



M.A. ENGLISH - I YEAR
DKE13 : MODERN LITERATURE - III
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Words worth's " The Prelude" Book1

William Wordsworth was born in 1770 at Cockersmouth in Camberland. His education was mostly carried on by self- chosen reading by nature. He and Coleridge became friends and write poems under the title " LegricalBallods". It is Wordsworth who started rebelling against Neo-classical poetry and started the romantic movement. To him nature appears as a formative influence. Nature is the guide and mentor for him. He is called a high priest of Nature.

Wordsworth believes that Nature is not only a physical phenomenon, but a living entity. Nature has not only life but also feeling. Wordsworth's conception of Nature was the product of a slow process extending from childhood to manhood. There are three phases.

The First Phase

In this stage, nature appealed to his senses. In his early boyhood days, he spent most of his time in childish joys such as bathing in stream, climbing trees, boating and gathering flowers etc. During this period, he experienced a "Calm delight". At this stage, Nature seemed to speak to him remember able things.

The Second Phase

At this state Wordsworth's love of Nature is of mere sensibility, devoid of thought. By this time he developed a likening for sensuous beauty of Nature. He viewed Nature with a purely physical passion. The beauty of Nature became an object of passions. This type of experience gradually led him to the final stage of love of Nature.

The Third Phase

This stage is marked with Wordsworth's love of Nature. He sees Nature by the eye of soul. Wordsworth passes through spiritual experiences of Nature. At this stage his love of Nature was no longer as passionate as it was earlier. Mixed with an attachment to humanity, it grows calmer and sobre. He began to realise the existence of a unifying spirit running through all things. At this stage all the senses are suspended and the disturbing influences of the reason is removed



NATURE AS A TEACHER

In his poem “ **The Tables Turned**” he says ‘Let nature be your teacher’. The line suggests that he regarded Nature as his best teacher.

“**The prelude**’ is an account of the best part of the poet’s education that he received from Nature. Nature exercised upon his the discipline of fear and joy. This discipline enabled his to feel Nature’s presence in the background of all his activities. He advises to abandon books and emphasises the need of getting the direct inspiration that a man can get from Nature. Even Wordsworth finds sermons in stones.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ELEMENT IN HIS POETRY. (OR)

THE CONFESSIONAL ELEMENT IN HIS POETRY

Wordsworth’s poetry is a record of his inner experience. His poetry is remarkable not so much for this beautiful descriptions, impressions, experiences and emotional reactions about Nature. He lived an uneventful outward life. He talked much of himself, his own experiences, thoughts and beliefs. Because of this reason Keats called him” the Egotistical Sublime”. A larger part of this poetry is record of his own mind. The poems ‘ **The Prelude**’, **Tintern Abbey**,’ **Immortality Ode**’, are remarkable for their autobiographical significance. ‘**The Prelude**’ is subtitled as ‘ *Thy Growth of a Poet’s Mind*’. It is a spiritual autobiography. It is a poetical record of his life from childhood to early middle age. It is an autobiographical account not of Wordsworth, the man, but the poet. The first two books describe his early love of Nature and various formative influences. The next four books narrate his stay at Cambridge and his experiences there. The books from VII to XI describes his enthusiasm for the great revolution. The poem’ **Tintern Abbey**’ traces the development of the poet’s love of Nature from his boyhood to manhood. In the beginning Nature was only secondary to poet’s animal pursuits. In the next state, his love of Nature grew sensuous. In the final stage he realised a harmony between Nature and Soul. ‘**The Immortality Ode**’ also has an autobiographical charm. The poet feels the loss of the ‘celestial light’ that appeared in his childhood.

The Wordsworth’s poetry is a truthful record of his own mind and soul.



Shelley's Ode to Skylark

A wonderful Lyric.

To a skylark is one of the most famous lyrics in English poetry. Swinburne calls it "the most perfect poem of its kind in all the world of poetry". It is a piece of supreme art and embodies the best qualities of Shelley's lyrical genius. Its chief virtues lie in its wonderful melody and its unpremeditated thought. The spontaneity of the poem is equally remarkable. The lines of the lyric bubble out from the poet's heart without any labour or artifice. It is open to natural effusion and as such it is regarded as a gem among Shelley's lyrics. It is extremely rich in melodious charm, though in imaginative conception and material power it is excelled by *The Cloud and The Ode to the West Wind*. The exquisite melody of the poem is unforgettable. All the stanzas lie with each other in their melodic charm. In its 'lyric fervour' and its 'ebullient lyricism" it remains unsurpassed among other poems of Shelly.

Imagery

Among significant qualities of the poem is the riches of its imagery. The various beautiful stanzas of the poem are those in which the bird is compared to difference bright objects of nature and life; it exhibits Shelley's imaginative genius, and the gift for coining similes and metaphors for heightening the effect of the poem. The bird has been beautifully compared to a poet hidden in the light of thought, to a highborn maiden in a palace tower, to a glow-worm golden in dell of dew, and to a rose enbower'd in its own green leaves. These similes are very charming and beautiful, and help in visualising the picture of the bird in its wonderful flight. The point of these comparisons is in the action, the showering out, from some unseen source, more than in the things themselves. Stopford A, Brooke complains that these images divert our attention from the skylark itself. Lamborne defends Shelly by pointing out that the similes recall to Shelley's readers a series of lovely visions whenever its song is heard. And thus one great end of poetry is achieved – to make this much loved earth more lovely, by filling it with beautiful associations. It is significant that the similes, each of which constitutes a gem of poetry in itself, are exquisite elaborations of images that are recurrent in Shelley's happiest poetical moods- light, music, odour, and spring with its reviving showers.



Pictorial Quality

The pictorial quality of the poem is equally significant. The poet presents the flight and the movement of the bird in the sky with remarkable ease and the picture of the bird pouring out its melody comes dancing before our eyes. We feel that the golden lightening of the setting sun the lark is really 'an embodied joy whose race is just begun'

Pessimistic Note

This poem presents the pessimism of the poet. We hear in it authentic notes of tender, vague pathos which no other poet but Shelley could have so confidently struck. The poet has pathetically presented the lot of human-beings in the world. The following stanza has become world famous not only for its haunting melody but also for its tender pathos, longing and yearning"

"We look before and after,
And pine for what is not;
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught.

Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought."

Joy of the bird contrasted with the suffering of human-beings

The happy lot of the bird has been beautifully contrasted with the sorrow and suffering of human-beings. The rapture of the bird is caught for ever in verse that quivers with emotion, and in a language which is imperishable. Wordsworth was the opinion that Shelley's *Skylark* was the expression of the highest emotion to which his genius had attained.

Lack of Order

Graham Hough has noticed the absence of internal structure in the poem; the structure is rather loose. He says : The *Skylark* has great beauty in individual stanzas; it has been pointed out that the order of stanzas is insignificant--- they would be rearranged almost anyhow without loss. This is not as damaging as is sometimes supposed: it is in fact a not unusual poetic situation: it is not obligatory for poems to progress in a temporal or logical sequence; they have often a timeless, synoptic point of view; and this is appropriate enough to a poem about the song of a far off, almost unseen bird.

But the *Skylark* is rather a long lyric: and the absence of internal structure is more felt the longer a poem becomes. And it remains true that a



more conscious designer than Shelly would either have given the poem a clearer sense of direction, or have made it a shorter poem.

Metre

This poem is written in a stanza of Shelley's invention. Each stanza consists of five lines, the first four lines, being shorter than the last which is Alexandrine. The first and the third lines have three trochees each and rhyme. The second and fourth lines are shorter, have two trochees and a long syllable and they also rhyme. The fifth line has twelve syllables is called Alexandrine. Leigh Hunt was deeply influenced by the metre of the poem and his praises are worthy of our attention. He says about the metre of the poem---"Shelley chose the measure of this poem with great felicity. The earnest hurry of the four short lines following by the long effusiveness of the Alexandrine expresses the eagerness and continuity of the lark."

On the whole, 'To a Skylark' is a wonderful poem, a sweet lyric, and a gem in Shelley's poetry. The force of the verse, depth of imagination, beauty of expression, daring rhymes and a scintillating chain of similes have made it a memorable song. The quality of Shelley's style which may be called luminousness is here strikingly exemplified. The verse moves with a radiance, a rapidity that are in perfect accord with the theme. The poet has compared beautifully the bird's easy movements and fluent song with man's clumsy attempts at each, and deduces, tongue in cheek, that the bird has superhuman talents.

John Keats "Ode on a Grecian Urn"

"In the Ode on a Grecian Urn," Keats addresses the urn. The inspiration of this ode has been derived from a marble urn belonging to Lord Holland and preserved in the garden at Holland House. On the Urn, many objects and scenes are carved. The silent music of the marble pipes, the uttered sing, the love that never reaches, fruition – all this life of imagination is more real and enviable than the human life of audible melody and tangible embraces.

Art is permanent. The lovers carved on Urn are forever parting and young on the Urn. Keats praises art for its permanence. At the same time, Keats is also aware of the coldness and lifelessness of art. Life is fleeting but it has 'breathing human passion'. Though Keats seems to be all admiring art, he



brings out the defect of art. Though he is dissatisfied with the transience of human love, he likes it, because it has 'passion' as opposed to the coldness of art.

Art as represented by the Urn is wedded to quietness. It is away from noisy life. The movements that agitate human life cannot destroy art. Art cannot be killed by time. Unaffected by time, it remains fresh like a bride. Though a sculptor made the Urn, it is still protected by silence and slow time. Keats describes the Urn as 'the foster child of silence and slow time. According to Keats, sculpture can tell the tale more effectively than Poetry. The poet is uncertain whether the figures he sees on the Urn are those of gods or human beings. The Urn does not give full information. Ironically, Keats describes it as a 'sylvan historian'.

William Empson observes, "by feeling the beauty of the pot, Keats is led to make reflections on human life. The beauty of the pot presumably tells truth so far as it is a sound guide to the pot, and what it tells him is how to digest his sufferings and turn them into beauty.

The sight of piece of ancient sculpture sets the poet's mind at work. Imagination catches fire. The scenes of ancient life and worship are conjured up. He speculates on the abstract relations of plastic art to life. The Urn is a concrete symbol of some vast reality. The Urn depicts a flowery tale sweetly than does the poetry.

Keats expresses his theme in the following lines clearly, "Heard melodies are sweet but those unheard are sweeter". The music that we hear actually is sweet. But the music realised by imagination is much sweeter. The third stanza expresses the vast difference between human life and art which gains permanence on beauty. The green trees will never shed their leaves and will enjoy the perpetual summer. The musician on the Urn will never be fired and old and his song will be always fresh and new. Love as presented in the Urn will be always warm and panting. They pass into the land of eternity.



S. T. COLERIDGE'S KUBLA KHAN

Most of the Coleridge's poems are short. Awakening from a pleasant dream, he wrote few lines of "Kubla Khan" and went out with a friend leaving the poem incomplete. He could not complete the poem later. 'Kubla Khan' takes the reader to the little known xanadu where the sacred Alph flows through measureless caverns down to a 'Sunless sea'.

Kubla Khan was published by Coleridge in 1816 at the request of his friend Lord Byron. Coleridge described 'KublaKhan' as "A vision in a Dream", a Fragment.

Kublakhan was a great Chinese emperor and founder of the Yuan dynasty. Xanadu was his summer capital. He built there a splendid pleasure palace on the bank of the sacred river Alph. Flowing through deep caves, the Alph ultimately poured itself into a dark subterranean sea, untouched by the rays of the sun. It finally empties itself into a sea. The Alph, branching off into numerous 'sinuous rills' has fertilised 'twice five miles' of ground. There are gardens full of 'incense bearing trees'. The forests are as old as the hills. They encircle 'sunny spots greenery'.

Next, the poet draws attention to a deep chasm on the side of a green hill covered with cedar trees. A hissing sound keeps issuing out of the chasm. It looks as though the poet watches them and envies them. The urn is the record of the lovely and yet fatal enchantment. The Urn is the incitement to a day dream that will give him all the desires.

In the Urn, a priest is leading a heifer to the sacrifice. But this is certain that the streets of the town will ever be empty and deserted. None of them will return to explain the permanent absence of the people. They are made immovable by art. The lovers in the urn are immortal. Mortality and decay have slopped from them. But they are human still. The poet who envied them, ends by pitying them. Keats is torn between the immortal art and the mortal life.

Keats' poetry is noted for its pictorial quality. Keats is an expert in creating a vivid picture with a few strokes. Keats creates a succession of vivid pictures in the poem. There is a picture of a tree in spring season. There is a picture of lover seizing hold of a woman and trying to kiss her. The statement "Beauty is truth, truth beauty – that is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know" occurs at the end of the poem.



Earthquake is going to erupt soon. A mighty fountain splashes out of the chasm, throwing out big rocks. A tumultuous noise is made. Kubla Khan suddenly hears a voice of his ancestors, warning him of an imminent war. The ancestral voice might represent Kublakhan's own conscience, teaching him. It is unwise to dissipate himself in the palace of pleasure and forget his paramount duty as a warrior and protector of the people.

The first part of the poem has symbolic significance. The Alph flowing underground and then suddenly forcing itself upward as a mighty mountain stands for the mysterious working of poetic inspiration. The river's underground course is a symbol of the depth of the poet's mind which is involved in the poetic process. The turmoil of the chasm is the emotional upheaval that a poet experiences while comprising poems. The huge rocks that the fountain throws out are the epoch-making truths that the poet expresses.

Kublakhan who builds a strange palace is changed into an Abyssinian lady singing a song about Mount Abora. The Alph flowed underground symbolises the innermost recesses of the poet's heart. The poet claims himself to be superior to Kublakhan. The poet can reconstruct the sunny dome and the caver of the ice with words so vivid that whoever reads the poem can conjure up the palace before his mind's eye. The real palace perished but the poet's verbal palace will never perish.

Lord Byron 's when we two parted

Lord Byron is one of the five romantic poets. There is an element of melancholy in his writings. The present lyric is on an unidentified lady love of his earlier days.

Byron fell in love and out of love throughout his brief life. An unlawful passion for his step-sister led to his leaving England and wandering restlessly all over Europe. This poem describes Byron's unrequited love for a woman who remains unidentified till now. Like a male chauvinist, Byron find fault with the lady and presents himself as immaculate.

Byron recalls his separation from his beloved. They were silent and in tears. The thought that they would be separated broke their hearts. Her cheeks became cold and her kisses were passionless. Their sorrows have not



subsided. Grief had drained away all the passion. Byron was surprised at her coldness. He thought that her love had become extinct. He could not fathom the psyche of his lover. In reality, the separation had driven her love underground.

Many years passed by. There is no communication from Byron. Byron guesses that, being cut off from him, she could have developed ties with others. The prudish society set afloat a whispering campaign against her. Byron was stung to the quick by the vicious report that his former beloved had totally forgotten him and was leading an unprincipled life. He regrets for having loved her. He says that they had met and mingled in secret. Now he is grieving in secret. There is nobody by his side to console him. He cannot erase her from his memory. He is in the dark. He cannot find out why her spirit has deceived him. He toys with the idea of meeting her again. His previous passions sprout up in all the original intensity. If he meets her, he hopes that he will shed tears silently. Tears will express his undying love.

ODE ON MELANCHOLY

A critical Appreciation

The Ode on Melancholy is the least complex of the Odes and perhaps the weakest of them, only the freshness and firm concreteness of the imagery in stanza II saving it from becoming enervated. Melancholy, as defined by the poem, is the condition of recognizing and accepting the fact of transience in human experience. Graham Hough says, "*The Ode on Melancholy*" recognises that sadness the inevitable complement of the moment of intense sensuous happiness that so far have been the peaks of his experience."

" she dwells with Beauty --- Beauty that must die
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu".

It is therefore, a vain to attempt to escape from this inevitable pain as to expect a light not to cast shadows. Melancholy springs from the transience of joy, and the transience of joy is a part of its nature. But the note of the poem is not "Gather ye rose buds, while ye may." It suggests an eager grasping at pleasure, that are soon to be snatched an eager grasping at pleasure, that are soon to be snatched away. The whole movement and vocabulary of the Ode



suggest a rich, show brooding over beauty and joy, with a full realization both of beauty and the pain.

W. J. Bate says that this poem matches the *Nightingale* and the *Grecian Urn* Odes in restrained intensity of language and versification. Each stanza of ten iambic pentameter lines consists of a quatrain of alternative rhymes and a sestet rhyming c d e, c d e.

An important difference between this ode and the *Nightingale* and the *Grecian Urn* Odes is that it lacks a dominant symbol. Keats is, therefore, forced to storm the main gate of the subject directly. His ultimate ideal had been dramatic. In the *Nightingale* and *Grecian Urn* Odes he had at last found himself developing a form of dramatic lyric. But a direct ascertain of belief can hardly be dramatic unless there is either some form of debate or else a developing discovery of what he really believes. The poet addresses an imaginary person with protest. Wordsworth was especially fond of this. It was one of the mannerisms of Wordsworth that Keats had in his mind when he spoke of poetry that bullies us. The mode was alien to Keats, yet he writes *Odes on Melancholy* in this mode.

There is reason to believe that when Keats wrote this ode he was in a particular ironical and violent mood. He wrote a stanza which he did well to reject. It began with the grim words:

“ Though you should build a bark of deed men’s bones
And rear a phantom gibbet for mast”.

As the poem now stands, there is not this violence, but violence nevertheless does not seek for melancholy in melancholy things, cries the poet. If sorrow craves company, it is not in the contemplation of sad things that it will find it. No, indeed, the grand paradox, the profound irony, of grief is that it abides for ever in beauty to the sentient man. That is the theme of the poem. It is the direct antitheses of Keats’ attitude in the *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, where the realization of the eternal quality of art binds and heals the bitter wounds which life inflicts. For the theme of the poem he owes to Beaumont and Milton, but he treats the them in a manner entirely his own, expressing his experience of the habitual interchange and alternation of emotions of joy and pain with a characteristic easy magnificence of imagery and style.

According to Robert Bridges, the perception in this *Ode* is profound, and no doubt experienced. The paradox that *Melancholy* is most deeply felt by the



organization most capable of joy is clinched at the end of the observation of the reaction which satiety provokes in such temperaments so that it is also in the moment of extremist joy that it suddenly fades:

“Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips”

H.W.Garrod says that this is the only old scepticism about the senses, finding for itself a new direction out of that luxury of the beautiful, he can yet perish in it.

There are two main defects in the poem:

1. The opening is abrupt. The reason is that the first stanza of the poem has been discarded. He cancelled an original first stanza, which evokes an atmosphere of Gothic horror in order to deny that it has anything to do with true melancholy; this explains the abrupt beginning of the poem.

2. In the second stanza last three lines beginning from ‘Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows’ are an intrusion. There is no occasion for the reference of his love in this poem. A.R Weekes says that this” weakness inevitably betrays itself in the allusion to love. Keats is, no doubt, thinking of Fanny Brawne, whom, overwhelming as was his passion for her, he seems to have regarded rather as the incarnation of his ideal beauty than a living reasoning woman”.

In the opinion of Grierson, Melancholy is a subtle Baudelairean expression of the mood in which sensuous beauty is most deeply realised. For the sensuous beauty see the following lines:

“Or, if thy mistress some rich anger shows
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
And feed deep upon her peerless eyes”.

There is a beautiful description of Nature in the following lines:

“Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose
Or on the rainbow of the salts and wave”.

The Ode is full of bright and vivid images, although there is not as much colour as is found in other major Odes. There is graphic pictorial are in these lines:

“Aye, in the very temple of Delight
Veil’s Melancholy has Sovran shrine”.



P.B Shelly's "The Cloud"

Critical Appreciation

The cloud is a lyric typically Shelleyan in conception and execution. The rust and glory of this lyric are undeniable. All the aspects of Shelley's are and genius are embodied in it. The poet's peculiar fondness for the swift, violent and dynamic aspects of Nature, his unusual habit of painting ethereal images one after another, his special faculty in describing the delicate shade of colour and, above all, the scientific truth behind all such poetic images are charmingly exhibited in this poem of all Shelley's 'mythopoetry' such as ***Hymn of Apollo*** and ***Prometheus Unbound*** this is the happiest in spirit and expression. His observation is that of a poet and scientist, a 'scientific Ariel.'

The Cloud is a Nature poem. A revolutionary and dynamic personality that he was, Shelley loved to paint dynamic and violent sides of Nature. The cloud is a powerful and mobile force filling the vast sky with great stir. It is a tremendous force filling the vast sky with great stir. It is mighty force that threshes the green farms with the flail of hail –stones"

I wield the flail of the lashing hail
And whiten the green plains under
And then again I dissolve it in rain
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

In the next stage the cloud is spoken of as a mighty force shaking the huge pine trees upto their roots, so that they cry and moan with pain:

I shift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;

The cloud is further described as a great conqueror, marching in triumph, accompanied and attended by his generals, viz., the tempest, lightning and snow. Behind him march the powers of air in chains as prisoners. In the ship of the cloud is also imprisoned, convict-like, the thunder who frequently roars and cries as if clamouring to be free. All these descriptions present the cloud as a great force, and formidable phenomena of Nature.

The poem is a clear manifestation of Shelley's power of description. The scene of the moon and the stars intermittently bursting upon view through the shifting clouds, has been beautifully described. He affirms that the goddess of moon, treading upon the soft surface of the cloud, causes rents in its texture,



and through these openings the stars peep at the world down below and smile. When the openings get wider, patches of the sky, with the moon and stars in their lap, show up and throw their reflections on lakes etc:

*When I widen the rent in my wind-built rent
Till the calm, rivers, lakes and seas
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.*

The description of the morning scene is equally exquisite in point of delicacy of colours and imagery. Every stanza of the poem, is, in fact, a specimen of descriptive beauty and excellence.

The poem is adorned with a series of brilliant images. Of these, some are remarkable for their delicacy, others for their colours, and yet others for their inherent force and dynamism. The imagery which describes the cloud as a thresher beating the green fields with the flail of hail-stones until they turn white, is deeply impressive. And no less impressive is that another imagery where the cloud is suggested as a mariner sailing across the uncharted sea of the sky. Even more attractive is the imagery where the rosy rising sun is described as secretly and softly jumping on to the rear of the cloud's ship. Other images where the cloud is spoken of in relation to various other phenomena of Nature are quite fascinating. For instance, sample for following lines:

*I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl,
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwind is my banner unfurl.*

The poem is also an illustration of Shelley's love of bright and delicate colours. The description of the early dawn, making the entire sky rosy and purple, presents a most colourful picture:

*The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead.*

The time of the setting sun is again painted in the same delicate colours which makes Shelly's images characteristically bright and transparent.



His imaginative portrayals are fantastic, abstract and illusive, but their special merit is that they are backed by some scientific truth. The most remarkable of such portrayals is the one in the last stanza of the poem where the cloud is described as the immortal power immune from death. The cloud is shown as laughing at his own cenotaph. And it is scientifically acceptable and correct. The cloud may visibly die, but it is again recreated and restored to its original form by the action of the sun. The sun evaporates the water of the rivers and seas and gives it the form of cloud. The phenomena has been described with a beautiful imagery with scientific truth behind it :

*I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb
I arise and unbuild it again.*

In *The cloud* Shelley heightens our appreciation of inorganic natural processes by investing with personality. The tone of the poem, detached and scientific, shows he is not deluded by his own make-belief. The blend of science and human imagery recalls Act IV of *Prometheus Unbound*, but the intensity of the latter has dissolved into geniality : the verb *laugh* occurs four times in *The Cloud*. The playful metaphors often hide Shelley's firm grasp of the physics. For example, in line 8 he says that the earth dances about the sun. So indeed it does, performing, more faithfully than any ballerina, gyrations more complex than any human choreographer science and the humanities.

The poem has no relation with humanity probably because it is too sublime and too far removed from the human world. While we read the poem we are not conscious even of the poet. Shelley had the strange power of stripping himself of humanity and of identifying himself completely with the elements of Nature so that they become more real than the poet himself. Professor Herford says, " Where Wordsworth's imagination isolates and focuses, and Keats' fills in and enriches, Shelley's dissolves and transcends."

Desmond King-Hele writes, "*The Cloud* is one of Shelley's purest lyrics. It is like clear mountain stream, quite unsullied by the muddy residues of his own troubles. We may, if we wish, equate and cloud's brief life with Man's, and suggest that the cloud's revival after death offers consolation for Man; but it is unlikely that Shelley meant us to read this moral into it, for he remains



emotionally aloof throughout the poem, and the continual scientific detail applied to clouds, not men. Philosophical, doctrinal and personal overtones, if they exist at all, are decidedly muted. We are given a scientific monograph enriched by imaginative invention, warned by human metaphor and made piquant by the permanent death-sentence which hangs over the cloud.”

The cloud is a Nature myth of flawless beauty. The complete identification of the poet with his subject, the superb rush of music, the crystalline clearness of the picture not for a moment marred by an over profusion of metaphors as in the *Skylark*, these things make criticism tongue tied. Even the comment on its beauties is an impertinence. It is made for wonder and delight. This wonderful poem is to be compared with *Ode to the West Wind* in its perfect fusion of the object with the spirit of the observer. Long had Shelley taken imaginative and dreamful notice of the clouds; he had watched their changes and vanishings until their life had entered into harmony with him. It is natural, and not an artifice, that the cloud speaks in his verse.

The cloud is one of the fugitive forms of the spirit of beauty, ever disappearing from our gaze and returning to enchant us in a more wonderful birth. Shelley’s idea is not the crude worship of the savage, nor the sublime pantheism of Wordsworth. The cloud has an individuality, as he himself has: it dies, as he himself dies, and the formative spirit of beauty forthwith clothes itself, anew.

As regards technical aspect of the poem, the composition runs into six lengthy stanzas--- the first and the last of twelve verses; the third and fourth and fifth stanza containing fourteen verses each; and the second stanza is made up of as many as eighteen verses. Most of these stanzas are further divided into quatrains and sestets. The rhythm of the verses is iambus with others, in order to give variety to the music which follows naturally the moment of the thought. The rhyme scheme is very ingenious. Besides the end rhymes, there is also another device employed in it. Shelley has made use of the internal or the middle-rhymes, i.e the rhyming of two words in the same line used at uniform intervals. For example.

I bring fresh *showers*, for the thirsty *flowers*

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I bear light *shade*, for the leaves when *laid*

This device has been uniformly used throughout the poem in the verses of uneven numbers, i.e in 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th, lines of the stanza. The imagery is



rich , forceful, varied and picturesque. The use of figures of speech has been done as of necessity and not as deliberate attempt at ornamentation.

WORDSWORTH'S THEORY OF POETRY

In the preface to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1802) Wordsworth set out his theory of poetry and also expressed his views about (a) the subject and (b) the diction of poetry. The entire poetic theory of Wordsworth centres round the examination of the origin, nature and purpose of poetry. Wordsworth starts with the assertion that “all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings,” and proceeds to say, “though this be true, poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man also thought long deeply.”

Analysis of Wordsworth's theory of poetry

When we examine the above statements certain points emerge for our consideration. The first point is that poetry is spontaneous, a free and involuntary exuberance. It cannot be made to order, nor under duress. The poet cannot be hustled into writing on the spur of an opportune moment. Poetry is a matter of feeling and mood. When the poet is in mood he sings out songs of joy or sorrow in an effortless outburst from the depth of his heart. His language in such moments becomes the language of poetical inspiration. In short, Wordsworth asserts that the basis of poetic creation is “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling.” “The clear springs of poetry must flow freely and spontaneously – it cannot be made to flow through artificially laid pipes.”

From his observation flows the influence that poetry is essentially a matter of “expressing powerful feelings” felt in the heart and not generated in the mind. Poetry is born in the springs of the heart and not in the cold and calculating process of the intellect. All of us realise and feel but the poet feels intensely and deeply than most of us. The poet's heart leaps up when he beholds a rainbow, a red rose, a white dove, and lily. He is emotionally moved and stirred at the sight of beautiful things, and the surging emotional tide breaks into verses. Thus, according to Wordsworth, deep emotion is the fundamental condition of poetry. Without emotion and driving force of feelings poetry cannot be produced. But “sensibility along is not adequate to ensure good poetry, it must be directed by a calm mind.” Hence the poet's



conclusion that “poetry is produced by a man who being possessed of more than ordinary organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply.”

Wordsworth’s second statement analysed

From the statement “had also thought long and deeply” arises the second contention of Wordsworth that “poetry takes its origin from emotions recollected in tranquillity” Wordsworth explains the function of calm thinking and deliberate contemplation in the composition of poetry later on in the preface when he says, “The emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and in emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on.” The process of poetic composition is not an easy one. As expressed in the above statement, it passes through four stages, viz. recollection, contemplation, recrudescence and composition. All that Wordsworth seek to lay stress in the theory that ‘poetry is emotion recollected in tranquillity’ is that good poetry is never an immediate reaction to the provoking cause; that our sensation must be allowed time to sink back into the common fund of our experience, there to find their level and due proportion. That level is found for them by the mind in the set of contemplation, and then in the process of contemplation the sensations revive, and out of the union of the contemplating mind and the receiving sensibility, raises that unique mood of expression which we call poetry.

Wordsworth’s practice of his theory of Poetry

Wordsworth actually followed the above process of poetic composition. He allowed the emotions sink, and revived them at a later stage in a state of tranquillity and composed his finest work in that recollected state of tranquillity. *The Prelude, The Daffodils, Tintern Abbey, Resolution and Independence, the Solitary Reaper etc*, were composed according to his theory of emotions recollected in tranquillity. He indulged her memory with long periods of reverie, set it to travel to and fro among the past experiences of his life, and loved solitude and indolence chiefly because during the lulls of social intercourse and intellectual labour lost impressions were again captured. He loved to sit in the ‘long barren silence’ contemplating the submerged feelings



and images in his mind taking hold of them when they rose to the surface. His own function, as seemed to him, was simply that of still and patient chronicler:

*Nor is it I who play the part,
But a shy spirit in my heart,
That comes and goes..... will sometimes leap,
From hiding places ten years deep;
Or haunt me with familiar face;
Returning like a host unlaid,
Until the debt I owe be paid.*

Inadequacy of Wordsworth's theory of poetry

Wordsworth could follow his theory of poetic composition, but to say that all poetry is written in a state of calm and tranquil recollection is far from the truth. If that view is accepted the scope of lyric poetry will be much narrowed down, and poetry will not be written at the white heat of emotional excitement. Hence to compose poetry in the manner and method defined by Wordsworth one needs a strong memory that can faithfully recall and recollect the past and bring to bear upon it contemplative mind fit to cogitate and recreate what had been experienced at an early stage. Wordsworth could practise his theory, for he had been gifted by Nature with prodigious memory and a contemplative mind. "For Wordsworth", says Myers, "life was a series of impressions, and the poet's duty was to recapture those impressions to isolate them and brood over them, till gradually, as a result of his contemplation, emotion stirred again and emotion akin to the authentic thrill that had excited him, when the impression was first born in experience." For other poets like Shelley the method of Wordsworth could not be squarely applied. It was applicable to Wordsworth along an exclusively. Wordsworth alone had the gift of visualising the past with remarkable clarity and vividness and gloat over them with the flurry and fancy of a poet as he did"

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood.
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;



Qualifications of a poet

Wordsworth, next, takes up the qualifications of the poet. According to him, it is a privilege to be a poet, who has a noble mission to carry out in his life. He is not an ordinary man but “a man speaking to man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature and a more comprehensive soul than are supposed to be common among mankind.” Elucidating Wordsworth’s observations about a poet, J.C.Smith remarks in his book *A Study of Wordsworth*, “The poet then is a man endowed with a ‘more than usual’ capacity to perceive and feel and to revive his perceptions and feelings in the presence of their objects.” To be a great poet, let us add, he must have thought long and deeply. In all this he differs from his fellow men only in degree; all men are able to perceive, feel and think in some measure, and many are able even to imagine :

Oh !many are the poets that are sown

By nature ; men endowed with highest gift,
The vision and the faculty divine;

Yet wanting the accomplishment of verse.

It is this last gift, the accomplishment of verse, that distinguishes the articulate poet from other natures, even from other poetic natures. The poet can communicate his experiences, and communicate them in such a manner as to give pleasure and delight.

The aim and function of poetry

Having described the nature of the poet Wordsworth next takes up the question of the aim and the function of poetry. Poetry is not a mere diversion, not a dish for Epicurean taste. “Poetry says Wordsworth, “is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge, the impassioned expression that is in the countenance of all science.” Poetry aims at ennobling and edifying. It is like the evening star which throws its radiant light through the gloom and darkness of life. The poet is a teacher who impart through the medium of poetry moral lessons for the betterment of human life. Poetry is the vehicle for propagating moral thoughts. Wordsworth’s poetry does not merely give us delight, it also instructs us in deep moral lesson and profound philosophic truths about life and religion. Wordsworth believes that “ a poetry of revolt against moral ideas



is a poetry of revolt against life; a poetry of indifference towards moral ideas is poetry of indifference towards life.”

Wordsworth’s views on the subject of poetry

Wordsworth’s theory of poetry can be divided into two parts concerning (a) the subject and (b) the diction of poetry. Regarding the subject of poetry Wordsworth declares his preference for incidents and situations from common life. To obtain such incidents and situations, humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because in that condition the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity.” Over these incidents Wordsworth proposes to throw “ a certain colouring of the imagination whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect.

Wordsworth’s views on poetic diction

Wordsworth’s views on poetic diction are the most revolutionary of all the ideas in the preface. Discarding the “ gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers”, he insists that his poem contain little poetic diction, and are written in “ as selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation.” His views on poetic diction can be summed up in these words, “ There neither is nor can be any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition.”

CRITICAL SUMMARY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT OF “ALL FOOLS’ DAY”

Company of Fools

The essay celebrates the first of April. Lamb says that each one of us has a bit of the fool in him and we should not hesitate to participate in the celebration of all fools’day. Lamb himself, he says, belongs to the company of fools. He says that the majority of the world is foolish. At least four quarters of the earth are on the side of fools. He invites everyone to share with him goose berry wine and sing the song of folly, which Amiens sings in a play of Shakespeare. He would like to meet the greatest fool on earth and drink his toast.



Fools of the Past

Lamb calls up all the people of the past whom he regards as fools: for instance, Empedocles who jumped into the crater of a volcano to know what was at the bottom of it, Cleon Brotus who jumped into the sea with the idea of living a better life after death, Gebir who helped to build the Tower of Babel, Alexander who wept at having no more countries to conquer. He invites the philosopher chemist of the thirteenth century, Raymund Lully, and also Duns Scotus. He also invites fools from literature such a parson Adams, Master Stephen, Cokes Shallow, Silence, Slender and Aguecheek. Ramsay, who used to keep the library in Ludgate street, is also invited and given a place between the two Spanish Dons, Armado and Quixote, for he shared their chivalry and bombastic speech.

A Natural Love for Fools

Lamb feels a close bond tying him to the fools of this world. Even as a boy, when he read the Biblical stories. He felt an attraction for the fool who built a house on sand rather than for the wise man who built his house on a rock. He sympathised with the servant who buried his money in the ground instead of investing it like his wise colleagues. He felt sorry for the five foolish virgins who were deprived of their bridegroom. As he grew up, he contracted more lasting and strong friendships with those who had a touch of absurdity in their nature. He respects honest stupidity and eccentricity. He feels that fools never betray friends. A man, who is completely free of folly, is sure to be full of wickedness. Some of the most kind-hearted people of this world have been fools. He points out that the finest flesh comes from birds and animals which are considered foolish. He ends with a warning to the reader not to misinterpret his words and put false constructions on them

CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND APPRAISAL

Informal Conversational Tone

All fools' Day is one of Lamb's most light-hearted and informal essays. It is pervaded with pure fun and humour. The very first line has a conversational tone, establishing an instant rapport with the reader. He greets the reader heartily and plays the fool in an uninhibited manner.



Pure Fun and Humour

Lamb directs the humour against himself and calls himself a fool. In the same breath, he calls upon the people to consider themselves in a similar light. He humorously claims that "four quarters of the globe" are on the side of fools. He calls up a roll of fools drawn from history and literature. Each of the figures has something of folly in his action—philosophers like Empedocles and Cleombrotus have something of folly in them if they chose to jump into a crater and the sea in order to find out more about life. Similarly, it is foolish to think of building a ladder to reach heaven, Alexander's tears over not having any more worlds to conquer is again. Funny. Lamb delightfully picks on the absurd or comic side of each personality and highlights it to produce laughter. The literary figures called upon to join the feast of fools are, similarly, relevant to the subject. The reader is not spared, for the essay ends with a humorous reference to him: "Reader, if you wrest my words beyond their fair construction, it is you and not I, that are the April Fool."

In the essay, there is no element of pathos tinging the humour.

Style

Lamb's scholarly writing is in full evidence in this essay. We notice with respect the list of personalities which he draws from history and literature to adorn the roll of fools. His ready scholarship helped him to draw upon his knowledge easily and effectively. Appropriate allusions come to his mind automatically. Several references to Biblical episodes enliven the essay---- we have the story of the man who built a house on sand, the story of the servants with money, and the reference to the five virgins who lost their bridegroom because of their foolishness.

The mode of writing eminently matches the mood and theme. A Colloquial note marks the essay, and, as a result, the sentences are short and crisp. Sometimes have an epigrammatic ring, for example: "I venerate an honest obliquity of understanding." The long eloquent sentences are also present to lend variety.

Conclusion

All Fools days is an enjoyable piece of writing. Through the sparkling fun and humour, one can also get a glimpse of Lamb's fondness for the underdog and the human beings who have a pathetic lack of common sense. Unlike the Biblical parables, he cannot censure folly. What is remarkable, is that such a



funny essay is free from crudity or vulgarity. I has a refined humour, and a sharp, brilliant, yet humane wit.

A Bachelor's Complaint

Introduction

A Bachelor's Complaint of the Behaviour of Married People appeared in London Magazine. September, 1822. The essay is "personal" for Lamb as a bachelor might very well be speaking of his own experiences with married people.

Subjective Point of View

Lamb gives a subjective point of view in the essay. He talks of the embarrassing situations, indignities and discomfiture he has had to face when visiting married friends. Of course, the autobiographical element is present. Lamb was a bachelor throughout his life, though not because he could not marry. He chose not to marry, because he wanted to look after his mentally sick sister. We notice that the personal pronoun "I" is present all through the essay ---- an aspect of Lamb's peculiar egotism which is not irritating or aggressive but charming and touching. We can sense his disappointment over not having the very things he complains of in the essay. Mystification of the reader is also evident, for he creates the impression of disliking children. The erroneous impression is corrected when we read Dream Children. For Lamb loved children in real life.

Clear Arguments

'The essays' shows evidence of Lamb's ability to argue logically. There are no digressions or fanciful flights, but there is a rational presentation of subject. Arguments follow one another and points develop systematically. The statements seem to be based on actual experience. Some of Lamb's observations are bound to make married couples feel somewhat guilty, for they are based on reality. For instance, the comment that many married couples go out of their way to show affection to each other in public, or that they exhibit their child's virtues to all visitors and expect applause for having borne such children, is true to life. The psychological insight of Lamb is evident.



Amusing Disparagement of Wives

Lamb uses all his wit, humour and irony in his criticism of wives. Again, some of his observations, though presented most wittily, have a basis in reality. He is especially amusing when he describes the various devices employed by a wife to make her husband break off his friendship with a bachelor whom he has known since long before marriage. The experience of having had to wait for his dinner because of a husband coming late is told in funny terms. Lamb cannot understand the cause for pride in begetting children--- “when they are so common”. Lamb complains of how he once had to be satisfied with a less tasty dish while his friend’s wife gave her husband the better dish. All this is an amusing criticism of the behaviour of married people.

Style

The Style of the essay suits the purpose, and is devoid of Lamb’s usual rhetoric and elaborate allusiveness. It is chaste, lucid and straightforward. Lamb does not employ many Latin expressions, obscure quotations or scholarly references. The sentences are not complex or involved in structure. He does not indulge in his usual extravagances of language, compound phrases, verbosity and accumulation of epithets for the sake of effect. He shows himself capable of an economical style. Some of the sentences have an epigrammatic note – for instance, “Marriage by its best title is monopoly, and not of the least invidious sort”, or “one daisy differs not much from another in glory, but a violet should look and smell the daintiest,” The essay is not without the typical humour of Lamb. We have some witty similes, which are, however, easy to understand. One such comparison is that between children and quiver of arrows.

Conclusion

The essay is certainly personal in tone. But the style is almost ‘classical’ and shows that Lamb could very well write in a simple and straightforward manner. The essay, however, is not devoid of Lamb’s typical humour which shows itself in the bantering tone. The humour also arises from the fact that Lamb makes himself a butt of laughter.



IN PRAISE OF CHIMNEY SWEEPERS

The Young Sweeps

Lamb tells us that he feels a deep attachment, for the young chimney---sweeps who appear at the crack of dawn crying out “ sweep sweep” which sounds like the chirping of birds. Lamb feels a great sympathy for these small boys who climb the high chimneys to clean them. He gives them many poetic epithets like “dim specks” “poor blots” and so on. As a child, he used to wonder at the sweep climbing up the high chimney from inside brushing its wall and emerging from the top. Lamb urges his readers to show sympathy for these poor boys and be generous to them whenever they can, for they truly deserve it.

Sassafras Tea : a Favourite Drink with the Sweeps

Lamb describes a peculiar concoction which was particularly liked by these young sweeps. Lamb himself finds the drink too unpalatable judging from the smell coming out of it. He has never tasted it. Some, however, find it tastier than even China tea. A man called Mr.Read had a shop on the south side of Fleet Street, where he sold this wholesome and pleasant beverage. These shops were very popular with the labourers setting out for work in the morning. If one wants to show generosity to a sweep, one should buy him a large basin of this brew call “sassafras”. It would not cost much but it would make the little boy very happy. The sweep would be ever so grateful and clean your chimney extra well. Lamb did not like to be laughed at, but he did not mind a sweep’s laughter. Once, in the course of a walk, Lamb had slipped on a wet road and fallen. A mischievous chimney-sweep standing by had laughed till the tears flowed down his cheeks. Lamb felt happy that he had given some pleasure to the child. The laughter of sweep is innocent and free of malice.

Noble Origin

Lamb fancifully suggested that sweeps have some connection with noble families, for they are usually so polite. He says that they must be children kidnapped from noble families and made to work. He supports his arguments with the story of Montagu child who was discovered working as a sweep after being considered lost. Another incident, which would indicate the instinctive nobility of the sweeps, is that which happened at Arundel Castle. There, a



sweep was discovered asleep in the duke's bed. The sweep would not have dared to do so if an inherent feeling of kinship with the noble family had not existed in him.

The annual Feast for Chimney-sweeps

Lamb's friend Jem White used to give an annual dinner for young sweeps, because he was so much full of sympathy for them. This feast was held in the enclosures on the site of St. Bartholomew Fair at Smithfield. Jem White used to act the part of host with great enthusiasm and used to personally look to the needs of the guests. He treated them as if they were aristocrats and recommend the best dishes and fed them with tasty bits of food. He was a very popular host with the sweeps and there was a great deal of merry-making at the dinner, ending with the toast : "May the Brush supersede the Laurel". Now, Jem White was dead and the feast was no longer held, and no one else had come forward to cheer the poor sweeps.

S.T. COLERIDGE'S BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA

In the Biographia Literaria Coleridge explains the origin of the Lyrical Ballads which contained the poems of Wordsworth and Coleridge. Their aims and purposes were different. Wordsworth undertook to describe ordinary everyday happenings. At the same time, he sought to bring out the novelty and wonder hidden in them. Even ordinary things have a beauty of their own. But we are blind to it, because of our excessive familiarity with it. Familiarity makes even lovely things ordinary. Wordsworth aimed at removing the film of familiarity and showing the hidden beauty of objects.

Coleridge, on the other hand, specialized in supernatural incidents. He sought to invest such supernatural incidents with a human interest and an appearance of truth. In other words, he aimed at making supernatural incidents in such a way that the judgement of the reader would be lulled asleep and he would come to believe in these wildest flights of fancy. The phrase 'willing suspension of disbelief's is one of the famous coinage of Coleridge



The role of Coleridge and Wordsworth are complementary, Coleridge sought to make supernatural incidents appear natural and Wordsworth sought to make natural incidents appear supernatural.

In *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge says that the poet has two purposes, namely, communication of pleasure and communication of truth. Sometimes, the two purposes will be in conflict with each other. For example, under certain circumstances, promotion of pleasure may not promote moral and intellectual truth. The ideal society is that society which promoted both the purposes. In the ideal society, if the ultimate purpose of poetry is not achieved, that is, if morality is not promoted by poetry then the immediate purpose of poetry would also be defeated that is, poetry will stop giving pleasure. In an ideal society, poetry, however pleasing to read, will not give pleasure, if it spreads immoral or untruthful ideals.

In this connection, Coleridge mentions two poems--- the *Bathyllus of Anacreon* and the *Alexis of Virgil*. Bathyllus was a beautiful young man loved by Polycrates, the tyrant. Anacreon a famous Greek poet, not only loved Bathyllus but also celebrated him in his twenty-ninth ode. Alexis was also a handsome young man whom a shepherd deeply loved. Virgil, a Roman poet, celebrated their love in one of his poems. Both Anacreon and Virgil celebrated perversion and immorality. They employed their poetic powers to describe perverted love-affairs. In an ideal society, even the sweetest poems celebrating such perversions would not be appreciated by readers.

In the *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge says that the best poem is that poem in which every part contributes to the effect of the whole poem. A part of the poem which is a purple patch drawing attention to itself will not harmonize with the rest of the poem. The reader should dwell on every part of the poem and enjoy the effect it produces. He should not read hurriedly, going to the end of the poem at a stroke to grasp how the poem has been concluded. In other words, it is not the purpose of poem merely to satisfy the reader's curiosity. The serpent moves forward, creeping inch by inch. No space on its path is left untouched. Similarly, sound travelling through air does not jump. On the other hand, it does not leave untouched any space on its path. In the same way, the reader of a poem should not leave any part unenjoyed. *Praecipitandus ... spiritus* : " The free spirit of the epic poet must be hurried onward (through digression, etc)".



In his preface to the edition of the Lyrical Ballads Wordsworth explains why he has chosen to write about low and rustic characters. Coleridge says that the characters in some of the best poems of Wordsworth are not low rustics. For example, the characters in 'Michael', 'Ruth' the 'Mad Mother' etc, are not taken from low or rustic life. Wordsworth says that the good qualities of his characters are attributable to their occupations and abode. But Coleridge does not share this view also. He says that whoever is raised above servitude and whoever works hard for his maintenance will come to have such good qualities, whether he lives in a village or a city. It is wrong to assume that only shepherds in a village will have such good qualities. Coleridge also says that solid religious education consisting of a deep reading of the Bible will also develop such good qualities. Coleridge goes on to say that it is wrong to assume that only shepherds have such religious education. In this connexion, Coleridge quotes a statement of Dr. Henry More to the effect that a confined education focusing the attention of people to the Bible, will produce far better people than those learned people who are conversant with several languages.

In the *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge attacks Wordsworth's choice of the shepherds of Westmoreland and Cumberland. Coleridge says that a poet should not choose to write about particular classes but about mankind in general. Poetry should invest characters with generic and not with particular attributes. In this connection Coleridge refers to Aristotle's conception of poetry as essentially ideal, so that individual characters in poetry should be general and typical and their feelings should be typical and representative of the whole class to which they belong, irrespective of their occupations or status in life. Wordsworth's poems centring round humble figures succeed only to the degree to which they conform to this principle. He fails where he departs from this principle as in 'The idiot Boy'

In the *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge severely condemns Wordsworth's choice of the real language of the rustics in his poems. He says that the language of rustics is not suited to express subtle, philosophical thoughts. Wordsworth later added that the rustic mind, in a state of excitement, can give rise to a powerful language. But Coleridge says that even when the mind is excited by strong passions, it cannot create fresh words. It can only set increased activity to the stock of words already present in the mind of the speaker. A common uncultivated mind overpowered by a strong



passion can utter broken words or repeat the sets of words and phrases known to him. An uncultivated mind groping for words for want of a rich vocabulary is like a dramatist managing to represent a huge army on the stage with the help of a few persons. In *Macbeth* and *Henry VIII* a big army has to be shown on the stage. A poor dramatist manages the situation by making the same actor move forwards and backwards on the stage to prevent the appearance of empty spaces on the stage and to create the impression of a huge army moving on the stage. In the same manner, a poet using the language of rustics has to use repetitions to hide the blankness in the speaker's mind and to create an impression of profundity.

Examine Coleridge's attack on Wordsworth's theories of poetic diction

1. Coleridge's answer to Wordsworth's Theory of Poetic Diction

Coleridge begins his examination of Wordsworth's theories of poetic diction in Chapter XVII of the *Biographia Literaria*. According to Wordsworth, the language of the real conversation of men under the influence of natural feelings is the fittest language of poetry. Coleridge objects to this, saying that Wordsworth's theory is applicable only to certain classes of poetry. Secondly, Wordsworth says that he has chosen rustic and low characters, because "in that condition the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak of plainer and more emphatic language because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a stage of greater simplicity and consequently may be more accurately comprehended and more forcible communicated because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feeling, and form the necessary character of rural occupations are more easily that conditions the passions of men are incorporated with that beautiful and permanent forms of nature.

2. Coleridge's objections

Coleridge criticizes Wordsworth's theories on two important grounds. The first objection raised by Coleridge is that the characters in the best poems of Wordsworth are not taken from *low or rustic life* in the common acceptance of those words. And the feelings and sentiments expressed by these characters are also quite different from those aroused by their occupation and abode. Their feelings and sentiments "spring from the general causes which



will produce identical feelings in every state of life, whether in town or country. The more important of these circumstances are (a) spirit of independence arising from economic competence which places a person above servitude, yet not above the necessity of toil, thrift and simplicity in life and (b) religious education which makes a man well-conversant with the Bible and the liturgy. Human soul cannot flourish and nature in rustic life unless it is provided with these advantages. Where life is destitute of education and original sensibility the mind is sure to shrink and harden, and man to become selfish, sensual, gross and hard-hearted. Under such circumstances, the universe of Nature, 'the mighty world of eye and ear' becomes as useless as a beautiful picture to the blind and sweet music to the deaf.

3. Wordsworth does not follow Aristotle's theory

At this juncture, Coleridge refers to the Aristotelian conception of poetry as essentially ideal. Aristotle says that the characters in poetry should be general and representative of the whole class to which they belong, irrespective of their occupations or status in life. Wordsworth's poems present characters who are representatives of a class. In poems like 'The Idiot Boy' Wordsworth does not present 'general' characters and therefore those poems are failures.

4. The language of the rustics

Next, Coleridge criticizes Wordsworth's theories of poetic diction. Wordsworth says in the Preface : " the language, too of these men has been adopted (purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of the language is originally derived and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the action of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Coleridge's first object to this theory is that " the language of the rustic purified from its defects and grossness will not differ materially from the language of any other man of common sense however learned or refined be may be; except for the paucity and unconnectedness of the ideas expressed by the rustics. The experience of the rustic is limited; the facts at his disposal are scanty, and so he cannot think logically and consecutively. He fails to connect that with fact and express himself logically and lucidly, as a educated



man can. Therefore, the language of the rustics lacks expressive vigour and range, and so is unfit for poetry.”

5. The best part of human language derived from the mind

Secondly, Coleridge questions Wordsworth’s view that the best part of the human language is derived from the objects with which the rustics daily communicate. Coleridge says that the rustic is acquainted with a few things only, and those things are connected with his physical needs only. They have nothing to do with the spiritual side of man in life which only, according to Coleridge, forms the best part of human language. The best part of human language is derived not from physical objects but from reflection on the acts of the mind itself. Such acts and mental processes have no place in the consciousness of uneducated men” “ Reflection is possible only for properly educated people from whose mouths the rustics pick up their humble share of current words and phrases”. Words percolate from higher to lower levels of society preachers and religious instructors play a major role in disseminating words. Attending to the church and listening to the Bible has done much to spread particular words and phrases which have finally become a part of rustic speech. The uncivilized tribes cannot express religious and moral truths even though they are in constant touch with natural objects. Therefore, it is wrong to say that the best part of language is derived from the object of nature with which the rustics hourly communicate.

6. Language of every man contrasted with the language of the rustics

Wordsworth says that he use the ‘real’ language of men. Coleridge objects to the ambiguity of the word ‘real’. What is ‘real’ language and what is ‘unreal’ language? Coleridge says that every man’s language varies according to the extent of his knowledge, the activity of this faculties and depth and quickness of his feeling”. The language of every man is made of three elements - firstly, characteristics peculiar to the individual’ secondly, characteristics common to the class to which he belongs; and thirdly, words and phrases of universal use. Coleridge says that the language of even the homeliest poem by Wordsworth differs from the language of common peasant. Coleridge suggest that instead of the word ‘real’, we must use the word ‘ordinary’ or lingua communis’. And such ordinary language is not found in the language of rustics, as it is not found in the language of any other class. The peculiarities of the language of the higher classes can be omitted and we can arrive at the



'ordinary' language, just as Wordsworth proposes to arrive at it omitting the peculiarities of the language of the rustics.

7. Mere excitement cannot create new words

Moreover, the language of the rustics differ from country to country. As Dante has pointed out in 'The illustrious Vernacular' the common language of the rustics exists everywhere in parts, and nowhere as a whole. Later, Wordsworth added the phrase 'in a state of excitement'. But Coleridge says that mere excitement cannot create new words. The utmost that excitement can do is to "set in increased activity the stock of words already present in the mind of the speaker. A common uncultivated mind overpowered by a strong passion can utter broken words or repeat the set of words and phrases known to him. As it requires great care on the part of a literary artist to turn such fumlings and strainings of uncultivated minds into a language fit for poetry.

8. Diction not merely words but also the arrangement of words.

Next Coleridge argues that Wordsworth might have used words from the language of the rustics. But the order in which these words are arranged is that of Wordsworth and not that of rustics. Rustics are not capable of ordering And arranging their thoughts in such a nice way. Now, diction is not merely words but also the order in which words are arranged. Coleridge contends that "the order of words, as well as the nature and frequency of Wordsworth's imagery is poetic and not that of ordinary rustic speech; Wordsworth is a poet of genius, and his diction remains unaffected by his theories at least when he is genuinely inspired".

P.B.Shelley : Defence of Poetry

Shelley wrote 'A Defence of Poetry', as a counter blast to Peacock's attack on Romantic poetry.

Peacock's essay The Four Ages of Poetry appeared in 1820. It presents a cyclical theory of the history of poetry and correlation it with the history of culture. He divides the history of poetry into four ages. The first was the age of iron. This age produced only rude panegyrics on heroes. The next age was the age of gold. It covered the period from Homer to Sophocles. Then came the age of silver. This age was characterized by the production of heroic poetry, social comedy and satire. Virgil and Horace were prominent during this age. The fourth was the age. The fourth was the age of brass represented by



Nonnus and the like. Philosophy and history flourished during this age and the poetic spirit languished.

Turning to the history of English literature. Peacock calls the period of the medieval romance the iron age. The golden age was that of Shakespeare. The ages of Dryden and Pope constitute the age of silver. Peacock describes the contemporary period (the age of Shelley and the other Romantic poets) as the age of silver. In this context, Peacock condemns all the contemporary writers.

Shelley begins with establishing a distinction between reason and imagination. Shelley has in mind Peacock's view that reason is bound to triumph ultimately, causing the decline of imagination. Shelley answers this criticism by saying that reason is only an instrument of imagination. Reason is the body and imagination is the soul. Reason is the shadow and imagination is the substance. Reason without imagination is ineffective.

Origin of poetry:

Poetry is the expression of imagination. Poetry dates back to the origin of man. Man is like an Aeolian harp, when wind touches the Aeolian harp, music is produced. Similarly, when the environment affects the poet's imagination, poetry is produced. Here Shelley advances a naturalistic explanation of the origin and development of poetry.

The language of the poet vitally metaphorical

Poetry is the expression of the apprehension of an order on a rhythm. The poet is the man whose faculty appreciates beauty much more than that of others. He has an excess of this faculty. The language of the imaginative poet is vitally metaphorical. Metaphor is the result of apprehending new relation of things. The poetic faculty is directed towards an appreciation of the true and the beautiful.

The poet participates in the eternal:

The poet has two things which other do not have – imagination to understand the order and harmony in the world and the power to express it. This imaginative faculty is found not only in poets but also in the institution of laws, the founders of civil society, the inventors of the arts of life, the founders



of religion, the poets and the artists. Hence, all these people are also poets. Shelley goes on to say that the poet participates in the eternal, the infinite, and the one.

Lange a proper medium for poetry:

Poetry is made not only of language but also of colour, form, religion and civil habits of action. Usually, poetry refers to works which use language and metre. Language, being created by the imagination, is a better medium for poetry than any other material.

Distinction between prose and verse.

The distinction between prose and verse is as vulgar distinction. Prose can be as poetic and imagination as poetry. A rational distinction is that between a measured language and an unmeasured language.

All translation is a vain effort.

Shelley says that rhythm is part of poetry. Rhythm depends on the relation of one sound to other sounds and on the relation between sounds and what they express. Poetry cannot be translated. Only the meaning of poetry can be translated – not the inter-relation of sounds. Hence all translation is a vain effort. Every good poem is an organic unity of form and content. Since only the content can be translated and not the form, no translation is successful. Only poetry that expresses much action need be metrical. Otherwise what is needed is just a measured language. Judged by such criteria, even Plato and Bacon are poets.

Poetry transforms even the ugly into the beautiful.

‘A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth. “The poem deals with actions that reflect the unchangeable forms of human nature. It expresses the Platonic Forms, Essences, or ideas, Poetry can transform even the ugly into the beautiful.

Shelley does not insist on the whole composition being poetical. It is enough if parts of a composition are poetical. According to this criterion, even historians like Herodotus, Plutarch, and Livy are poets.

Shelley has so far told us what poetry is and who the poets are.



Effects of poetry upon society:

Now he undertakes to enquire into the effects of poetry upon society. Poetry is unique in the sense that it offers wisdom in a delightful manner. The poet sugarcoats the bitter pill. Though poets render a meritorious service, they do not gain the fame which they deserve, during their life time. So the poet lives in solitude. His poetry is intended to cheer him up in his solitary moments. However some poets have managed to attract the attention of listeners. Homer is an example. He attracted people, because he embodied the ideal perfection of his time in human character.

Poetry reforms people

A charge that is often levelled against poetry is that it is immoral. Shelley regards this as a baseless charge. Shelley says that even the best ethical doctrine have failed to reform people. Poetry reforms people by awakening and enlarging their minds. Poetry removes the evil and reveals the hidden reality behind the appearances. Poetry achieves this with the help of imagination. Moral good can be effected only through imagination. The secret of morals is love and the poet helps to promote love. Thus the poet changes people for the better by enabling them to love, by providing them with moral ideas. The poet, however, should not express his own time and place, which usually have only a limited appeal.

Connection between literature and social conditions:

Shelley next traces a connection between poetry and social conditions. The Athenian society of the age of Pericles was full of energy, beauty and virtue. The writings of the period are stamped with the divinity of man. This shows that the best poetry gets written in a period of happiness when man attains perfection.

The Athenians were very much interested in the art of drama. The highest idealisms of passion and power are represented in the Athenian drama.

There is a connexion between corruption of manners, and the degradation of drama. When poetry declines, corruption begins in society. The Athenian drama coincided with the more and intellectual development of the age. The drama is fit to be called the mirror of the age.

During periods of social decay, drama also decays. This was what happened during the reign of Charles II in England.



After the decline of the arts in Greece, poetry flourished in Egypt and Sicily. Their poetry was intensely melodious but it had no thought-content to board of Poetry communication all the Pleasure which people are capable of receiving, Shelley believes in the cyclical conception of poetry. He speaks of the later erotic poems as episodes to that great poem which all poets have built up since the beginning of the world.

A similar historical development is traceable in Rome. The Roman social life was not permeated by the poetical spirit. Yet, “the true poetry of Rome lived in its institutions’. He considers the Roman institution as “the episodes of that cyclic poem written by Time upon the memories of men”.

Next came Christianity with its own system of manners and morals. These systems produced evil and yet “no portion of evil can be attributed to the poetry they contain”.

Shelley is of the opinion that Christianity is valuable only for the poetry it contains. If evil came out of it at any time, it was the result of a temporary eclipse of the poetical principle. By the eleventh century, “the effects of the poetry of the Christian and chivalric systems began to manifest themselves”. Poetry flourished during the period, because of the abolition of personal and domestic slavery.

Power of love celebrated in poetry.

The freedom of women promoted the poetry of sexual love. Love became a religion. The troubadours became popular. Then came the world-famous poets, such as Petrarch and Dante. Dante’s poetry is regarded by Shelley as a perpetual hymn of everlasting love. They were in turn followed by other equally great poets who also celebrate the power of love.

Dante a link between the past and the present.

Dante connected the ancient and modern times. His poetry can be regarded as a bridge between the ancient and the modern world. His personality was revealed in his work, as Milton’s was revealed in *Paradise Lost*. Both Dante and Milton had boldly eschewed a direct moral purpose in their poems.

Homer was the first epic poet. Dante was the second great epic poet. There was a noticeable connection between their writings and the spirit of their times. “Their works bore a defined and intelligible relation to the



knowledge and sentiment and religion of the age in which they lived, and of the age which followed it”.

Dante had a fierce religious spirit. He was thoroughly influenced by the spirit of the ancient religion. He was the first religious reformer and first poet to bring about a religious awakening in Europe. His words burn with sparks, that is, they radiate passion.

Next came the revival of the fine arts. The Italian poet were the cause of the flowering of poetry in England. Chaucer was profoundly influenced by the Italian poets. He built his edifice on the foundation laid by the Italian poets.

By talking of these poets of various countries. Shelley seeks to establish a connection between poetry and social conditions.

Poetry and pleasure:

Peacock had pointed out that though imagination is delightful, reason is much more useful than imagination. So, the poet is inferior to the people who believe in reason. Shelley now undertakes to disprove this notion. Shelley says that there are two kinds of pleasure. One is permanent and universal. The other is transitory and particular. Both are useful. But the first kind of pleasure enlarges the imagination of man and refines his spirit. The poet gives this kind of pleasure. So, his service is very useful.

The transitory and egotistic kind of pleasure does immense harm. It has brought untold suffering to man.

The art of literature is not simply pleasure. The pleasure that literature gives is peculiar in the sense that it is mixed up with pain. “Tragedy delights us by affording a shadow of that pleasure which exists in pain”.The pleasure which is found in sorrow is far sweeter than the pleasure of pleasure itself. Posts and poetical philosophes give such pleasure.

The world would not have lost much, even if the reformist writers had never existed. But our loss would have been incalculable if poets had not existed. Only poets have created an awakening. If man has advanced with the help of his reason, it is because his reason has been awakened by the imagination of the poets.

Though the scientist has enhanced the material welfare of mankind., at the same time scientific activity has cramped man’s inner world. Poetry is like God, whereas reason is like Mammon.



Two -fold function of poetry.

Poetry has a two-fold function. Finally, it creates new materials of knowledge, power and pleasure. Secondly, it awakens a desire to reproduce and arrange these materials according to a rhythm and order. Poetry is absolutely necessary to counter balance the excessive working of reason.

Poetry has as divine element:

Poetry has a divine element. "It is the centre and circumference of knowledge". The poetic power cannot be brought under our control. One cannot write poetry at will. No one can say that he will compose a poem. The poem is the product of inspiration and inspiration is fleeting inspiration offers a fleeting glimpse of a vision and poetry is the expression of that vision. No amount of labour and study can create fine poetry.

Poetry has a divine element, it sets in motion a divine energy. "Poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man". Poetry transforms everything into the beautiful. It reveals reality which is good, true, and beautiful. Poetry creates a new universe. It shows a world that is lasting and real.

Poets unacknowledged legislator of the world:

Poetry cannot be subjected to any control. It cannot be controlled by the conscious will. The poet is delicately organized and so he is able to capture the inspiration in a medium. Great Poetry is an expression of imagination and inspiration. Poets, through their imaginative approach, set norms to be followed. Hence, they can be called the unacknowledged legislation of the world.

Confessions of an English Opium Eater Summary

Confessions of an English Opium Eater is broken into two parts, each of which was published separately and each of which is broken further into sub-sections. Overall, it is a selective autobiography of its author, with most focus on experiences that help explain his use of, addiction to, and ultimate defeat of opium.



To the Reader

De Quincey introduces *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* as an extract from a longer autobiography. He hopes that it will be “instructive” (1), which is why he is willing to go into such explicit details about his personal life. He tried his hardest to resist opium, but could not because it was such an effective pain-killer and he was suffering from numerous physical ailments. According to De Quincey, opium use is more widespread than people know, but the public has many misconceptions about the drug.

Preliminary Confessions

De Quincey’s father died when he was seven. As a young boy, he attended a number of upscale boarding schools. Although he appreciated one teacher he had at Eton, he mostly looked down on his teachers because they were not as fluent as he was in ancient Greek – his academic passion. At seventeen, he ran away from his current boarding school because his guardians would not let him drop out. He set out on foot with only his clothes and two books, and ended up traveling to North Wales. There, he stayed in an inn for several weeks but left after the innkeeper offended him by revealing her suspicions that De Quincey was a swindler.

He quickly ran out of money and began to rely on the charity of villagers, offering to do odd jobs for them like writing letters in exchange for food and shelter. He was impressed by the working class’s hospitality. In one memorable incident, he stayed for several days with a group of teenage brothers and sisters who greatly enjoyed his company. He had to leave these young people when their elderly parents came home from a Methodist meeting in a nearby town, so De Quincey went to London. There, he nearly starved, although he managed to find lodging in an unoccupied apartment. He shared this apartment with a little girl who was afraid of ghosts.

In addition to the little girl, De Quincey also befriended [Ann](#), a fifteen-year-old prostitute who bought him a bottle of spiced wine when he was dying of starvation. Ann became a prostitute after her belongings were stolen, and she becomes good friends with De Quincey. He remembers her kindness for the rest of his life, but can never find her after he returns to London in later years because he never discovered her last name. Tired of poverty, De Quincey asked a rich friend at Eton, the Earl of — (Densart), to cosign on a loan. Although the young Earl reluctantly agreed, the loan fell through, so De Quincey alleviated his poverty by reconciling with his family and going to the University of Oxford.



Part II

In this brief introduction to the second part of *Confessions*, De Quincey reflects on the trials he and Ann suffered in London. Although he was never so poor again, he would suffer illness and psychic misery later in life. He believes that his time in London prepared him for these struggles by teaching him to endure hardship.

The Pleasures of Opium

De Quincey first tried laudanum (a tincture of opium) in autumn of 1804 while he was still a student, after a classmate recommended it for the pain from a toothache. He remembers his first opium experience as mystical and joyous. He debunks the misconception that an opium high is similar to being drunk from wine. He notes that an opium high lasts much longer and feels very different. He then argues instead that opium allows people be their best selves morally and intellectually by alleviating the pain they experience from their everyday, physical problems. De Quincey also resents the assumption that opium causes depression and laziness. He uses his habit of wandering the streets of London while high as a counterexample to this. He also dwells on the special pleasure of attending the opera while under the influence of opium. He notes that in his early years of taking opium, he only took it once a week and usually as a social activity. At the end of the section, De Quincey praises opium's potential to relieve mankind's sufferings.

Introduction to the Pains of Opium

In 1812, De Quincey moved to a cottage in the mountains to write and study. He lived with a single female servant and was relatively happy. He continued to take opium weekly, and his doctor endorsed this practice. In 1813, he increased his dosage because he was experiencing extreme stomach pains. He was temporarily able to decrease his dosage in the year 1816-1817, and he cites this as the happiest year of his life.

During this period, a Malay sailor knocked on De Quincey's door one day, presumably to beg. De Quincey allowed the Malay to take a nap on his floor and gave him some opium as a parting gift. He was shocked when the Malay immediately took all of the opium De Quincey gave him. Although the author thought the Malay would surely die, he seemed fine and De Quincey never heard about his body being found. [The Malay](#) would appear in De Quincey's nightmares after he relapsed into heavy opium use.



The Pains of Opium

De Quincey forgoes chronological order in this section, and relates this period of his life instead as a series of events and impressions. As he increased his daily dose of laudanum, De Quincey became physically weak and lost many of his intellectual faculties. He entertained himself by reading aloud and studying political science and economics. The work of David Ricardo particularly impressed him, and even inspired him to write his own economic treatise. However, he was unable to do publish it because he could not motivate himself to write the preface and the dedication.

De Quincey then began to experience hallucinations and vivid nightmares. He compares these to a set of plates by Giambattista Piranesi called *Dreams* (the correct title is *Imaginary Prisons*). He often dreamt of lakes and worried this was a sign that his brain had dropsy. In May of 1818, De Quincey dreamt about the Malay. The dream is set in China, and in it, De Quincey is terrified of the intimidating foreign culture. A year later, he dreamt of visiting a child's grave and of seeing Ann sitting on a stone. The setting changed to where he was walking with Ann through their old haunt, London's Oxford Street. The most recent dream, from 1820, was a nightmare in which De Quincey is surrounded by a chorus of loud music that evokes the "caves of hell" and "everlasting farewells" (77). Shortly after this, De Quincey realized that he would die if he did not decrease his opium use, and he did so despite very painful withdrawals. He wishes other addicts luck in quitting. He still suffers from many misfortunes, and still experiences opium nightmares.

PLOT-CONSTRUCTION IN "THE HEART OF MIDLOTHIAN"

Plot Relevant to Theme

The Heart of Midlothian is woven round the theme of mercy and justice. All the major events of the novel, such as execution of Wilson, pardon granted to Porteous and his subsequent hanging by the mob, the role of Robertson, the trial of Effie, the mission taken by Jeanie to get a reprieve for Effie, etc. are directly related to the theme.

A Well-Constructed Plot

The novel opens with the account of the Porteous Riot of 1736, Captain Porteous, Commander of the City Guards, had unjustifiably, caused the deaths of several citizens by ordering his force to fire, and himself had fired on the



crowd, assembled at the hanging of Wilson, a convicted robber. Captain Porteous had been sentenced to death but had been reprieved, whereupon some of the incensed mob, headed by one Robertson, the associate of Wilson, stormed the Tolbooth prison, carried Porteous out, and hanged him.

With these authentic historical incidents, Scott linked the story of two sisters-Jeanie and Effie. Effie imprisoned for child's murder does not follow her lover Staunton's (Robertson) instruction to escape from the jail when it is being stormed. She has to face a trial in which God-fearing Jeanie refuses to give false evidence. Consequently, she is sentenced to death. As an expression of her deep love for Effie, Jeanie goes on foot to London to secure a reprieve from the king through the influence of the Duke of Argyle. The Duke obtains an interview for her with Queen Caroline, and by Jeanie's moving and dignified, pleading, Effie is pardoned.

By the Duke's favour, Jeanie is also able to marry her lover, Reuben Butler, and with her stern cameronian father, Davie Deans, settles in a farm on the Duke's estate. Meanwhile, Effie has eloped with, and married George Staunton, eventually becoming Lady Staunton. It is now known that her son, whom she was accused of murdering, is actually alive. He is now an associate of Donacha Di-naDhu, a notorious robber. In his efforts to recover his son, Sir George Staunton is shot by him in the affray. Lady Staunton, overcome by the tragedy, retires to a convent and dies there. Jeanie and her husband enjoy a happy family-life and die lamented.

Thus the historical events and the domestic tragedy of the Deans are skilfully blended together by Scott. There is a lot of dramatic suspense and interest and curiosity in the story. Right says Arnold Kettle, "It is a well-constructed novel, grouped effectively around its central situation, the trial of Effie Deans, with the black gallows as a central symbol, throwing its shadow across the whole book. Is it merely a "story", i.e., a consecutive narrative of interesting events held together by suspense? I don't think so. True, the plot is important, a bit too important, perhaps, for the use of so much coincidence gives a certain sense of artificiality. The ends are a little too neatly gathered, everyone is at the right place just a little too often. But these are not important faults; we should regard them rather as part of the convention in which the novel is written; a convention which has become rather old-fashioned but is by no means indefensible. The main point about the plot, however, is that it



successfully serves and subordinate itself to the essential pattern of the book. The pattern is the consideration of the trial of Effie, the causes which bring it about and the consequences that follow from it.”

Other Features of the Plot : The dramatic Quality

In *The Heart of Midlothian*, the story is well-contrived and justifies E.M.Forster’s statement about Scott: “Scott’s fame rests upon one genuine basis. He could tell a story. He had the primitive power of keeping the reader in suspense and playing on his curiosity.: The plot demonstrates some dramatic qualities where the unexpected happens, and the plot can be divided into three sections, corresponding to the Aristotelian beginning, middle and end. The introductory chapter serves as a prologue and some major characters discharge the functions of chorus.

The Ballad Plot

Crawford has pointed out that *The Heart of Midlothian* has a typical ballad plot. He writes: “The plot, though based on a real-life incident, the case of Helen Walker, is a typical ballad plot, and a broadside one at that: it has many –fairy-tale and folk elements that appeal to the deepest elements in our being the girl who cannot tell a lie, the journey through a perilous landscape for a moral end, the beautifully set scene of the interview with the Queen, the rewards doled out to the virtuous by the benevolent Duke, the final punishment that Fate meets out to the wicked baronet. Yet it is only when these are integrated with the historical and metaphysical themes that the book achieves greatness; in the denouement, where the archetypes are strongest, the tale degenerates towards yet another version of pastoral.”

Background Closely Integrated With Action

In *The Heart of Midlothian*, background is more closely integrated with character and action than in the other novels, with the possible exception of *The Bride of Lammermoor*. In a sense, Jeanie, Davie and Effie really are what the Scotland that produced them. Never before had the novel dealt so well with masses of men as in the great Porteous Riot scenes at beginning, and never before had a city (in the case of Edinburgh) been so fully or convincingly rendered. Scott’s Edinburgh is far more real than Fielding’s London. Jeanie’s



interview with Queen Caroline is prepared by a preliminary description of the Thames and the southern English landscape that makes the very countryside seem regal, forming a graceful tribute to the sister kingdom.

The Weaknesses of the Plot

The plot is not without, faults. It is coloured by illicit passions, violence, rioting, crowd-scenes, gipsy life and the life of bandits, lynching and murder, picturesque manners in low places and high places, and an environment of crags and castles and filthy dens. It is also a poorly structured book, with an incoherent world-view, essentially valueless for us, no matter how attractive certain single element of the book may be. The novel is too lengthy. Jeanie's story has not much relevance to the main plot. The sub-plot is as important as the main-plot and thus the Aristotelian principle has been violated. Then there is the sub-plot of Porteous too. Both the stories of Porteous and Effie are yoked together but very appropriately.

The second half of the novel is not so good as its first. It is spoilt by the scenes in Lincolnshire-those tedious and unconvincing conversations with the Stauntons. It is also spoiled by the emergence of the Duke of Argyle as a *dux exmachina**. The part of resolving all the conflicts, reconciling all the contradictory forces and turning the drama of the destiny of the Deanses into something like a cheerful domestic comedy is assigned to him. This does not seem to be probable and natural.

The stock devices of accident, coincidence, and undelivered letter, used in the novel, have made its plot somewhat artificial. Some of the minor characters-the highwaymen and domestic servants have no bearing on the plot: they are superfluous. Jeanie's travels in England and her adventures with robbers and gypsies and inn-keepers on the road are picaresque elements in the novel; these are an excrescence on its plot. The third of the part is also regarded by some critics as irrelevant.

'The last chapter alone reads as though it contained the undigested material of still another novel about a son who kills his father, a moral tragedy which Scott had not the time, of perhaps the patience, to raise above the level of the most perfunctory melodrama.' (Thomas Crawford). But there are some other critics who have given a justification for the third part. It has been suggested by a critic that only in this part of the novel does Scott deal



genuinely with the conventional theme of rewarding virtue and punishing vice in the correct way and that this is by far his most rigidly moral book. Here the novelist rounds off the novel with a moralistic conclusion that merely serves to cover the summary of violence of the last chapter, proclaiming that “the paths of virtue, though seldom, those of worldly greatness, are always those of pleasantness and peace.”

The length of the novel is not justified. The factual basis of the story is not a relevant consideration. Many questions are left unexplored. The novelist has tried to use personal story as a part of history.

Conclusion

Walter Allen calls Scott’s plots “Poor.” The Heart of Midlothian does not show such a poor plot-work is might be seen anywhere else. On the whole, we can say that Scott’s plot in this novel is better than that of any other novel by him. Rightly has observed Ian Jack: “The Heart of Midlothian is the one great novel of the series partly because in it Scott does not merely entertain us; the book has the deep unity of them which is the condition of its profounder effect. It is the only one of the Waverley series that passes Aristotle’s test of unity; nothing can be added or taken away without impairing it as a whole.

MANSFIELD PARK

‘Mansfield Park’ is a novel by Jane Austen, written at Chawton Cottage between 1812 and 1814. It was published in July 1814 by Thomas Egerton.

The main character, Fanny Price, is a young girl from a relatively poor family, raised by her rich uncle and aunt, Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram, at Mansfield Park. She grows up with her four cousins. Tom Bertram, Edmund Bertram, Maria Bertram and Julia, but is always treated a inferior to them; only Edmund shows his real kindness. He is also the most virtuous of the siblings: Maria and Julia are vain and spoilt, while Tome is an irresponsible gambler. Over time, Funny’s gratitude for Edmund’s kindness secretly grows into romantic love.

While the children have grown up, the stern patriarch Sir Thomas leaves for a year so he can deal with problems on his plantation in Antigue. The fashionable and worldly Henry Crawford and his sister Mary Crawford arrive in the village, and stay with their sister, the Parson’s wife. The arrival of



the Crawfords disrupts the staid world of Mansfield and sparks a series of romantic entanglements. Mary and Edmund begin to form an attachment, though Edmund often worries that her manners are fashionable and her conversation often cynical, masking a lack of firm principle. However, she is engaging, beautiful and charming, and goes out of her way to befriend Fanny. Fanny fears that Mary has enchanted Edmund, and love has blinded him to her flaws. Henry plays with the affections of both Maria and Julia, despite Maria being already engaged to the dull, but very rich, Mr. Rushworth. Maria believes that Henry is really in love with her, and treats Mr. Rushworth coldly, invoking his jealousy. Fanny is little observed in the family circle – her presence is often overlooked and she frequently witnesses Maria and Henry in compromising situations.

Encouraged by Tom and his friend Mr. Yates, the young people decide to put Elizabeth Inchbald's play *Lovers' Vows*; Edmund and Fanny both initially oppose the plan, believing Sir Thomas would disapprove and feeling that the subject matter of the play is not appropriate. Edmund is eventually swayed, offering to play the part of Anhalt, the lover of the character played by Mary Crawford. As well as giving Mary and Edmund a vehicle to talk about love and marriage, the play provides a pretext for Henry and Maria to flirt in public. Sir Thomas arrives unexpectedly in the middle of a rehearsal, which ends the plan.

Henry leaves, and Maria is crushed; realising that Henry does not love her, she marries Mr. Rushworth and they leave for Brighton, taking Julia with them. Meanwhile, Fanny's improved looks and pleasant temper endear her to Sir Thomas, who pays more attention to her care.

Henry returns to Mansfield Park and decides to amuse himself by making Fanny fall in love with him. However her genuine gentleness and kindness cause him to fall in love with her instead. When he proposes marriage, Fanny's disgust at his improper flirtations with her cousins, as well as her love for Edmund, cause her to reject him. The Bertrams are dismayed, since it is an extremely advantageous match for a poor girl like Fanny. Sir Thomas rebukes her for ingratitude. Henry decides he will continue to pursue Fanny, hoping that in time she will change her mind by coming to believe he is constant. Sir Thomas supports a plan for Fanny to pay a visit to her relatively poor family in Portsmouth, hoping that as Fanny suffers from the lack of comforts there, she



will realize the usefulness of a good income. Henry pays Fanny a visit in Portsmouth, to convince her that he has changed and is worthy of her affection. Fanny's attitude begins to soften but she still maintains that she will not marry him.

Henry leaves for London, and shortly afterward, Fanny learns of a scandal involving Henry and Maria. The two had met again and rekindled their flirtation, which quickly had developed into an affair. The affair is discovered and hinted at in a national newspaper' Maria leaves her husband's house and elopes with Henry. The scandal is terrible and the affair results in Maria's divorce; however Henry refuses to marry her. To make matters worse, the dissolute Tom has taken ill, and Julia has eloped with Mr. Yates. Fanny returns to Mansfield Part to comfort her aunt and uncle and to help take care of Tom.

Although Edmund knows that marriage to Mary is now impossible because of the scandal between their relations, he goes to see her one last time. During the interview, it becomes clear that Mary does not condemn Henry and Maria's adultery, only that they got caught. Her main concern is covering it up and she implies that if Fanny had accepted Henry, he would have been too busy and happy to have an affair, and would have been content with merely a flirtation. This reveals Mary's true nature to Edmund, who realises he had idealised her as someone she is not. He tells her so and returns to Mansfield and his living as a Parson at Thornton Lacey. "At exactly the time it should be so, and not a week sooner." Edmund realised how important Fanny is to him, declares his love for her and they are married. Tom recovers from his illness, a steadier and better man for it, and Julia's elopement turns out to be not such a desperate business after all. Austen points out that if only Crawford had persisted in being steadfast to Fanny, and not succumbed to the affairs with Maria. Fanny eventually would have accepted his marriage proposal--- especially after Edmund had married Mary.

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