South Valley University
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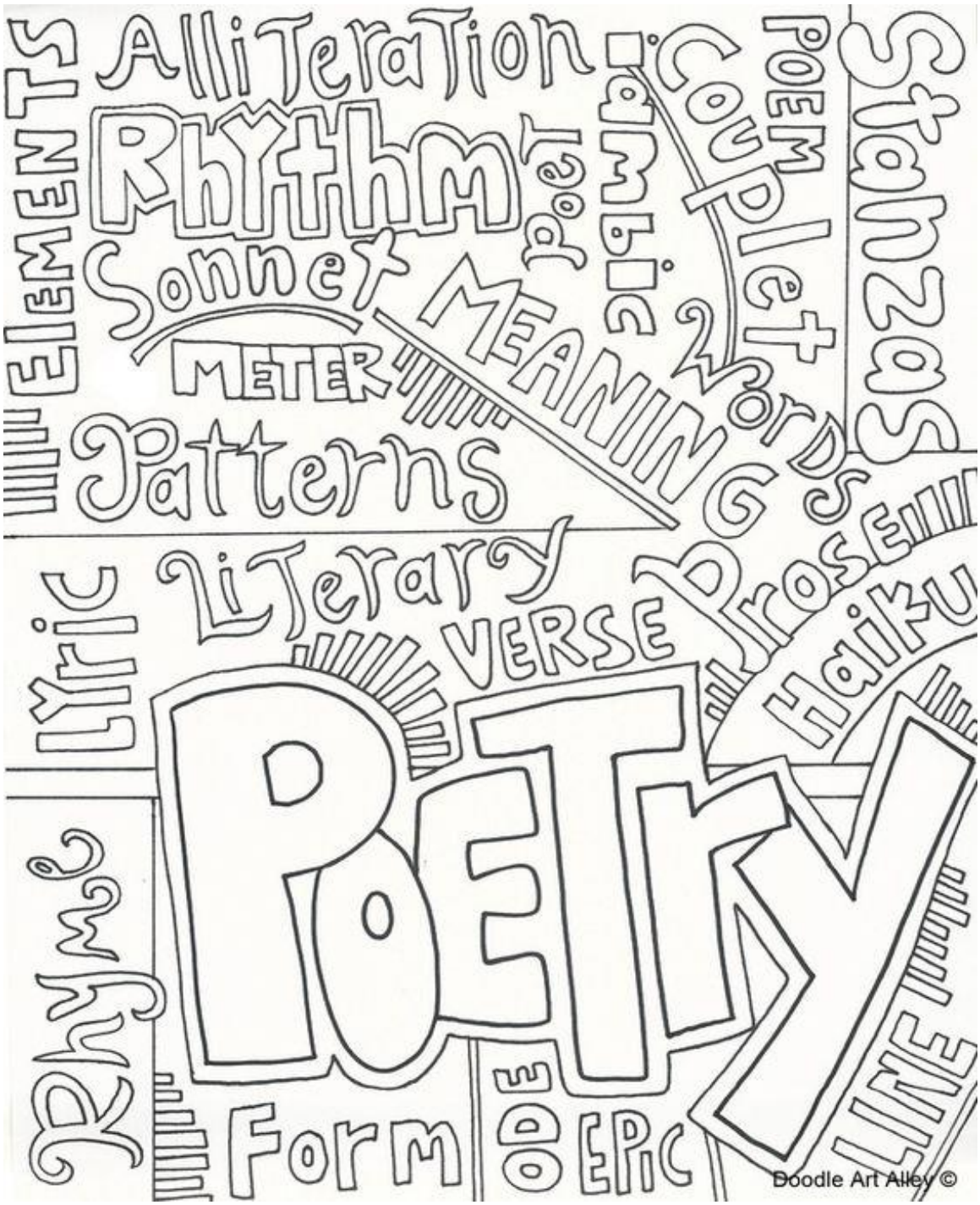
ELEMENTS
Alliteration
RHYTHM
Sonnet
METER
Poet
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Couplet
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Victorian Poetry

The Victorian Age is a period when Queen Victoria reigned during a long period 1837 to 1901. The Victorian Age succeeded the Romantic Age and inherited numerous qualities from Romantic literature. Yet, the Victorian writings expanded to acknowledge its new ideas, its scientific achievements, and its unique Victorian attitudes.

Throughout history, the work of poets and writers has been influenced by the changing society. The Romantic Age was affected indirectly through various revolutions. The French Revolution disillusioned many Romantic poets, who had supported the French ideals of equality and liberty because the revolution turned to a violent course which abandoned its democratic goals for Napoleon's dictatorship. Another revolution that also had an influence on the poetry of the Romantic Age was the Industrial Revolution. It caused disappointment for the Romantic poets since the revolution had paved the way for poverty, bad working conditions, and the exploitation of women's and children's labor. Overall, the Romantic period was marked with political and social turmoil.

Under these circumstances, many Romantic poets avoided reality and indulged in their imaginative world of poetry. Romantic poetry glorified individual freedom, and liberty as well as emphasized imagination and closeness to nature.

Contemporary changes also had an imprint on the Victorian Age. The Victorian Age is one of the most remarkable periods in the history of England. It was era of political consciousness, democratic reforms, industrial and mechanical progress, scientific advancement, educational expansion, empire building and religious uncertainty. The Victorian Age brought about great changes in all areas of everyday living. Countries were rapidly changing from an agricultural to an industrial society.

This was a great time of scientific discovery, with Charles Darwin's 'Theory of Evolution' causing a ripple of controversy throughout the civilized world. However, accompanying the breakthrough in scientific discoveries was a crisis of faith, as much of the new information seemed to directly oppose the long held religious beliefs. Many started to doubt their religion, and this had a rather large influence on the literature of the time.

Obviously in such a time of upheaval, forward progress and controversy would have a profound effect on the writers of the day. The Victorian Era was known as the age of marvelous poetry. Some of the most famous poets in history were writing their works during the Victorian Era. The poetry reflected the events, scientific advances and crisis of the faith which confronted Victorians.

Essayists, poets, and novelists during the Victorian era reflected the major transformation in most aspects of English life, such as significant scientific, economic, and technological advances to changes in class structures and the role of religion in society. Their writings included criticisms of the dangers of factory work, the plight of the lower class, and the treatment of women and children.

Victorian poets confronted personal experiences of uncertainty and loss. In a variety of ways, they expressed these problems in poetic language and tried to formulate compensatory reactions. The melancholy that pervades numerous poems, especially by Tennyson and Arnold, demonstrates how intensely and painfully change and loss are experienced. The popularity of the elegy, often on the death of a friend (as in Tennyson's In Memoriam, 1850)

betrays the same phenomenon. Here the general experience of loss takes shape in personal grief.

The leading poets during the Victorian period were Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–1892), Robert Browning (1812–89), Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806–61), and Matthew Arnold (1822–88).

One of the most significant accomplishments of the Victorian Era is the appearance of female poets. There were few female poets before, as poetry was considered to be predominantly male occupation. Despite these views, works of such poets as Elizabeth Browning, Christina Rossetti, and the Bronte sisters became famous during The Victorian Age.

While Elizabeth Barrett Browning was the wife of Robert Browning she had established her reputation as a major poet before she met him. Her most famous work is the sequence of 44 sonnets "Sonnets from the Portuguese" published in Poems (1850).

The poetry of this period was heavily influenced by the Romantics, but also went off in its own directions. Particularly notable was the development of the dramatic monologue, a form used by many poets in this period, but perfected by Browning.

The most characteristic device in Victorian poetry is the genre of the dramatic monologue, a form of lyrical speech that Tennyson and Browning developed independently of each other at about the same time (in the 1840s and 1850s). The speaker, clearly dissociated from the author, is an individualized figure, embedded in a specified situation (hence “dramatic”), addressing another figure, whose response, however, is not reported. In contrast to soliloquy (the speech of a character talking to himself or herself alone), monologue denotes the individual utterance of a speaker as part of a dialogue. The purpose of this form is to render more objective and distanced the representation of the speaking self. In other words, the dramatic monologue enables the poet to have the speaker present himself in a specific situation and unwittingly and inadvertently reveal his problems, desires and motives.

Among the Victorians, Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892) enjoyed the greatest popularity. He wrote on a variety of topics, including religion and ethics. His poetry responded to all the issues and concerns of the Victorian society and reflected moods and attitudes of the Britons. Tennyson was Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom during much of Queen Victoria's reign. He was described by T. S. Eliot, as

"the greatest master of metrics as well as melancholia", and as having "the finest ear of any English poet since Milton".

Matthew Arnold's reputation as a poet has declined in recent years and he is best remembered now for his critical works, like *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), and his 1867 poem "Dover Beach".

Victorian Poetry was a very crucial period in the history of poetry, as it linked Romanticism and Modernism of the 20th century. Therefore, it is sometimes difficult to identify to which epoch this or that poet belongs, as it is not easy to categorize them all in these broad movements.

Victorian Poetry Characteristics

Literature is always the mirror of the age. This is borne out in no age so faithfully as in The Victorian Age. The literary history of this age bears out the influences of the social forces that were at work during that age. Science, rational thoughts, technological advancement, religious controversies and movements and industrialism are all found to have conspicuous effects on the literary aspiration as well as activities of the age. The Victorian Age and literature are found closely related.

Objectivity

Victorian poetry – often in marked contrast to Romanticism – thus reveals an intensive effort to objectify the representation of consciousness and processes of experience. Objectivity of a different kind is furthermore achieved by the attempts in some Victorian poems to draw on established middle-class norms as a final point of reference, such as the ideals of home and family. In addition, poems often show a strong awareness of contemporary social conditions in that topical questions are addressed (e.g. the relevance of science, the crisis of faith, the social position of art or problems of love and marriage), as is

evident in Tennyson's influential collection In Memoriam. Another strategy often found is the increased effort to reproduce the tone of colloquial speech (especially in Browning) and to present details in the poems. Thus, lyric poetry touches upon the concept of realism in contemporary fiction.

Sense of Responsibility

The Romantics believed in "return in nature". A number of the Romantics did not like the city life and instead of giving voice to the victims of industrialization, they left the city life. On the other hand, Victoria poets took the responsibility of social reform and gave voice to the commoners by living with them. Victorian literature in its varied aspects was marked by a deep moral note. The marked characteristic of the age is that literature, both in prose and poetry, seems to depart from the purely artistic standard of art's sake and to be actuated by a definite moral purpose.

Focus on Masses

Romantic Poetry mainly focused on rural and rustic life. It is no way related to city life. On the other hand, Victorian

poets used language as well as themes common to city life and thus wrote about the masses and for the masses.

Science versus God

The Victorian age was a great time of scientific discovery, with Charles Darwin's publication of On the Origin of Species and Theory of Evolution that caused a ripple of controversy throughout the civilized world. However, accompanying the breakthrough in scientific discoveries was a crisis of faith, as much of the new information seemed to directly oppose the long held religious beliefs. Many started to doubt their religion, and this had a rather large influence on the literature of the time. Educated men were dividing themselves into two groups, of utilitarian, and firm believers in the faith. Utilitarian based their beliefs on the utility of objects, and scientific facts. The firm believers were those who resisted the crisis of the faith.

The Victorian era is associated with an era of ideological conflict. It's associated era within which the conflict between science and religion, rationality and mysticism, and technical progress is found keen and clear. The writers of the age seem to have expressed their

response to these diverse shades of conflict through their literary ideals and attitudes, thoughts and feelings.

It was an important feature of Victorian poetry. The development of empirical science, rationalism and radicalism led the people to give up religious thoughts and be more skeptic. Moreover, corruption in the Church, defining the morality of Priests, etc also led the people to question the religious institutions.

The pessimism and melancholy of Matthew Arnold are all the outcome of the skeptical tendencies evoked by scientific research. Tennyson's poetry is also influenced by the advancement of science in the age, and the undertones of scientific researchers can be heard in "IN MEMORIAM".

Realism

Coming down from the Romantic Age of Idealism to the Victorian era of Realism, one experiences the feeling of a return from solitude to society, from nature to industry, from optimism to agnosticism, and from lyricism to criticism.

The Victorian Poetry was quite realistic in nature and quite less idealized as compared to the Romanic Poets who were idealists and believed in *Art for the Art Sake*. Nature,

that was everything for the Romantics lost that idealized position in the Victorian era and became just a source of inspiration for the poets.

The Victorian poets were more focused on the real socio-political issues and developments taking place in the nation and the world. Very often the poetry of this age reflects the historical issues and themes mentioned above, directly or indirectly.

Pessimism

Industrial revolution and advancement in science and technology, coupled with social-economic-political reforms also brought about a spike in the urban population resulting in poverty, unemployment, corruption, diseases and death, marriage, apart from deserted villages with aged people struggling to survive, environmental and existential crises. These factors brought pessimism in the poetry of this period.

As already discussed, Victorians were quite realistic and thus were more concerned about the reality rather than the ideal world. Thus, Victorian Poetry which focused on the pains and sufferings of commoners had a note of pessimism. This note of pessimism, doubt and despair runs though

Victorian literature and noticed especially in poetry of Matthew Arnold.

Influenced by Romanticism

The literature of the Victorian age could not completely out of form the main springs of Romanticism. The spirit of Romanticism continued to influence the innermost consciousness of the age. It affected the works of Tennyson, Browning and Arnold. It has been said that the Victorian literature was only a continuation of Romantic ideals in theme; in style and rather than a fresh start.

Victorian Poetry mustn't be taken as fully with the exception of Romantic poetry. It is a continuation, in its spirit as well as pattern, of the latter, with a good number of additions, deviations and transformations. Nature and her serenity, as noted in Wordsworth, as the poetic theme are replaced by man and his society in the Victorian World. But there is seen no new beginning. The main interest only is shifted from Nature, as in Wordsworth, to man, as in Tennyson and Browning.

Use of Sensory Devices & Imagery

The defining characteristics of Victorian age poetry are its focus on sensory elements, its recurring themes of the religion/science conflict, and its interest in medieval fables and legends.

The most important and obvious characteristic of Victorian Poetry was the use of sensory elements. Most of the Victorian Poets used imagery and the senses to convey the scenes of struggles between Religion and Science, and ideas about Nature and Romance, which transport the readers into the minds and hearts of the people of the Victorian age, even today.

Dramatic Monologue

A dramatic monologue is a long speech by a single person. It differs from soliloquy which means the expression of ideas by a character in a play. On the other hand, dramatic monologue is a kind of lyric which was used and improved by **Robert Browning**.

These poems are dramatic in the sense that they have a theatrical quality i.e. the poem is meant to be read to an audience. To say that the poem is a monologue means that

these are the words of one speaker with no dialogue coming from any other character.

The reason poets choose to write poems like this is to express a point of view through the words of a character. However, often the opinion stated by that characters are not the same as the views of the poet.

Characteristics

- A speaker is a single person who is not a poet.
- The speech of this character makes up the whole of the verse, in a specific situation at a crucial moment.
- This character addresses & interacts with one or more people, but we know of the others' presence & what they say or do only from clues in the poetic dialogues of the speaker.
- The primary focus of the poet is to tell the readers and audience a story having a moral in a way that boosts the curiosity towards it, the speaker's temperament & character.
- The subject of the monologue is self-revelation. These are some of the features of dramatic monologue.
- The rhyme scheme is not important in Dramatic Monologue.

ALFRED TENNYSON (1809-1892)

ALFRED TENNYSON was undoubtedly one of the greatest poets of the Victorian age. He is a representative poet of the Victorian age of the 19th century and was honored with the high office of the Poet Laureate. During the long span of his career as a poet he wrote every kind of poetry- the song, the dramatic monologue, the dialect poem, the descriptive, the ballad, the war ode, the epic, narrative and the drama. He wrote on classical romantic and modern subjects: on English history and legend, and on the deepest problems of philosophy and religion.

Tennyson entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1827, At Cambridge where he met Arthur Hallam and became his closest friend. Tennyson was profoundly grieved when Hallam died in 1833, but he wrote some of his best work in the years after his friend's untimely death. These poems and others were contained in the profound two-volume *Poems*, published in 1842.

In 1850, after the publication of *In Memoriam*, dedicated to Hallam, Tennyson's fame was such that he was appointed the new poet laureate. *In Memoriam A.H.H.* was written as an elegy for his friend Arthur Hallam, after he died of a stroke

at the age of 22. Here Tennyson deals with all the phases of personal grief and sorrows and discusses the conflict between knowledge and science on one side and faith/religion on the other. The poet marches from the state of despair to a state of hope and optimism.

Tennyson wrote poetry throughout the rest of his life. Late work included the twelve blank-verse poems on King Arthur and his knights comprising *The Idylls of the King* (1859), and "Crossing the Bar."

Tennyson presented in his poetry all the essential feature of Victorian life, the ideas and tastes, moderation in politics, refined culture religious liberalism a lively interest in the advance of scientific discovery, increasing sympathy with poverty and distress- all these Victorian feelings find expression in Tennyson's poems.

Crossing the Bar

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
 Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
 Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
 And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
 When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
 The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
 When I have cross'd the bar.

Crossing the Bar, is a short poem by Alfred Tennyson, written in 1889, three years before he died. He was 80 years old and recovering from a serious illness. Tennyson's illness and old age may have contributed to this very personal and memorable meditation on death. The poem contains four stanzas of four lines each, with a traditional ABAB rhyme scheme.

The poem is written as an elegy, utilizing an extended metaphor; a metaphorical meditation on death. The speaker

compares dying to gently crossing the sandbar between a coastal area and the wider sea/ocean. Tennyson uses the metaphor of a sand bar to describe the barrier between life and death. The poem relates death to a sea voyage. He so much believed in his being able to see the face of God when his great journey of life and death was over. The point of view of the poem is first person with the poet as the speaker, who conveys his own thoughts on life and death.

The voyage is a metaphor for the final journey of man. "Crossing the Bar" is Tennyson's most famous metaphorical meditation on Death. Where "Bar" or sandbar is metaphor used for the demarcation between the harbor and the open ocean, as the barrier between life and death. Thus Crossing the Bar is the act of passing beyond life, or it can be said that it signifies meeting death.

The 1st stanza The poem begins with the phrase *sunset and evening star*. It depicts the transitional time between day and night. It marks the end of the day and the beginning of the night. In a deeper sense, it also refers to the stage of life and death or end of life and beginning of the afterlife.

There are two metaphors for death in the first stanza: “Sunset and evening star.” Both bring the darkness. The sun

setting in the west has always symbolized the end of a person's life. When the poet adds the clear call, he states that death is calling to him. The bar is a place at the mouth of a river or harbor where tides deposit sand. The waves and wind blow over the bar and sounds of moaning come from it. These sounds denote that there is not enough water to sail over the bar. Symbolically, the reference to the bar shows the life and death of the ship or boat that would try to go over it when the tide is low or hopefully high. The passing over from life to death is the crossing of the bar.

The 2nd Stanza The second stanza can be an explanation of the first one. The poet says the tide which was full of might is moving now in such a way that it seems to be quiet and weak. Its might is gone it can neither produce sound nor foam. It came from deep inside the sea and now going back to its origin. Going deeper into the words we find that the tide here refers to the life. It seems to come from unknown place which takes the boat toward home. The boat will be taken out to sea toward home or heaven for the one who has passed away.

The 3rd Stanza The third stanza is quite similar to the first one. The poet uses different images to depict the same

ideas described in the first stanza. He says that it is evening now and the evening bell has rung. The poet begins with two more references to the evening time and the symbolic night: twilight of a person's life and the sounding of the death knell. After this, it would be dark. In a deeper sense, his end is near. Now he will die. Again he asks his friends not to be sad after he has gone. He wants no one to be sad or melancholy about his passing. The word embark gives the impression that he is starting a journey. To Tennyson who was a Christian, this is a journey that he may look forward to making.

The 4th Stanza The poet says that after his death he will be free from the bonds of time and place. The word flood here refers to the afterlife journey. The poet says that the journey will take him away from the limitations of the world and then only he will be able to see his Pilot or the One who has brought him in the world and is taking him back to his original home. All this will happen once he crosses the bar i.e. the wall between life and death. The poet thus presumes to see his Pilot. This is Tennyson's hope when he crosses the bar on his long trek to heaven. By capitalizing "Pilot" , Tennyson has equated the Pilot with God, but God in the guise of a specially qualified and skilled mariner.

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888)

Matthew Arnold was an English poet and cultural critic, whose work remains amongst the best known of 19th century British poetry. Arnold found great success as a writer. He was elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford in 1857, and re-elected in 1862.

The poems of Matthew Arnold can broadly be classified into narrative, dramatic, elegiac and lyrical poems besides a few sonnets which he wrote form time to time. Arnold was one of the greatest poets of the Victorian Age but he was considered more a critic than a poet. He has influenced a whole school of critics including new critics such as T. S. Eliot. He was the founder of the sociological school of criticism.

In his point of view, “Poetry is the criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such a criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty.” Arnold’s Poems offer a criticism of the Victorian age which was concerned with materialism. His poems critically represent the growing craze of the Victorian people for power and wealth. The Victorian people are wavering between doubt and faith, instability and stability of their customs and values. At that time, Arnold seeks faith

and stability earnestly. So we notice in Arnold's poetry that the search for faith and stability is a dominant note.

Dover Beach

1 The sea is calm tonight.
2 The tide is full, the moon lies fair
3 Upon the straits; on the French coast the light
4 Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
5 Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
6 Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
7 Only, from the long line of spray
8 Where the sea meets the moon-blanched land,
9 Listen! you hear the grating roar
10 Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
11 At their return, up the high strand,
12 Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
13 With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
14 The eternal note of sadness in.

15 Sophocles long ago
16 Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought
17 Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
18 Of human misery; we

19 Find also in the sound a thought,
20 Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

21 The Sea of Faith
22 Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
23 Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
24 But now I only hear
25 Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
26 Retreating, to the breath
27 Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
28 And naked shingles of the world.

29 Ah, love, let us be true
30 To one another! for the world, which seems
31 To lie before us like a land of dreams,
32 So various, so beautiful, so new,
33 Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
34 Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
35 And we are here as on a darkling plain
36 Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
37 Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Dover is a city in England that is famous for White Cliffs. The beach lies between England and France. The poet is on the England side and is watching the coast of France. The time is that of night. This piece is made up of four stanzas containing a variable number of lines. They range in length from fourteen to six lines in length. There is no consistent rhyme scheme but there are a number of random end rhymes throughout the poem and it is written in irregular iambic pentameter.

Dover Beach is dramatic monologue lamenting the loss of true Christian faith in England during the mid-1800's as science captured the minds of the public. The poet's speaker, considered to be Matthew Arnold himself, begins by describing a calm and quiet sea out in the English Channel. He stands on the Dover coast and looks across to France where a small light can be seen briefly, and then vanishes. This light represents the diminishing faith of the English people, and those the world round. Throughout this poem the speaker/Arnold crafts an image of the sea receding and returning to land with the faith of the world as it changes throughout time. At this point in time though, the sea is not returning. It is receding farther out into the strait.

Faith used to encompass the whole world but now it is losing ground to the sciences, particularly those related to evolution (The Origin of Species by Charles Darwin was published in 1859). The poem concludes pessimistically as the speaker makes clear to the reader that all the happiness that one may believe they are experiencing is not in fact real.

First Stanza Arnold begins this poem by giving a decription of the setting in which it is taking place. It is clear from the title, although never explicitly stated in the poem, that the beach in question is Dover, on the coast of England. The sea is said to be calm, there is beach on the water at full tide. The moon “lies fair,” lovely, “upon the straits” (a strait is a narrow passage of water such as the English Channel onto which Dover Beach abuts).

The speaker is able to see across the Channel to the French side of the water. The lights on the far coast are visibly gleaming, and then they disappear and the “cliffs of England” are standing by themselves “vast” and “glimmering” in the bay. The light that shines then vanishes representing to this speaker, and to Arnold himself, the vanishing faith of the English people. When the light

vanishes, the poet sees the White Cliffs which are shining in the moonlight on the Shore of England.

Now for the first time (in the poem), the poet interacts with his wife. He requests her to come to the window side and enjoy the pleasant air of the night. He then asks her to focus on the edge where the sea meets the land. The land is looking white and shiny due to the moonlight.

In the next line, the mood suddenly changes. There is a shift from ecstasy to sorrow. The poet says 'listen!' to the unpleasant and harsh sound of pebbles that are pulled out by the strong tides and turned back on the shore when the tide return. The process is continuous and the poet focuses on their rhythmic movement.

The movement of pebbles is 'tremulous cadence slow' they are trembling in a slow rhythmic movement. The rhythmic sound of pebbles mingles with that of the poem. This movement of the pebbles with terrible sound is not pleasant and brings out the note or music that is sad and never-ending.

Second Stanza The stanza 2 begins with reference to Sophocles. It was the tradition of Victorians to refer to the classical poets and writers in their works. The poet says that

Sophocles had already heard this eternal note of sadness while sitting on the shores of Aegean.

'The turbid ebb and flow" means the movement of water in and out. It also refers to the loss of Faith. Sophocles compared eternal movement with the miseries of humans which like them are also never-ending. This is how he succeeded in composing painful tragedies.

According to the poet, he can hear the same sound of sea sand and retreating tide by sitting, like Sophocles, on the Shore of the Northern Sea (English Channel). The term 'We' in a context refers to the poet and his wife but in a broader sense, it refers to every human. In this sense, the poet draws our attention to the universality and eternity of sadness.

Third Stanza According to the poet, the Sea of Faith once had united the whole of mankind but now it has declined. He hears its sadness, longings and roars of pulling away of faith as night wind is hovering over the sky. What remains there are the naked stones which have been pulled out of the earth by the tides.

The Sea of Faith that once existed among mankind gradually vanished. The Faith can refer to trust, humanity religion, kindness, sympathy and so on. Thus the greed gave a death blow to this faith. In this sense, the whole scene which was calm and pleasant (from stanza one) can be considered as the Sea of Faith. But suddenly the night wind or industrialization or Science and Technology came that murdered that peace and spirituality.

The poet describes religious faith as a sea that was once full like the tide. At that time, it reached around the earth like a girdle. Now the poet hears that sea's sad retreat. As the Sea of Faith becomes smaller, says the poet, it disappears into the atmosphere and leaves the edges of the world naked.

Fourth Stanza is characterized by a feeling of escapism. The poet asks his beloved to be true to him. He speaks directly to her, and perhaps, to all those true believers in God. He asks that they remain true to one another in this “land of dreams.” The world is no longer what it was, it is more like a dream than the reality he is used to. It is a land that appears to be full of various beautiful, new and joyous things but that is not the case. The poet believes that

the world which was like the Land of Dreams in the beginning is in reality hollow from inside. There is no joy, love, light, certainty, peace, sympathy in it.

The poem concludes with a pessimistic outlook on the state of the planet. Both the poet and his beloved are in a dark and ugly world. They hear the sound of struggle and fights of the people who are fighting without seeing each other. This fight can be regarded as the fight of opposing ideologies in the mind of man or that of forces of materialism or selfish and political forces. The poem thus ends with the terrible picture of society during the Victorian age.

ELIZABETH BARETT BROWNING (1806-1861)

The wife of Robert Browning was another important figure and occupies a place of her own among the poets of Victorian Age. She was a few years older than her husband. Her reputation rests chiefly upon her love poems

Elizabeth's *Sonnets from the Portuguese* was published in 1850. Critics generally consider the Sonnets—one of the most widely known collections of love lyrics in English—to be her best work. Her love poems are rich in emotion and exhibit the intensity of her passion and love for Browning.

In 1857 Browning published her verse novel *Aurora Leigh,* which portrays male domination of a woman. In her poetry she also addressed the child labor mines and mills of England, and slavery, among other social injustices.

How Do I Love Thee?

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.

I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love with a passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints, -- I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life! -- and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *"Sonnet 43: How do I love thee? Let me count the ways"* is part of the volume *Sonnets from the Portuguese.* The collection of 44 sonnets was published in 1850 and dedicated to her husband, the poet Robert Browning. This poem, in particular, is among the best known of Browning's verses and considered by many to be one of the most famous love poems in the English language.

"Sonnet 43" is a love poem written from the perspective of a woman to her lover. It is written in iambic pentameter and follows the Italian sonnet tradition in the style of Petrarch. A Petrarchan sonnet contains 14 lines: an octet of eight lines followed by a sextet of six lines.

Analysis of Sonnet 43

One can assume that Browning is also the speaker of the poem since it is well known just how deeply she and Robert Browning loved and cared for each other. The speaker is talking directly to her beloved in the sonnet; she uses personal pronouns such as “I” and “you.”

Line 1 Based on the initial line, it appears that the speaker has been asked a question prior to reciting Sonnet 43. The first line also serves as the motivation for the rest of the work. She then uses the last thirteen lines of the poem to show just how much she loves her husband.

Lines 2-4 provide the first way in which the speaker loves her husband. Here she is describing that her love is as deep and wide and tall as it can possibly be. It is so deep and wide and tall, in fact, that she cannot even “see” the edges of it: it is infinite. Barrett Browning uses consonance in line two in order to convey just how much she loves her husband. The repetition of the “th” sound gives the line movement, which signifies that her love for him is ongoing.

Lines 5 and 6 Barrett Browning continues to show her husband how much she loves him. These lines are

particularly lovely in their simplicity. While her love knows no bounds, the speaker also loves her beloved in ordinary, everyday life. She needs him as much as she needs other basic necessities of life.

Lines 7 and 8 Barrett Browning writes of two other ways she loves. These lines give an innate sense of feeling to her love. Just as men naturally strive to do what is good and right, she freely loves. In addition, she loves him purely, just as men turn from praise in order to maintain humility. The speaker does not want thanks or attention for her love; just like good and just men, she loves because it is what she has to do. Using these two similes in these two lines strengthens the tone of love and adoration in the poem.

Lines 9 and 10 Barrett Browning continues with the pattern of showing how much she loves her husband. Her diction here is interesting, particularly because she is taking the feelings she has about something relatively negative and comparing it to the feelings she has for her husband. Old grieves can be defines as anything that a person passionately despises. She is telling her husband here that she has as much passion for him as she does for those things in life that she just cannot stand. She also loves him

with the faith of a child, which is a particularly lovely line. Children's faith is usually steadfast and true. Just like a child has faith, so, too, does the speaker have love for her husband.

Lines 11:13 Barrett Browning continues with this religious motif in the next lines. Her "lost saints" is a reference to all of those people she once loved and adored in her life. The love she once felt for them, that she eventually lost, has now been transferred into the love she feels for her husband. Additionally, she loves him with all that she is: her breath, her smiles, and her tears. Barrett Browning confesses that she loves her husband with all that has made up her life.

Lines 13:14 Barrett Browning ends her poem by acknowledging that she is willing to love her husband forever if God chooses to allow her to do so. Not only will she love him well into eternity, she writes, but she will also love him even better than she does presently. Her love will continue to grow with the passing of time, regardless of whether or not she or he is still alive. The speaker's love for her husband is so strong that not even death could destroy it.

ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889)

Robert Browning was another important poet of the Victorian era. In 1845 Browning met Elizabeth Barrett. They were married secretly in September 1846; and went to live in Italy until she died in 1861. In 1855, Browning brought out "MEN AND WOMEN" which was dedicated to Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

The most feature of Browning's poetry is his profound interest in character. He is a great master of the art of presenting the inner side of human beings, their mental and moral qualities. It is in his dramatic monologues that Browning is seen at his best. He uses the dramatic monologues for the study of character, of mental states, and moral crisis in the soul of the characters concerned.

My Last Duchess

FERRARA

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

"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my Lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat"; such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart . . . how shall I say? . . . too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule

She rode with round the terrace--all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,--good; but thanked
Somehow . . . I know not how . . . as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech--(which I have not)--to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark"--and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
--E'en then would be some stooping; and I chuse
Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will 't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your Master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;

52 Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
53 At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
54 Together down, Sir! Notice Neptune, though,
55 Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
56 Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me.

My Last Duchess, is poem of 56 lines in rhyming couplets by Robert Browning. It is one of Browning's most successful dramatic monologues.

Robert Browning's inspiration for *My Last Duchess* came from the Duke and Duchess Ferarra. The Duchess died under very suspicious circumstances. She was married at fourteen and died by seventeen. Browning uses these suspicious circumstances as inspiration for a poem which dives deep into the mind of a powerful Duke who wishes to control his wife in every aspect of her life, including her feelings.

Throughout the poem, the duke reveals his belief that women are objects to be controlled and possessed. This reflects the thinking of Browning's own era, when Victorian social norms denied women the right to be fully independent human beings. Through this portrayal of the duke, Browning

criticizes such a viewpoint. Browning wrote real life poetry that reflected upon some of the darkest aspects of Victorian life. One of those aspects, of course, being the treatment of wives by their husbands. Browning reveals that this mentality was widespread during this time. The life of a Victorian wife was a dangerous and risky one.

Lines 1-15 My Last Duchess opens up with the speaker asking a listener if he would please sit down and look at a portrait of his last Duchess. This makes the readers wonder why this Duchess is no longer his present Duchess. He asks his listener to sit and look at the life sized painting of her. He reveals that this painting is behind a curtain, and that no one but he is allowed to draw the curtain to view the painting or to show it to anyone. This is very suspicious behavior. The reader can immediately sense that the Duke is controlling. The question that still remains unanswered is, why is this his last Duchess?

The Duke personifies the painting throughout this passage, both by saying “there she stands,” as though the duchess herself and not her image in the painting is standing against the wall, and “will’t please you sit and look at her,” instead of asking the messenger to look at “it” or “the

painting." This again suggests that he views the woman and the work of art as one and the same.

The Duke also makes it clear that he cares for the status the painting can give him and not for the nostalgia or memories about his former wife. He remarks on the artistry of the painting in seeming so lifelike ("looking as if she were alive"), rather than on missing her, since the woman herself as we will soon find out, has died. Likewise, he describes the artwork as "a piece" and "a wonder," and brags about how "busily" the famous Fra Pandolf worked to paint it, in a move calculated to impress the emissary with the quality of his art collection and therefore his wealth

The Duke describes the look on the Duchess' face, and that she had a joyous look and earnest glance. He notes that "twas not her husband's presence only called that spot of joy into the Duchess' cheek". This is a curious thing to say. Why would he expect that his presence alone, and nothing else, would bring joy to her face? He does not answer that question, but the fact that he notes this gives a little bit of insight into why he was the only one who was allowed to open the curtain. All along, he wanted to be the only one who would bring a look of joy to his Duchess' face. Now that she was put away somewhere, and her life-size painting was

on the wall, he could be the only one to ever see that look of joy on her face, because he would allow no one else to look at the painting without his permission. Suddenly, our speaker seems somewhat psychotic; unbalanced.

Lines 16-24 In this section of My Last Duchess, the Duke seems to be remembering his former Duchess and all that bothered him about her. It would seem that she was too easily pleased by everyone around her. The Duke was not happy with this. He didn't like that if someone like "Fra Pandolf" (we don't know much more about this character) were to tell her that her shawl covered her wrists too much, she would blush. The Duke did not like that she would blush at the flirtations of another man. He did not like that the things which he called common courtesy would "call up that spot of joy" which she seemed to always have on her face.

The Duke accuses her of having a heart that was "too soon made glad" and "too easily impressed". He was annoyed that she liked everything that she looked at. This man seems more controlling as My Last Duchess goes on. It would seem that he put away his Duchess because he could not control her feelings. He wanted to be the only one to bring her joy and make her blush.

Lines 25 -35 In these lines of My Last Duchess, the Duke continues to explain all of the flaws in the Duchess' character. He says that she values her white mule, a branch of cherries, and a sunset as much as she values a piece of jewelry that he had given her. He is irritated that she does not seem to see the value in what he gives to her, or that she seems to value the simple pleasures of life as much as she values his expensive gifts to her. He also seems irritated that she does not seem to understand the importance of his place in life. By marrying her, he had given her a "nine-hundred-years-old name". This reveals that his family had been around for a very long time and thus he gave her a well-known and prestigious name in marrying her. She did not seem to be any more thankful for this than she was thankful to watch the sun set. This irritated the Duke so much that was not even willing to "stoop" to her level to discuss it with her. He thinks it would be "trifling" to do so.

Lines 35-47 The Duke continues to explain that he chooses never to stoop to discuss with his Duchess what made him so disgusted with her. Yet, he seems quite comfortable discussing it with this listener. Perhaps he thought himself to high and mighty to stoop to talk to a woman, even if that woman was his wife.

He admitted that she smiled at him pleasantly when he passed by, but it bothered him that everyone received that same smile from her. He explained that he “gave commands” and “then all smiles stopped together”. This causes the reader to feel sorry for the Duchess, and rightly so. She was a lovely, happy, smiling person. It seems that the Duke commanded her in such a way as to make her stop smiling altogether. He robbed her of her joy with his controlling attitude toward her.

After explaining what happened when he commanded her, the Duke turns his attention back to the painting on the wall and says, “there she stands as if alive”. This suggests that the real Duchess is no longer alive. The Duke seems happier with a painting of her because he can control who gets to look at the joy in her face. The Duke then invites his listener to return downstairs with him.

Lines 47-56 This section of My Last Duchess reveals the identity of the Duke’s listener. He is the servant of a Count in the land, and they are trying to arrange a marriage between the Duke and the Count’s daughter. The Duke says that his “fair daughter” is his “object”.

He brings the man back downstairs with him, and as they walk, he points out bronze statue that was made especially for him. The statue is of Neptune taming a sea-horse. Neptune is the Roman god of the sea, and the statue represents dominance. This symbolizes the Duke, and the sea-horse symbolizes any Duchess he would acquire. The Duke views himself as a god, and he wishes to tame his wife to do whatever he wishes her to do, and even to feel whatever he wishes her to feel. As such, the statue perfectly reflects the duke's opinion of himself: he sees himself as an all-powerful god who tames and subdues everything around him, whether wives or prospective in-laws. What's more, the statue is "a rarity," further implying how special and powerful the duke must be in order to be in possession of it. This man is clearly controlling.

Commentary

- The Duke (Duke Alfonso of Ferrara) is the speaker in the poem.
- We know that he's been married at least once before, and that his wife died — by the end it is suggested that he killed her. He is already remarrying.

- His words are cold, practical and superior. His cool manner when speaking about his last wife suggests that he is comfortable with death and murder, and as he is speaking to the envoy of his new wife it presents a threat to her that she will also be killed if she doesn't behave as he wishes.
- The other voices in the poem are silent — the envoy listens and sometimes asks short questions, be we don't know exactly what he asks — we assume he speaks and responds, but the Duke clearly dominates the conversation — he uses his power and status to gain control.

Twentieth Century Poetry

Modernism and Post-Modernism are two major trends in twentieth-century literature. This era started from 1900 to 1961. **Modernism** was an early 20th-century artistic and literary movement. It began in the early 1900s and lasted until the early 1940s. Society was seeking a change from the traditional modes of expression and looking for outlets of self-expression and representation that were more in line with the values, ideals, and experiences of the newly industrialized and modern way of life. This artistic movement intended to break with the traditional values and the classical forms to reflect the changing society. Modernism, a movement that was a radical break from19th century Victorianism, led to post-modernism, which emphasized self-consciousness and pop art.

Imagism is a poetry movement from the early twentieth century. It was one of the first Modernist literary movements in the English language. Imagist poetry is characterized by sharp, clear language. It rejects sentimental verse more typical of Romantic and Victorian poetry. Instead, it focuses on the economy of language. Saying the most with the least.

The concept of Imagist poetry as it is known today largely spans from two Imagist anthologies compiled by Richard Aldington and Ezra Pound. Many of the rules of Imagism were led by the American poet Ezra Pound. He published the first anthology of Imagist poetry called *Des Imagistes* in 1914. Among the other prominent poets were Hilda Doolittle, William Carlos Williams, and Amy Lowell.

Perhaps the most famous example of Imagism is Ezra Pound's 'In a Station of the Metro':

In a Station of the Metro

The apparition of these faces in the crowd:
Petals on a wet, black bough.

The poem is just 20 words, including the title. But, in its conciseness, it is so effective. In just two lines, Pound describes both a setting and an unspoken mood, as well as a speaker's perspective. The setting is France, in a station at the Paris Metro underground system and the poet describes these faces as a "crowd," meaning the station is quite busy. The poet describes the faces of the crowds of people are like the petals hanging on the 'wet, black bough' of a tree. He compares these faces to "petals on a wet, black bough," suggesting that on the dark subway platform, the

people look like flower petals stuck on a tree branch after a rainy night.

Pound contrasts the image of a metro station with a natural image to juxtapose the urban and the natural world. Also stirring is the use of the word ‘apparition’, giving a ghostly quality to the many individuals passing through.

No word in the poem is unnecessary - everything has a purpose. Alliteration is used for ‘black’ and ‘bough’. This reflects Pound’s respect for poetic conventions as well as using bold, new devices.

Pound said the story behind this poem that takes place in an undergrounded metro train station:

> Three years ago in Paris I got out of a "metro" train at La Concorde, and saw suddenly a beautiful face, and then another and another, and then a beautiful child’s face, and then another beautiful woman, and I tried all that day to find words for what this had meant to me, and I could not find any words that seemed to me worthy, or as lovely as that sudden emotion.

Imagism was a short-lived but extremely influential movement. We can take many of its tenets as inspiration for

our own writing. By being acutely aware of every word you write, you can make sure every word serves a purpose.

By focusing on the image, we can economize on our language whilst presenting the reader with something he will remember. With a laser focus on the quality of writing rather than quantity, we can sharpen our craft.

Modernist poetry is characterized by themes of disillusionment, fragmentation and alienation from society. These characteristics are widely believed to be feelings brought on by the Industrial Revolution and the many social, political and economic changes that accompanied it. Some of the great historical and cultural events of the modern era include two global wars: World War I (1914-1918) and World War II (1941- 1945), and huge changes in industry and technology as compared to the 19th century.

The war was traumatic not only for the soldiers in the trenches but also for artists and writers. The catastrophe of the war had shaken faith in the moral basis, coherence, and durability of Western civilization and raised doubts about the adequacy of traditional literary modes to represent the harsh and dissonant realities of the postwar world.

The experience of World War I, which brought many Americans into contact with Europe for the first time, further bridged the gap between American and European culture, and it prepared the ground for an international modernism in which Americans would play a crucial part.

The war poetry of Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Isaac Rosenberg, Robert Graves, Edward Thomas and many other poets marks a transition in English cultural history. These were all young men who, pushed to the limits of experience, found in poetry a means of expressing extreme emotions of fear, anger and love. Their combined voice is more than a personal witness to military events in France from 1914 to 1918. The poems they wrote have become part of the national consciousness. They themselves have become icons of innocence, courage and integrity, in a world which after the war felt that these values were increasingly under threat. Many of their best poems are driven by a need to communicate the reality of the evils of war, particularly to those back home.

The term postmodernism can be described as vague for many readers. The term “postmodern” simply indicates a style that followed the “modern” movement in art and writing, which is often described as the work around and just

following the two World Wars of the 20th century. The term “postmodern poetry” is often applied to the literature and art after World War II (1939-45), when the effects on Western morale of the first war were greatly exacerbated by the experience of the threat of total destruction by the atomic bomb, the progressive devastation of the natural environment, and the fact of overpopulation. Postmodernist poetry is often noted for a few stylistic and thematic aspects. Postmodern poetry often deals with themes of meaninglessness or lack of reality.

Other major trends include social critique (Harlem Renaissance, feminist literature), the rise of hyphenated literatures (Asian-British, African-American, Anglo-Indian, etc.), and the growing influence of television, film, video games and other media on literature.

The Black Arts movement (1965-1975) was a controversial literary faction that emerged in the mid-1960s as the artistic arm of the Black Power movement, a militant political operation that rejected the purposes and practices of the Civil Rights movement that preceded it. The Black Arts movement was one of the only American literary movements to merge art with a political agenda. The Black Arts Movement started in 1965 when poet Amiri Baraka [LeRoi

Jones] established the Black Arts Repertory Theater in Harlem, New York, as a place for artistic expression.

The assertion of blackness through poetry is one of the preoccupations of postmodernist poetry. The main message of this poetry is that the time of black slavery must be ended at all costs even if it means absolute death**. Black Americans** must fight the white supremacy if they want to prove their existence on the American lands. Black American poets sought to impose their collective identity defended their existence in the American scene. They lashed sever attack and criticism towards the successive white American administrations for discriminating Americans according to race and color. These poets used poetry as a significant device to voice themselves and resist the white notion of supremacy. Through their poems, black poets attempted to establish a black world. They used art as a medium of free expression and vitality. Art, for them, is an effective weapon of social change. It is a tool that can break the chains of slavery and oppression which the whites had imposed on the blacks.

Twentieth Century Poetry Characteristics

Realism

The poetry of the 20th century is marked with a note of realism. Realism in modern poetry was the product of a reaction against Romanticism. The modern poet sees life and paints it as it is with all its ugliness. Robert Frost is one of the poets of realism in modern poetry.

Pessimism

There is a note of pessimism and disillusionment in modern poetry. The modern poet has realized the pettiness of human life and the tragedy and suffering of the poor have made him gloomy and sad. T. Hardy and T.S. Eliot are the poets of Pessimism and disillusionment in modern poetry.

Humanitarian and Democratic Note

Modern poetry has a deeper sense of the tragedy of common life. Modern poets are not concerned with the fates of royal figures. It is about the bitterness, disenchantment, and uncertainty of ordinary people.

Modern poetry is marked with a note of humanitarian and democratic feeling. The modern poet is interested in the life

of laborers, workers and in the daily struggles of these people etc. There is a concern in the common man and his sufferings.

Religion and Mysticism

A note of Religion and Mysticism is present in Modern poetry. Though the modern age is the age of science but there are so many poems written on the subjects of religion and mysticism. Robert Graves, W.B. Yeats, George, Russell are the great poets who have kept alive the flame of religion and mysticism in their poetry.

Diction and Style

Modern poets have a preference for simple and direct expression. Modern poets have chosen to be free in the use of the meter. Symbolist Movement in England is the major tradition that presented ideas through symbols. Yeats is considered a chief champion of this type of poetry.

Free Verse

Free verse is a type of poetry that does not contain patterns of rhyme or meter. Free verse is considered an open form of poetry, as opposed to poetry written in structure or form, and tends to follow natural speech patterns

and rhythms. While some rhyme and rhythm may occur in free verse poems, the poet does not adhere to strict patterns. However, this not does imply that free verse has no guiding principles. Indeed, free verse generally contains poetic lines and poetic imagery that distinguish it from prose.

Poems written in free verse are characterized by generally not using meter or rhyme, but that doesn't mean that they can never include meter or rhyme. Saying that a poem is "free verse" just means that the use of meter or rhyme is not extensive or consistent in the poem.

While some types of formal verse have specific requirements for the length or number of stanzas, free verse has no such restrictions. A poet writing in free verse may use stanzas of regular length consistently throughout their poem, though more often than not the length of stanzas in free verse poems varies at least somewhat throughout the poem—which is just to say that they don't follow any rule in particular.

Fragmented Structure

Prior to the 20th century, literature tended to be structured in linear, chronological order. Twentieth century writers experimented with other kinds of structures. Virginia

Woolf, for instance, wrote novels whose main plot was often "interrupted" by individual characters' memories, resulting in a disorienting experience for the reader. Ford Madox Ford's classic "The Good Soldier" plays with chronology, jumping back and forth between time periods. Many of these writers aimed to imitate the feeling of how time is truly experienced subjectively.

Writing from the Margins

The 20th century gave voice to marginalized people who previously got little recognition for their literary contributions. The Harlem Renaissance, for example, brought together African-Americans living in New York to form a powerful literary movement. Writers wrote fiction and poetry that celebrated black identity. Finally, the post-colonial literary movement was born, with writers writing stories on behalf of conquered peoples who had experienced colonization by Western powers.

William Butler Yeats (1865–1939)

W. B Yeats is an Irish poet, dramatist, prose writer, and one of the greatest English-language poets of the 20th century. He received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923. He belonged to the Protestant, Anglo-Irish minority that had controlled the economic, political, social, and cultural life of Ireland since at least the end of the 17th century.

Yeats's poetry underwent a profound development in the course of his career. Until about 1910 he wrote symbolist poems that emphasized the mood of the late Romantic period. In the 1910s and especially in the 1920s, Yeats's style began to change in favor of greater intellectual clarity and directness.

Death

NOR dread nor hope attend
A dying animal;
A man awaits his end
Dreading and hoping all;
Many times he died,
Many times rose again.
A great man in his pride

Confronting murderous men
Casts derision upon
Supersession of breath;
He knows death to the bone --
Man has created death.

Commentary

In just a dozen lines, Yeats examines human attitudes to death, contrasting them with an animal's ignorance of its own mortality. 'Death' was written in 1929.

The poem "Death" was actually written in reaction to the assassination of his political friend Kevin O'Higgins in 1927, which is referenced in the later part of the poem as the 'great man'. Yeats's poem is connected to its political context and makes a general point about man's attitude to his own mortality. How can we forget that one day we will die?

O'Higgins signed the death warrants of 77 republicans executed before the war ended officially in May 1923. Kevin O'Higgins recognized that in carrying out these orders he could be signing his own death warrant. His father, Dr. Tom O'Higgins, a prominent surgeon, would also pay the price for

his son's resolve — he was murdered in his home on February 11, 1923.

On a hot summer's morning, July 10, 1927, Kevin O'Higgins, minister for external affairs, left his home to walk the short distance to attend 12 o'clock mass in the church. A young man stopped him and asked him a question. Seeing two others approach, O'Higgins became suspicious and tried to escape. As he did so the men began firing.

"I have been shot; I don't know for what. I am dying, I feel that I am… I have always done the best that I can for Ireland. I forgive those who have done this," the following day's *Irish Independent* reported him saying to his friend MacNeill, who was also on his way to mass and was one of the first on the scene. Finally he said: "**There is no hope**... they've got me, just as they got my father... I die for my country. I go." On hearing the news, poet **WB Yeats** said: "**He was our personal friend as well as the one strong intellect in Irish public life, as was his pretty wife. He was a great man confronting murderous men**."

Analysis

NOR dread nor hope attend
A dying animal;
A man awaits his end
Dreading and hoping all;

There are two different kinds of death: one, unattended and un awaited, the other – attended and awaited. The sentiment in the first part of the poem is that simple truth; that we as humans, unlike other animals, are aware of our own mortality. Other animals aren't conscious as human beings. They don't understand death that is why they are not worrying about death, or even experiencing hope for the future.

Death is attended by dread and hope, and hence these two moods not only are companions of human death but they also wait upon it, give it care and thought. The animal death comes as a cut, a sudden move of scissors, severing the thread of life; it is a momentary occurrence which comes always unattended and unexpected.

Many times he died,
Many times rose again.

Many anxieties and fears stem from consciousness because we aren't dumb animals without awareness. Our mind remains in the past or in the future, areas which we have no influence on. At the same time, consciousness allows us to overcome those anxieties and fears by focusing on the present moment and improving the current situation. Each time we under go to our fears, a part of us dies, but each time we overcome a fear, we are reborn. Rise again as a better version of ourselves. There are many symbolic deaths we go through in life, only to rise again and continue.

A great man in his pride
Confronting murderous men
Casts derision upon
Suppression of breath;

However, such growth only comes from acceptance. Accepting that death is inevitable and acting regardless of that eventuality. Regardless of your fears and anxieties, regardless of pressure and stress. This is how a man becomes great. A great man is someone who knows death

but doesn’t fear it. He is willing to confront it and do the right thing even though it may result in him losing his life. “Confronting murderous men” could be taken literal and we can refer to the honorable individuals who do so or, it can be taken as symbolic and applied to life, confronting life, rather than cowering/suppressing from the unknown and unpredictable aspects of life.

Although the last portion is in direct relation to his friend, it relates to the inescapable nature of dying. Mr. O'Higgins had played a role in the executions of some IRA members, his assassination being in retaliation to this. He said to his wife, "Nobody can expect to live who has done what I've done." The image of a man looking head on towards certain death, in fact casting scorn at the idea of avoiding or replacing death (casts derision upon/ supersession of breath), may be a maturing from the initial feeling of dread at dying or hope to avoid it seen in the beginning of the poem.

He knows death to the bone -- Man has created death.

The concluding couplet brings with it an ambiguity which dims this picture. The opposite of death is life. If man has created death, then he has also created life, his own life.

Meaning that because we are conscious animals, we may be burdened by our knowledge of death but we are also relieved by our knowledge of life. Specifically, our ability to give meaning and purpose to our own lives which can overshadow death. And in doing so, find a sense of comfort with the eventuality of death because each individual has the opportunity or perhaps even a responsibility to take on the dread and hope associated with being alive.

As for the last line that "Man has created death", it's often quoted out of context from the poem. There are two thoughts about this. The first, when thought of with the beginning idea of the poem, that animals are unaware of their own mortality, well then it is we, "man" by our own awareness of dying that indeed we have created the concept of "death". Second, he simply could be referring to his friend Mr. O'Higgins, who by his own admittance, undertook actions that led to his death, thus perhaps he actually "created" his own death?

We have to remember that Yeats' poem appears in 1933, some 15 years after the world war which invented new ways of death. The Second World War will shortly add another layer of technological advancement in the

procedures of death dealing. Man has created death because man lives in history which is a story of the growing inventiveness of destruction.

“Man has created death” offers yet another line of distinction between man and animal. Man is a historical being, which animal is not, therefore it is free from the dark threat which has always accompanied human life and human death. From this perspective, having a long sequence of brutalities and atrocities enhanced by the technology of deadly machines assures that man’s existence is a distortion of life and man’s death only contributes to this disfigurement.

Robert Frost (1874–1963)

Robert Frost was an American poet who won four Pulitzer Prizes for his work. His poem, "The Road Not Taken," is often read at graduation ceremonies across the United States. Written in 1915 in England, "The Road Not Taken" is one of Robert Frost's—and the world's—most well-known poems. The poem actually contains multiple different meanings. With this poem, Frost has given the world a piece of writing that every individual can relate to, especially when it comes to the concept of choices and opportunities in life.

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

"The Road Not Taken" consists of four stanzas of five lines. Robert Frost has penned the poem in the first-person style. It depicts the poet/ individual looking in retrospect and contemplating upon past decisions. *The Road Not Taken* has been subjective. The speaker describes him or herself as facing a choice between which of two roads to take. The speaker's choice functions as an extended metaphor for all the choices that the speaker—and all people—must make in life. Through the speaker's experience, the poem explores the nature of choices, and what it means to be a person forced to choose.

“The Road Not Taken” has become well known for its perceived encouragement to take the “[road] less traveled by.” In other words, many people interpret this poem as a call to discover new trails and break away from the status quo.

Analysis

Stanza 1 A Road Not Taken opens with strong imagery, because of the diction used to depict two physical roads separating from each other in a “yellow wood” (which observably refers to the colors of autumn). Line two is hasty to display the theme of regret, by revealing that the individual is “sorry” before he even decides which road to take. We basically find ourselves observing a very important moment, where he has to make a decision that is evidently difficult for him. Lines three through five, express that the individual is trying to see as far as he can down each road, to help him decide which one he should choose to take.

This stanza introduces the dilemma that every human face, not once, but multiple times in his or her life; the dilemma of *choice*. We as people go through many circumstances and experiences in our lives, and one of them is choosing between two (or more) paths. Frost is

emphasizing that we all try our best to guess what lays ahead for us in every opportunity that we are presented in an attempt to find some control and later comfort over our final decisions. We like to take our time in order to make informed decisions so we can justify our choices when the regret of missing out on the other “roads” starts to haunt us.

Stanza 2 In this second stanza, lines six through eight: the individual in The Road Not Taken finally makes a decision and chooses a road that he thinks he believes is better, because it looked like not many people had walked on it before. However, in lines nine and ten, he is quick to add that the other road looked equally used in comparison to the one he chose, so it really wasn’t as less traveled as he was telling himself.

This stanza is important because it clarifies the common misunderstanding that one road was less traveled than the other since the character clearly states that both roads were “really about the same”. The diction in this stanza portrays the uncertainty of the character as he tries to justify to himself that his decision is the right one for him. The important idea to note in this stanza is that the character claimed the road he chose was better because it “wanted

wear” meaning, that it was tempting him. He felt that the road he chose “wanted” to be walked on by him.

Stanza 3 In this third stanza, Robert Frost mentions in lines eleven and twelve that at the moment that this individual was making his decision, both paths were nearly identical. No one had stepped through to disturb the leaves on both roads. Line thirteen is an important point in The Road Not Taken as this is when the individual finalizes his decision of leaving the other road, for perhaps another time. Lines fourteen and fifteen give us a glimpse of his doubts as he confesses to himself that it’s highly unlikely he will come back to travel this other road.

This stanza shows us that this character is truly being honest with himself, as he makes the crucial decision of which road to take. He notices that both choices lay equally in front of him and none of these choices have been “trodden black”. Sometimes in life your quick decisions are based on what you learned from other people’s experiences. These experiences then leave marks in the choices that we have, these marks then form our bias towards or against that path. When we encounter choices in our lives where find that the leaves are not “trodden black” by what we learned from the

people around us, it becomes harder to make a decision between them, just like the situation of the character in *The Road Not Taken*. After making his decision, he exclaims that he will leave the first choice for another day, and then he honestly tells himself that if he lets this road go now, there is no coming back. There are many defining decisions in a person's life that shape their futures and sometimes when we select an option in these moments, they change the course of our life and there's no turning back. That is where the regret of not exploring our other options disturbs us.

Stanza 4 In this last stanza, lines sixteen and seventeen, the individual predicts that one day far into the future, he knows will tell the story of this decision that he is now making. Lines eighteen and nineteen expose that he intends to lie, and claim he took the road that was less traveled (in reality both were equally traveled). Finally, the last line expresses that the individual is also planning to claim that his choice to take this less traveled road made all the difference, in where he will be standing at the time.

Edward Thomas (1878–1917)

Edward Thomas is one of the most famous English poets of World War I. He worked as a journalist before becoming a poet. When war began, Edward joined the Artists' Rifles, though he need not have enlisted due to his age. Much of his poetry focuses on the English Countryside. He was killed in action soon after arriving in France on April 9th, 1917.

In 1913 Edward Thomas met the American poet Robert Frost, who encouraged him to write poetry. Two years later Thomas enlisted in the British army. He was killed during World War I, and most of his poems were published posthumously. *Thomas' Collected Poems* appeared in 1920.

When Robert Frost wrote his famous poem *The Road Not Taken* in 1915, the poem was being interpreted more seriously by many readers, as an encouragement to be masters of their destiny. And among those it may have influenced in this way, to fatal effect, was Frost's best friend, fellow poet Edward Thomas. This interpretation of "The Road Not Taken" is debatable but it was enough to inspire

Frost's friend Edward Thomas to make a very grave decision to fight in World War I.

Frost and Thomas were great friends while Frost lived in England, both of them were well-read and very interested in nature. In the meantime, they had also become walking companions – the nature-loving Thomas often leading Frost through the countryside along paths of the kind mentioned in *The Road Not Taken*. Thomas sometimes regretted afterwards that they had gone the wrong way.

Frost's time in England ended in 1915 when World War I was on the verge of breaking out. He returned to the United States to avoid the war and fully expected Thomas to follow him. Thomas did not.

In the spring of 1915, Frost sent an envelope to Edward Thomas that contained only one item: a draft of "The Road Not Taken," under the title "Two Roads." Frost had been inspired to write the poem by Thomas's habit of regretting whatever path the pair took during their long walks in the countryside. Frost believed that his friend "would take the poem as a gentle joke and would protest, 'Stop teasing me.' Thus, in the poem's words, may have made all the difference. This, Frost believed, was the moment that set

him on a path to war. Being in his late 30s and married with children, Thomas didn't have to fight. Nor, apparently, was he compelled by any patriotism. In July 1915, the Englishman enlisted in the Artists Rifles. He was eventually sent to France in time to take part in the Battle of Arras and died on April 9th, 1917, shot through the chest. *The Road Not Taken* did not send Thomas to war, but it was the last moment in a sequence of events that had brought him to an irreversible decision.

Thomas was inspired to take "the road not taken" because of Frost's poem. The same is true for many people who've read the poem since it was first published in 1915. The concept of taking a "road less traveled" seems to advocate for individuality and perseverance, both of which are considered central to American culture.

The Owl

The Owl is one of the most celebrated poems writing about the First World War. It is not directly about the trenches but the war features in a more indirect way. The poem draws on Thomas's experience of the front line. It is also a poem about the emotions of empathy and guilt.

Downhill I came, hungry, and yet not starved;
Cold, yet had heat within me that was proof
Against the North wind; tired, yet so that rest
Had seemed the sweetest thing under a roof.

Then at the inn I had food, fire, and rest,
Knowing how hungry, cold, and tired was I.
All of the night was quite barred out except
An owl's cry, a most melancholy cry

Shaken out long and clear upon the hill,
No merry note, nor cause of merriment,
But one telling me plain what I escaped
And others could not, that night, as in I went.

And salted was my food, and my repose,
Salted and sobered, too, by the bird's voice
Speaking for all who lay under the stars,
Soldiers and poor, unable to rejoice.

Stanza One In the first stanza of 'The Owl' the speaker begins by describing his own actions. He was traveling downhill and was feeling hungry. He makes sure to add that although hungry, he was "not starved". This is followed up by another description of a similar nature. He was cold, "yet had heat within [him]." This heat was a kind of internal protection against the "North wind."

While these lines do not tell the reader anything specific about the setting, one is able to assume that the speaker has been somewhere where there isn't much, or any, food. Nor was there anywhere warm to stay, or anywhere that he could rest. He is lucky to have made it inside. The last lines speak on rest as being the "sweetest thing under a roof." It seems as though his exhaustion is the most important thing to him at this time.

Stanza Two In the second stanza, he makes it to the "inn." There, he is able to get all the things that he was lacking in the first stanza. There is "food, fire and rest." These three features of the inn are set against the three parts the speaker has shared about himself. That he was "hungry, cold and tired." Now, an interesting contrast is presented

between the outside world and that which the speaker is able to partake in inside the inn.

Outside, one is cold and hungry, but inside one is warm and fed. The less than desirable elements of the night were “barred out” by the walls of the inn and the supplies inside. But, there was one thing which penetrated, “An owl’s cry.” The sound of the owl is described as being “melancholy.” This fits with the overall tone of the poem so far. The speaker has been reserved in his descriptions and focused on getting inside. There is a calmness to the scene, but also a darkness.

Stanza Three The third stanza continues the dark tone of the piece. The speaker hears the fall of the owl and it lasts “long and clear.” It is coming, he thinks from “upon the hill.” He also adds that the “note” was not “merry,” nor did it cause “merriment.” The reflected repletion in this line is interesting as it creates a feeling of unity between the speaker and the owl. They are reflecting one another.

The fact that the speaker made it inside the inn is becoming increasingly important. He describes the sound of the bird as “telling [him] plain” what it was he escaped when he made it inside. The mournful sound is intimately

connected with the night and the fate of many others left outdoors.

The speaker notes this fact— that there are “others” who “could not” come inside in the last line of this stanza. He feels truly lucky to have escaped the cold.

Stanza Four In the last stanza, the speaker goes over the different things he has that separate him from the owl and the night’s cold it is representing. The haunting sounds made him feel “sobered.” His food was “salted” and his repose too. The “voice” of the bird spoiled his physical pleasure at these comforts.

This doesn’t seem to be something he is upset about though. The speaker seems saddened by the state of the rest of the world outside, those he refers to as the “Soldiers and poor.” They are unable to “rejoice” as he is, warm and inside.

The Owl is a poem consisting of sixteen lines, divided into four stanzas of four lines each.

Stephen Crane (1871 – 1900)

Stephen Crane was an American poet and novelist. His poems convey themes relating to death, loss, war, religion and love. He is recognized by modern critics as one of the most innovative writers of his generation.

Crane was considered an important figure in American literature. Crane's writing is characterized by vivid intensity, distinctive dialects, and irony. Common themes involve fear, spiritual crises and social isolation. Crane’s poetry was unusual for his time due to the use of free verse without rhyme or meter.

Although Crane never served in the United States military, as a journalist he covered a number of conflicts for various newspapers and news

War Is Kind

Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind.
Because your lover threw wild hands toward the sky
And the affrighted steed ran on alone,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Hoarse, booming drums of the regiment,
Little souls who thirst for fight,
These men were born to drill and die.
The unexplained glory flies above them,
Great is the battle-god, great, and his kingdom --
A field where a thousand corpses lie.

Do not weep, babe, for war is kind.
Because your father tumbled in the yellow trenches,
Raged at his breast, gulped and died,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Swift blazing flag of the regiment,
Eagle with crest of red and gold,
These men were born to drill and die.
Point for them the virtue of slaughter,
Make plain to them the excellence of killing
And a field where a thousand corpses lie.

Mother whose heart hung humble as a button
On the bright splendid shroud of your son,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

In ‘War is Kind’ , the poet does not use any pattern of rhyme or rhythm. In fact, the whole poem is written in **free verse**. But that doesn’t mean that there are moments of rhyme or techniques used to create rhythm. For example, the endings of lines one and five of stanza one rhyme with the words “kind” and “kind”. So do lines three and six of stanza two with “die” and “lie.” These same endings are used again in the fourth stanza.

Analysis

Stanza One In the first stanza of ‘War is Kind’ the speaker begins by making use of the refrain. He tells a “maiden,” or unmarried woman, that she should not weep. “War,” he states, is “kind”. This is obviously a very unusual and likely ironic, thing to say. He goes on to tell the woman that her “lover threw” his hands in the air when he was confronted with war. When this happened, his “steed,” or horse ran alone. It was “affrighted,” a complicated way to say frightened. It is unclear what exactly happened to make the lover throw his hands in the air. Maybe it was in surrender, or perhaps something darker happened and he was injured or even killed.

The last two lines of this stanza are a reiteration of part of the first line, and the two statements which make up the refrain. These two lines bookend the stanza, as they do with stanzas three and five.

Stanza Two In the second stanza of 'War is Kind' the speaker plays with the previous reference to a "steed" and uses the word "Hoarse". This time though he is referring to the drums played by the regiment of soldiers. They sound "hoarse," as if they are sick or in need of something to drink. In the next two lines the speaker says the soldiers are "Little souls" and are thirsting not for water, but "for fight".

The phrase little souls is interesting, it contrast with the next lines which seem to suggest the men do not have souls. The speaker goes on to say that these men were born for nothing else other than to fight. They were born to "drill" as in train and practice, and then die. They are mechanical in their actions and in their purpose.

In the fourth line the speaker references "unexplained glory". There is no clear definitive answer to what this glory is, but it could refer to the ephemeral nature of glory itself. It is something which spectators and outsiders from war imbue

upon those who were in war. Glory is not something that actively seeks out soldiers on the battlefield.

In the last lines of the section the speaker mentions a battle god. What the speaker is doing here is setting out a scene, which is ruled differently than other kingdom. This particular kingdom is nothing more than a field where “a thousand corpses lie”. It’s a dark and terrible place, which is ruled over by a powerful force.

Stanza Three In the third stanza the speaker begins by asking a “babe” not to weep. He has moved on from addressing a woman to speaking to a young child. He tells the child that there is no reason to weep, and then provides them with a very good reason to do so. The child’s father, who was in a battle of some kind died in “the yellow trenches”. He had rage in his breast and in the simplest way, “gulped and died”. The “rage” refers to his own thirst for war, and to the injury which killed him. The bullet entered his body, driven by another’s rage. The refrain is again repeated. It is starting to become even more haunting as its deep irony is made clear.

Stanza Four The flag of the regiment is mentioned in the fourth stanza of ‘War is Kind’. It is “blazing” and pattered with a “crest of red and gold” and an eagle. There is another moment of repetition in which the line “These men were born to drill and die” is used again. It is a reminder, and its reuse helps create a rhythm to the poem. Along with the refrain “Do not weep. / War is kind” the poem starts to sound song-like.

In lines four through six of this stanza the speaker goes through some terrible images. He speaks to the flag, and tells it to make sure the men know that there is “virtue” in slaughtering one’s enemies and that there is “excellence” in killing. The stanza ends with the repetition of the line “And a field where a thousand corpses lie.”

Stanza Five The fifth stanza of ‘War is Kind’ is directed toward a mother who was faced with the loss of her son. With the alliterative phrase “heart hung humble” the speaker describes the way she stood before his coffin. Her heart was on the “shroud” of her son, as simple as a button. Crane describes the heart as completing the action, a technique known as metonymy. The excerpt ends with the speaker again telling someone not to cry, and that war is kind.

Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888–1965)

American-English poet, playwright, literary critic, and editor, a leader of the Modernist movement in poetry in such works as *The Waste Land* (1922) and *Four Quartets* (1943). The publication of *Four Quartets* led to his recognition as the greatest living English poet and man of letters, and in 1948 he was awarded both the Order of Merit and the Nobel Prize for Literature.

His first important publication, and the first masterpiece of Modernism in English, was "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915). With the publication in 1922 of his poem *The Waste Land*, Eliot won an international reputation.

T.S Eliot is considered as one of the most important modernist poets. The content of his poem as well as his poetic style give elements of the modern movement that was famous during his time. Modernism was mainly represented by orientation towards fragmentation, free verse, contradictory allusions and multiple points of view different from the Victorian and Romantic writing. These modern features appear greatly in the works of Eliot.

Modernism

Modernism is used to describe post–World War I literature that employs techniques Eliot uses in The Waste Land. These techniques, and all the techniques associated with modernist literature, expressed a rebellion against traditional literature. For example, in traditional poetry, poets often sought uniformity in stanza length and meter. But particularly after World War I artists began to experiment with nontraditional forms, ideas, and styles.

Disillusioned by the war, artists and writers such as Eliot rebelled against the logical, traditional thinking. Eliot's poem, in all of its complexity and obscurity, was like a catalog of modernist poetic techniques, including free verse, odd stanza lengths, snatches of dialogue, quotations from other works, phrases from other languages, conflicting ideologies such as Christianity and paganism, and the list goes on.

Historical Context

While Eliot published ***The Waste Land*** in 1922, it was widely acknowledged as reflecting the disillusionment in Europe following World War I. This global war started from a regional tragedy. By the time the war officially ended in 1918, an estimated eight million people were dead and

countless more wounded. For the generation of men and women who came of age during or shortly after the war, life seemed bleak, and many of these young men and women became disillusioned or hopeless about their own futures and the sanctity of humanity. While this entire group was coined ***the Lost Generation***, most critics today associate this term with a group of American writers who translated their disillusionment into a social protest, and in the process produced some of the greatest works of twentieth century literature.

The Waste Land

The Waste Land consists of five sections and proceeds on a principle of “rhetorical discontinuity” that reflects the fragmented experience of the 20th-century sensibility of the great modern cities of the West. The poem’s original manuscript of about 800 lines was cut down to 433 at the suggestion of Ezra Pound.

The Waste Land by T. S. Eliot is a historical landmark in English poetry and a basic document on contemporary society. It mirrors the post-war generation. The poet reveals the disillusionment caused by the First World War. He also

shows his dissatisfaction with the so-called scientific achievements and industrial progress of Europe.

Cleanth Brooks describes The Waste Land as a ‘highly condensed epic of the modern age’. The poem truly depicts life in London in the aftermath of the First World War. Eliot gives a vivid description of the ravages caused by the First World War. He has written The Waste Land in 433 lines and divided it into five sections. The poem is enormously complex, making great demands upon the readers. Still, the importance of its theme and the brilliance of its technique give it a high rank as one of the most significant works of modern literature.

Eliot has used several devices in The Waste Land to link the present with the past. He has used various myths and legends with the help of allusions, symbols, quotations and phrases. The poem is, in fact, a mixture of many styles like narrative, dramatic, lyric & allusive. Eliot gives his impressions about the modern people through a protagonist of the poem named Tiresias. He is a spectator of all the events occurring in the poem and a kind of all-knowing universal person who belongs to the past as well as the present.

While the poem is obscure, critics have identified several sources that inspired its creation and which have helped determine its meaning. Many see the poem as a reflection of Eliot's disenchantment, disillusionment, and disgust of the period after World War I. *The Waste Land* expresses with great power the disenchantment, disillusionment, and disgust of the period after World War I.

Yet the crisis at the heart of The Waste Land wasn't only global, it was also personal. Eliot's wife, Vivienne, also had poor physical and mental health and he scattered his poem with references to their life together. Like other of Eliot's longer works, The Waste Land was composed in fragments over a period of time, the earliest dating from 1914–15. These were afterwards put together and 'edited', with the decisive help of Ezra Pound, into the final version that we know today.

T. S. Eliot has divided The Waste Land into five sections under the following titles:
(I) The Burial of the Dead, (II) A Game of Chess, (III) The fire Sermon, (IV) Death by water, and (V) What the Thunder Said.

Section I: The Burial of the Dead

The first section, The Burial of the Dead, reveals the degeneration and rootlessness of the modern man and his civilization. The modern man has lost faith in moral spiritual values. He has indulged himself in sex, gambling and violence, which have dried up sources of his vitality. His rebirth is possible only through the revival of spiritual and moral values.

Section II: A Game of Chess

In the second section, A Game of Chess, the poet indicates the failure of sex-relationship in the modern world. Sex has become a mere act of entertainment and has lost its moral and social purpose. The poet shows that sex perversities, both in high and low life, have become a matter of mechanical routine. This perversion of sex has made modern life utterly unproductive and desolate.

Section III: The Fire Sermon

The third section, The Fire Sermon, shows that lust and rape are responsible for the decay of modern society. And this kind of degeneration prevails in all classes of modern

society. The poet prays to God to save the modern civilization from lust and spiritual degeneration.

Section IV: Death by Water

In the fourth section, Death by Water, the poet has suggested the significance of water as a means of purification and rebirth. He has also made two associations there. The first one is from Shakespeare's The Tempest while the other one is from the ancient Egyptian myth of the god of fertility. The death of Phlebas, the Greek sailor, throws light on the life of people of modern people who devote themselves to worldly pursuit and meet death. There is no rebirth for such people because their life is devoid of moral values.

Section V: What the Thunder Said

The fifth section, entitled What the Thunder Said, suggests that there is a need of effort for the realization of the spiritual goal. The poet gives his own personal impression here. He says that it is impossible to reform the whole world and wonders where the change should begin from. Then he says that he must start with himself. He prescribes three remedies to gain spiritual peace and bliss, and ends the poem on a note of hope.

The Waste Land

"Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculis meis vidi
in ampulla pendere, et cum illi pueri dicerent: Σιβυλλα
τι θελεις; respondebat illa: αποθανειν θελω."

For Ezra Pound
il miglior fabbro.

I. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
A little life with dried tubers.
Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee
With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,
And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten,
And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.
Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch.
And when we were children, staying at the archduke's,

My cousin's, he took me out on a sled,
And I was frightened. He said, Marie,
Marie, hold on tight. And down he went.
In the mountains, there you feel free.
I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter.
What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water. Only
There is shadow under this red rock,
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
And I will show you something different from either
Your shadow at morning striding behind you
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
I will show you fear in a handful of dust.
Frisch weht der Wind
Der-Heimat zu
Mein Irisch Kind,

Wo weilest du?

"You gave me Hyacinths first a year ago;

"They called me the hyacinth girl."

—Yet when we came back, late, from the hyacinth garden,

Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not

Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither

Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,

Looking into the heart of light, the silence.

Oed' und leer das Meer.

Madame Sosostris, famous clairvoyante,

Had a bad cold, nevertheless

Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe,

With a wicked pack of cards. Here, said she,

Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor,

(Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)

Here is Belladonna, the Lady of the Rocks,

The lady of situations.

Here is the man with three staves, and here the Wheel,

And here is the one-eyed merchant, and this card,

Which is blank, is something he carries on his back,

Which I am forbidden to see. I do not find

The Hanged Man. Fear death by water.

I see crowds of people, walking round in a ring.

Thank you. If you see dear Mrs. Equitone,

Tell her I bring the horoscope myself:

One must be so careful these days.

Unreal City,

Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,

A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,

I had not thought death had undone so many.

Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,

And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.

Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,

To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours

With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.

There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying: "Stetson!

"You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!

"That corpse you planted last year in your garden,

"Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?

"Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?

"O keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men,

"Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!
"You! Hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable,—mon frère!"

A GAME OF CHESS

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,
Glowed on the marble, where the glass
Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines
From which a golden Cupidon peeped out
(Another hid his eyes behind his wing)
Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra
Reflecting light upon the table as
The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,
From satin cases poured in rich profusion.
In vials of ivory and coloured glass
Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes,
Unguent, powdered, or liquid—troubled, confused
And drowned the sense in odours; stirred by the air
That freshened from the window, these ascended
In fattening the prolonged candle-flames,
Flung their smoke into the laquearia,
Stirring the pattern on the coffered ceiling.

Huge sea-wood fed with copper
Burned green and orange, framed by the coloured
stone,
In which sad light a carvèd dolphin swam.
Above the antique mantel was displayed
As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene
The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king
So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale
Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
And still she cried, and still the world pursues,
"Jug Jug" to dirty ears.
And other withered stumps of time
Were told upon the walls; staring forms
Leaned out, leaning, hushing the room enclosed.
Footsteps shuffled on the stair.
Under the firelight, under the brush, her hair
Spread out in fiery points
Glowed into words, then would be savagely still.
"My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me.
Speak to me. Why do you never speak? Speak.

What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?

I never know what you are thinking. Think."

I think we are in rats' alley

Where the dead men lost their bones.

"What is that noise?"

The wind under the door.

"What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?"

Nothing again nothing.

"Do

You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember

"Nothing?"

I remember

Those are pearls that were his eyes.

"Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?"

But

O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag—

It's so elegant

So intelligent

"What shall I do now? What shall I do?

I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street

With my hair down, so. What shall we do tomorrow?

What shall we ever do?"
The hot water at ten.
And if it rains, a closed car at four.
And we shall play a game of chess,
Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door.
When Lil's husband got demobbed, I said—
I didn't mince my words, I said to her myself,
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
Now Albert's coming back, make yourself a bit smart.

He'll want to know what you done with that money he gave you
To get yourself some teeth. He did, I was there.
You have them all out, Lil, and get a nice set,
He said, I swear, I can't bear to look at you.
And no more can't I, I said, and think of poor Albert,
He's been in the army four years, he wants a good time,
And if you don't give it him, there's others will, I said.
Oh is there, she said. Something o' that, I said.
Then I'll know who to thank, she said, and give me a straight look.
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
If you don't like it you can get on with it, I said.

Others can pick and choose if you can't.

But if Albert makes off, it won't be for lack of telling.

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You ought to be ashamed, I said, to look so antique.

(And her only thirty-one.)

I can't help it, she said, pulling a long face,

It's them pills I took, to bring if off, she said.

(She's had five already, and nearly died of young

George). 160

The chemist said it would be all right, but I've never been the same.

You *are* a proper fool, I said.

Well, if Albert won't leave you alone, there it is, I said,

What you get married for if you don't want children?

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME 165

Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot gammon,

And they asked me in to dinner, to get the beauty of it hot—

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

Goonight Bill. Goonight Lou. Goonight May. Goonight. 170

Ta ta. Goonight. Goonight.

Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night.

III. THE FIRE SERMON

The river's tent is broken; the last fingers of leaf
Clutch and sink into the wet bank. The wind
Crosses the brown land, unheard. The nymphs are departed.
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.
The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers,
Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends
Or other testimony of summer nights. The nymphs are departed.
And their friends, the loitering heirs of City directors;
Departed, have left no addresses.
By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept . . .
Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song,
Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long.
But at my back in a cold blast I hear

The rattle of the bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear.

A rat crept softly through the vegetation
Dragging its slimy belly on the bank
While I was fishing in the dull canal
On a winter evening round behind the gashouse
Musing upon the king my brother's wreck
And on the king my father's death before him.
White bodies naked on the low damp ground
And bones cast in a little low dry garret,
Rattled by the rat's foot only, year to year.
But at my back from time to time I hear
The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring
Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring.
O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter
And on her daughter
They wash their feet in soda water
Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole!

Twit twit twit
Jug jug jug jug jug jug
So rudely forc'd.
Tereu

Unreal City
Under the brown fog of a winter noon
Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant
Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants
C.i.f. London: documents at sight,
Asked me in demotic French
To luncheon at the Cannon Street Hotel
Followed by a weekend at the Metropole.

At the violet hour, when the eyes and back
Turn upward from the desk, when the human engine waits
Like a taxi throbbing waiting,
I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives,
Old man with wrinkled female breasts, can see
At the violet hour, the evening hour that strives
Homeward, and brings the sailor home from sea,
The typist home at teatime, clears her breakfast, lights
Her stove, and lays out food in tins.
Out of the window perilously spread
Her drying combinations touched by the sun's last
rays,
On the divan are piled (at night her bed)

Stockings, slippers, camisoles, and stays.
I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs
Perceived the scene, and foretold the rest—
I too awaited the expected guest.
He, the young man carbuncular, arrives,
A small house agent's clerk, with one bold stare,
One of the low on whom assurance sits
As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire.
The time is now propitious, as he guesses,
The meal is ended, she is bored and tired,
Endeavours to engage her in caresses
Which still are unreproved, if undesired.
Flushed and decided, he assaults at once;
Exploring hands encounter no defence;
His vanity requires no response,

And makes a welcome of indifference.
(And I Tiresias have foresuffered all
Enacted on this same divan or bed;
I who have sat by Thebes below the wall
And walked among the lowest of the dead.)

Bestows one final patronising kiss,
And gropes his way, finding the stairs unlit . . .

She turns and looks a moment in the glass,
Hardly aware of her departed lover;
Her brain allows one half-formed thought to pass:
"Well now that's done: and I'm glad it's over."
When lovely woman stoops to folly and
Paces about her room again, alone,
She smooths her hair with automatic hand,
And puts a record on the gramophone.

"This music crept by me upon the waters"
And along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street.
O City city, I can sometimes hear
Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street,
The pleasant whining of a mandoline
and a clatter and a chatter from within
Where fishmen lounge at noon: where the walls
Of Magnus Martyr hold
Inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold.

The river sweats

Oil and tar

The barges drift

With the turning tide

Red sails

Wide

To leeward, swing on the heavy spar.

The barges wash

Drifting logs

Down Greenwich reach

Past the Isle of Dogs.

Weialala leia

Wallala leialala

Elizabeth and Leicester

Beating oars

The stern was formed

A gilded shell

Red and gold

The brisk swell

Rippled both shores

Southwest wind

Carried down stream
The peal of bells
White towers
Weialala leia
Wallala leialala

"Trams and dusty trees.
Highbury bore me. Richmond and Kew
Undid me. By Richmond I raised my knees
Supine on the floor of a narrow canoe."

"My feet are at Moorgate, and my heart
Under my feet. After the event
He wept. He promised 'a new start.'
I made no comment. What should I resent?"

"On Margate Sands.
I can connect
Nothing with nothing.
The broken fingernails of dirty hands.
My people humble people who expect
Nothing."

la la

To Carthage then I came

Burning burning burning burning

O Lord Thou pluckest me out

O Lord Thou pluckest

Burning

IV. DEATH BY WATER

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,

Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep sea swell

And the profit and loss.

A current under sea

Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell

He passed the stages of his age and youth

Entering the whirlpool.

Gentile or Jew

O you who turn the wheel and look to windward,

Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you.

V. WHAT THE THUNDER SAID

After the torchlight red on sweaty faces
After the frosty silence in the gardens
After the agony in stony places
The shouting and the crying
Prison and palace and reverberation
Of thunder of spring over distant mountains
He who was living is now dead
We who were living are now dying
With a little patience

Here is no water but only rock
Rock and no water and the sandy road
The road winding above among the mountains
Which are mountains of rock without water
If there were only water amongst the rock
Amongst the rock one cannot stop or think
Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand
If there were only water amongst the rock
Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit
Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit

There is not even silence in the mountains
But dry sterile thunder without rain
There is not even solitude in the mountains
But red sullen faces sneer and snarl
From doors of mudcracked houses

If there were water
And no rock
If there were rock
And also water
And water
A spring
A pool among the rock
If there were the sound of water only
Not the cicada
And dry grass singing
But sound of water over a rock
Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees
Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop
But there is no water

Who is the third who walks always beside you?
When I count, there are only you and I together
But when I look ahead up the white road
There is always another one walking beside you
Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded
I do not know whether a man or a woman
—But who is that on the other side of you?

What is that sound high in the air
Murmur of maternal lamentation
Who are those hooded hordes swarming
Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth
Ringed by the flat horizon only
What is the city over the mountains

Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air
Falling towers
Jerusalem Athens Alexandria Vienna London
Unreal

A woman drew her long black hair out tight
And fiddled whisper music on those strings

And bats with baby faces in the violet light
Whistled, and beat their wings
And crawled head downward down a blackened wall

And upside down in air were towers
Tolling reminiscent bells, that kept the hours
And voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted
wells.

In this decayed hole among the mountains
In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing
Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel
There is the empty chapel, only the wind's home.
It has no windows, and the door swings,
Dry bones can harm no one.
Only a crock stood on the rooftree
Co co rico co co rico
In a flash of lightning. Then a damp gust
Bringing rain

Ganga was sunken, and the limp leaves
Waited for rain, while the black clouds
Gathered far distant, over Himavant.

The jungle crouched, humped in silence.

Then spoke the thunder

DA

Datta:

what have we given?

My friend, blood shaking my heart

The awful daring of a moment's surrender

Which an age of prudence can never retract

By this, and this only, we have existed

Which is not to be found in our obituaries

Or in memories draped by the beneficent spider

Or under seals broken by the lean solicitor

In our empty rooms

DA

Dayadhvam: I have heard the key

Turn in the door once and turn once only

We think of the key, each in his prison

Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison

Only at nightfall, aethereal rumours

Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus

DA

Damyata: The boat responded

Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar

The sea was calm, your heart would have responded

Gaily, when invited, beating obedient

To controlling hands

I sat upon the shore

Fishing, with the arid plain behind me

Shall I at least set my lands in order?

London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down

Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina

Quando fiam ceu chelidon—O swallow swallow

Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie

These fragments I have shored against my ruins

Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.

Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.

Shantih shantih shantih

Poem Analysis

I. Burial of the Dead

The first section, as the section title indicates, is about death. The section begins with the words "April is the cruellest month," which is perhaps one of the most remarked upon and most important references in the poem. Those familiar with Chaucer's poem The Canterbury Tales will recognize that Eliot is taking Chaucer's introductory line from the prologue—which is optimistic about the month of April and the regenerative, life-giving season of spring—and turning it on its head. Just as Chaucer's line sets the tone for The Canterbury Tales, Eliot's dark words inform the reader that this is going to be a dark poem. Throughout the rest of the first section, as he will do with the other four sections, Eliot shifts among several disconnected thoughts, speeches, and images.

Collectively, the episodic scenes in **lines 1 through 18** discuss the natural cycle of death, which is symbolized by the passing of the seasons. The first seven lines employ images of spring, such as "breeding / Lilacs," and "Dull roots with spring rain." In **line 8**, Eliot tells the reader "Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee." The time has

shifted from spring to summer. And while the reference to Starnbergersee—a lake south of Munich, Germany—has been linked to various aspects of Eliot's past, to Eliot's readers at the time the poem was published, it would have stuck out for other reasons, given that World War I had fairly recently ended. During the war Germany was one of the main opponents of the Allied forces, which included both the United States and England—Eliot's two homes. By including German references, which continue in the next several lines and culminate in a German phrase, Eliot is invoking an image of the war. Who are the dead that are being buried in this section? All the soldiers and other casualties who died during World War I.

The German phrase leads into a conversation from a sledding episode in the childhood of a girl named Marie. The season has changed again, to winter. Marie notes, "In the mountains, there you feel free," implying that when she is not in the mountains, on a sledding adventure, she does not feel free. In other words, Marie feels trapped, just as humanity feels trapped in its own waste land. In **line 19** Eliot starts to give some visual cues about the waste land of modern society. "What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow / Out of this stony rubbish?" the poet asks. In response, Eliot

refers to a biblical passage, addressing the reader as "Son of man." The poet tells the reader that he or she "cannot say, or guess" what the roots of this waste land are, because the reader knows only "A heap of broken images" where "the dead tree gives no shelter." These and other images depict a barren, dead land. But the poet says in **line 27**, "I will show you something different." In **lines 31 to 34** Eliot reproduces a song sung by a sailor in the beginning of Wagner's Tristan und Isolde. Eliot is inviting the reader to come on a journey, a tour of this modern waste land. The song—which asks why somebody is postponing a journey, when there is fresh wind blowing toward a home-land—indicates Eliot's desire to regenerate this barren land. In fact his use of the word "Hyacinths," which are symbolic of resurrection, underscores this idea.

In **line 43** Eliot introduces the character of Madame Sosostris, a gifted mystic with a "wicked pack of cards," or tarot cards. She pulls the card of "the drowned Phoenician Sailor," another image of death and also a direct reference to a fertility god who, according to Sir James Frazer's The Golden Bough, was drowned at the end of summer. Again these images collectively illustrate the natural cycle of death. Following the Madame Sosostris passage, Eliot, beginning in

line 60, introduces the "Unreal City, / Under the brown fog of a winter dawn, / A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many." These lines suggest a similar description of the modern city by Baudelaire. The image of brown fog is dismal, as is the next line, which notes "I had not thought death had undone so many." Eliot here is describing a waking death. These people are alive in the physical sense, but dead in all others. It is a sad city, where "each man fixed his eyes before his feet."

In **line 68** Eliot notes there is "a dead sound on the final stroke of nine," which refers to the start of the typical work day. In other words these people trudge along in a sort of living death, going to work, which has become an end in itself. Within this procession, however, the poet sees someone he knows, "Stetson," who was with the poet "in the ships at Mylae!" Mylae is a reference to an ancient battle from the First Punic War, which by extension evokes an image of death on the civilization scale. The poet asks his friend if the "corpse you planted last year in your garden" has "begun to sprout?" Here again Eliot is invoking the idea of resurrection, and of the natural cycle of death and life. First, when dead people decompose, their organic matter fertilizes the ground, which loops back to the first line

of the section, in which April, "the cruellest month," is breeding flowers, which presumably are feeding off this decomposed flesh. But in a more specific way, this passage refers to Frazer's book, which details a primitive ritual whereby in April these primitive civilizations would plant a male corpse, or just the man's genitals, in order to ensure a bountiful harvest. This harvest, which can be interpreted symbolically as the rebirth of civilization, is potentially threatened by "the Dog," which has been interpreted as the lack of meaning in life.

Critics interpret the dog this way largely because of the final lines of the section, a quote from Baudelaire, which indict the reader for his or her part in creating the waste land by sucking all meaning and, thus life, out of society.

II. A Game of Chess

In the second section Eliot turns his attention from death to sex. The title of this section refers to a scene from Thomas Middleton's Elizabethan play Women Beware Women, in which the moves of a chess game between two people are linked onstage to the seduction played out by another pair. In the **first lines** of the section, Eliot creates a lush image of a wealthy woman, who sits in a chair "like a burnished

throne." The scene also includes "standards wrought with fruited vines," a "sevenbranched candelabra," and "jewels." On the woman's table are "satin cases poured in rich profusion." Inside these cases are "strange synthetic perfumes," which "drowned the sense in odours." In other words aphrodisiacs (artificial substances used to create or enhance sexual desire). Since sex is linked to procreation, and thus fertility, the fact that aphrodisiacs are needed is telling. In this room there is also a painting above the mantel that depicts "Philomel," a reference to a classical woman who was raped (indicated by the words "rudely forced") by "the barbarous king" Tereus. Eliot notes that "other withered stumps of time," or figures from history, are depicted on the walls. Then he launches into several disparate passages, the first of which is a hysterical plea by the woman in the room to her lover. "My nerves are bad to-night," she says, and "Stay with / me." She also asks the man what he is thinking, and repeats the word "think" several times in both question and statement form, ending with a one-word sentence, "Think." Eliot is trying to get his readers to think about the modern waste land, which is clearly indicated by his multiple emphases of the word "think" and the fact that he sets it off on its own.

Eliot repeats this pattern in another snatch of dialogue, in which he emphasizes the words "noise," "wind," and "nothing." He sets off "nothing" in its own one-word sentence like "think," although as a question: "Nothing?" The wind and the noise evoke an image of activity and life, but the final "nothing" again underscores the lack of meaning that Eliot is trying to convey. Following this passage, Eliot includes a passage that talks about remembering the "pearls that were his eyes," which refers back to the dead Phoenician sailor from the first section. Finally, in the last passage that refers to the wealthy woman and her lover, Eliot has them talking to each other, asking what they should do. Ultimately they decide "we shall play a game of chess, / Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon / the door." While this game of chess refers back to the sexual game from Middleton's play, the rich couple literally play a game of chess, since their relationship is sterile.

The next passage switches relationships, from the idle rich to the dirt poor. This scene, which continues until the end of the section, concerns "Lil" and her husband "Albert," who has just been "demobbed," or released from the military. The line "HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME" is a reference to the last call at the pub, or bar, and indicates that

they must hurry if they wish to drink. The poem talks about Albert, who has "been in the army four years" and who "wants a good time." In other words he wants to have sex with his wife. He has also given his wife money to buy "new teeth," because he cannot stand looking at her bad teeth. And, as Lil is warned, if she does not give Albert a good time, "there's others will." The line "HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME" is used again, reinforcing the importance of alcohol in the relationship. The woman's appearance is described as "antique," even though she is only thirty-one, and she attributes this to "them pills I took, to bring it off," a reference to abortion. As the next line notes of her previous children, "She's had five already," a testament to Albert's immense sexual appetite, which is discussed further when Eliot says Albert will not leave the woman alone. But Lil is asked, "What you get married for if you don't want children?" This line refers back to the fertility thread in the poem and the fact that modern sex is not always about procreation. The section ends with several more references to "HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME," showing that drinking has taken on more importance in the relationship than anything else. So, as with the first section, Eliot is showing the loss of meaning—in this case during sex, and through images of loveless sex—by

showing that this is true for both the rich and the poor. Just as the king from Weston's book is wounded sexually, so is all of human society. It has lost the vitality and procreative focus of sex, and instead sex is a meaningless—and in the case of abortion, fruit-less—act.

III. The Fire Sermon

The third section also addresses sex. The title refers to one of Buddha's teachings about desire and the need to deny one's lustful tendencies. The images with which Eliot chooses to open this section underscore this idea of lovelessness. For example, "the last fingers of leaf / Clutch and sink into the wet bank." The dying vegetation is a sign of the death of fertility, as is the brown land and "The nymphs" who have departed. Also the fact that the river bears no litter, such as "empty bottles," "Silk handkerchiefs," or "cigarette ends," all of which are a "testimony of summer nights"—in other words, signs of a raucous party—the image of lifelessness is enhanced. There is no youthful passion anymore. This feeling of despair is noted further through such phrases as "A rat crept softly through the vegetation / Dragging its slimy belly on the bank." From here on, Eliot includes images and references to sex and death, including

talking about "my father's death" and "White bodies naked on the low damp ground."

After a brief, four-line stanza in which he once again invokes the rape of Philomel, Eliot returns to the "Unreal City," the modern city, where he is propositioned by a "Mr. Eugenides" to have "luncheon at the Cannon Street Hotel / Followed by a weekend at the Metropole." These two locations, famous for clandestine meetings, indicate that Mr. Eugenides wants to have a homosexual affair with the poet.

Following this interlude, Eliot introduces the character of Tiresias, a mythological, prophetic figure who was turned into a hermaphrodite—indicated by the phrases "throbbing between two / lives" and "Old man with wrinkled female breasts." The fact that Tiresias is a prophet is important, since Tiresias can see the true nature of things. In Eliot's notes he calls this character the most important one in the poem. Tiresias witnesses a sex scene between a "typist home at teatime" and "A small house agent's clerk." The woman prepares food until the man arrives, and they eat. After the meal, "she is bored and tired," but he nevertheless starts to "engage her in caresses." Although these advances are "undesired," the woman makes no attempt to stop the

man, so "he assaults at once," oblivious to the woman's "indifference." After the man leaves, "She turns and looks a moment in the glass / Hardly aware of her departed lover," her only thought being, "Well now that's done: and I'm glad it's over."

At this point Eliot includes a long montage of scenes from London interspersed with many literary references to failed relationships through the ages. The indented passage that begins with the line "The river sweats" invokes a Wagner poem that describes the downfall of ancient gods. The section concludes with a quotation from St. Augustine's Confessions: "O Lord Thou pluckest me out / O Lord Thou pluckest." St. Augustine was a noted lecher in the days before he embraced religion. This passage is placed directly before the last line of the section, "burning." This one-word line refers to the Buddhist sermon that gives the section its title, and which encourages men to douse the fires of lust.

IV. Death by Water

The brief fourth section, the shortest of the five, starts off with a reference to "Phlebas the Phoenician," the dead sailor who was first mentioned in the second section. Eliot is again

focusing on death, and in this section he gives a thorough description of the sailor's body being torn apart by the sea: "A current under sea / Picked his bones in whispers." The section ends with an address and warning to the reader to "Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall / as you."

V. What the Thunder Said

The poem's final section builds on the images of death and sterility, but attempts to offer hope that these can be overcome, as they are overcome in the waste land of Weston's book. The title of the section is derived from an Indian fertility legend in which all beings—men, gods, and devils—find the power to restore life to the waste land by listening to what the thunder says. The section begins with a long discussion of Jesus Christ, "He who was living is now dead," which leads into scenes from Christ's journey to Emmaus following his resurrection, where he joins two disciples that do not recognize him: "Who is the third who walks always beside you?" one disciple asks the other.

Following the images of Christ, Eliot alludes to scenes of battle, "hooded hordes swarming / Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth." The dry earth refers back to the

waste land. Eliot includes more images of war and destruction, noting the "Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air / Falling towers." The image is one of a castle being destroyed, and Eliot follows this image with a list of historical cities that were destroyed or that fell into ruin and decay: "Jerusalem Athens Alexandria / Vienna London." By including London at the end of this list, Eliot implies that the modern city is also falling into decay, a moral decay. From this description Eliot moves on to discuss "the empty chapel," a reference to the Chapel Perilous, which Weston's book describes as the final stage on the hero's quest to restore life to the waste land. At this point, "a damp gust" brings rain to the dry and cracked land, and then the thunder speaks, "DA." According to the Indian legend, men, gods, and devils ask the thunder the same question, and each is given a different answer—give, sympathize, and control, respectively. After each response, Eliot includes several lines that respond to the thunder on these topics. Critics disagree on whether these responses are meant to be pessimistic or optimistic, but many feel they are Eliot's solution to restore life to the modern waste land.

In the last stanza of the poem, the Fisher King from Weston's book speaks: "I sat upon the shore / Fishing, with

the arid plain behind me / Shall I at least set my lands in order?" The king wonders what the solution is, how he can bring life back to the waste land again. Eliot follows this passage with a line from an English nursery rhyme: "London Bridge is falling down falling down falling / down." These words take the work from the mythological world back to Europe, which also in Eliot's view is a waste land that is falling down. The poem ends with several phrases from different languages, which give a mixed message. Some discuss rebirth, while others discuss violence and death. The final line consists of the same words repeated three times, "Shantih shantih shantih," which Eliot and others have noted can loosely be translated as the peace which passes understanding, and which seems to be Eliot's final pronouncement—only through peace will humanity ultimately be able to restore its vitality.

THE BLACK ARTS MOVEMENT (1965-1975)

The Black Arts Movement was the name given to a group of politically motivated black poets, artists, dramatists, musicians, and writers who emerged in the wake of the Black Power Movement. The poet Imamu Amiri Baraka is widely considered to be the father of the Black Arts Movement, which began in 1965 and ended in 1975. The Black Arts Movement was formally established in 1965 when Baraka opened the Black Arts Repertory Theater in Harlem. The movement had its greatest impact in theater and poetry.

The Black Arts Movement began—symbolically, at least—the day after Malcolm X was assassinated in 1965. Baraka described the goal of the movement as “to create an art, a literature that would fight for black people's liberation with as much intensity as Malcolm X our ‘Fire Prophet’ and the rest of the enraged masses who took to the streets.”

The Black Arts movement emerged in the mid-1960s as the artistic arm of the Black Power movement, a militant political operation that rejected the integrationist purposes and practices of the Civil Rights movement that preceded it.

The Black Arts movement was one of the only American literary movements to merge art with a political agenda. Because poems were short and could be recited at rallies and other political activities to incite and move a crowd, poetry was the most popular literary genre of the Black Arts movement, followed closely by drama.

The Black Power movement, from which the Black Arts movement derived, sought to empower African- American communities economically and politically by relying solely on resources within the black community. It also sought to celebrate blackness and restore positive images of black people from the negative stereotyping that took place in the larger society. Thus slogans, such as “Black Is Beautiful,” were prominent during the time.

The Black Arts Movement left behind many timeless pieces of literature, poetry, and theater. Despite the male-dominated nature of the movement, several black female writers rose to lasting fame including Nikki Giovanni, Sonia Sanchez, Audre Lorde, June Jordan, among others.

Although the Black Arts movement began its decline during the mid-1970s, at the same time as the Black Power movement began its descent, it introduced a new breed of

black poets and a new brand of black poetry. It also inspired and energized already established poets like Gwendolyn Brooks and Robert Hayden. The Black Arts movement created many poetic innovations in form, language, and style that have influenced the work of many of today's spoken word artists and socially conscious rap lyricists.

The movement began to fade when Baraka and other leading members shifted from Black Nationalism to Marxism in the mid-1970s, a shift that alienated many who had previously identified with the movement. Despite its brief official existence, the movement created institutions dedicated to promoting the work of Black artists. It also created space for the Black artists who came afterward.

Amiri Baraka (1934–2014)

Amiri Baraka is an African American poet, activist and scholar. He was an influential Black nationalist and later became a Marxist. Amiri Baraka was born Everett LeRoi Jones in Newark, New Jersey, on October 7, 1934.

After Black Muslim leader Malcolm X was killed in 1965, Jones repudiated his former life and ended his marriage. He moved to Harlem and founded the Black Arts Repertory

Theatre/School. The Black Arts Movement helped develop a new aesthetic for black art and Baraka was its primary theorist. Black American artists should follow “black,” not “white” standards of beauty and value. He moved back to Newark, and in 1967 he married poet Sylvia Robinson (now known as Amina Baraka).

In 1968, Jones became a Muslim, changing his name to Imamu Amiri Baraka. He assumed leadership of his own black Muslim organization. He founded the Black Community Development and Defense Organization, a Muslim group committed to affirming black culture and to gaining political power for blacks. In 1974 Baraka adopted a Marxist Leninist philosophy and dropped the spiritual title "Imamu."

Baraka’s legacy as a major poet of the second half of the 20th century remains matched by his importance as a cultural and political leader. His influence on younger writers has been significant and widespread, and as a leader of the Black Arts movement of the 1960s Baraka did much to define and support black literature’s mission into the next century.

A Poem for Black Hearts

For Malcolm's eyes, when they broke
the face of some dumb white man, For
Malcolm's hands raised to bless us
all black and strong in his image
of ourselves, For Malcolm's words
fire darts, the victor's tireless
thrusts, words hung above the world
change as it may, he said it, and
for this he was killed, for saying,
and feeling, and being/ change, all
collected hot in his heart, For Malcolm's
heart, raising us above our filthy cities,
for his stride, and his beat, and his address
to the grey monsters of the world, For Malcolm's
pleas for your dignity, black men, for your life,
black man, for the filling of your minds
with righteousness, For all of him dead and
gone and vanished from us, and all of him which
clings to our speech black god of our time.
For all of him, and all of yourself, look up,
black man, quit stuttering and shuffling, look up,
black man, quit whining and stooping, for all of him,

For Great Malcolm a prince of the earth, let nothing in us rest
until we avenge ourselves for his death, stupid animals
that killed him, let us never breathe a pure breath if
we fail, and white men call us faggots till the end of
the earth.

Analysis

The poem, written in free verse, consists of twenty-seven lines that build an image of Malcolm X, which immortalizes him as a “black god of our time” while encouraging African American men to continue the struggle for civil rights. Malcolm’s body and essence are fragmented by the speaker; each part of Malcolm’s body is given significance so that the created image of the fallen leader becomes an image for all “black men.”

While the poem is “For Black Hearts,” it is also “For Malcolm’s eyes,” which, according to the speaker, have the ability to break “the face of some dumb white man” by challenging his authority, his bigotry. The poem is “For/ Malcolm’s hands,” which “blessed” everyone in the African American community (the speaker included), “black and strong in his [Malcolm’s] image.” The speaker asserts that the poem is “for Malcolm’s words,” which are descriptively

and figuratively renamed “fire darts” to show that his flaming words included the rhetoric of war and were carefully aimed at the enemy.

The speaker feels that Malcolm was assassinated “for saying, feeling, and being/ change,” believing that Malcolm was murdered for speaking out against racism and encouraging political action by “any means necessary.” In addition, the poem is “For Malcolm’s/ heart,” his love for his fellow “black men” and his “pleas” for African American dignity, life, and education. Finally, the poem is “For all of him [Malcolm] dead” and all of him remembered, which “clings to” African American political and cultural rhetoric.

The speaker incites his intended readers, “black men,” to “quit stuttering and shuffling,” “whining and stooping” and to “look up.” Instead of hanging their heads in defeat, “black men” should raise their heads in dignity and look to Malcolm as an example of African American pride, masculinity, and political activism. In the closing lines, the speaker, while aligning himself with and including himself in the African American community, challenges “black men” to “let nothing in [them] rest” until Malcolm’s death has been avenged. He furthers his vow of vengeance by pledging that “if we fail” to avenge Malcolm’s death, “let us never breathe a pure

breath.” It is clear, at this moment in the text, that the speaker wants “black men” to internalize Malcolm’s eyes, words, heart, and dignity as well as his desire to change the world so that the voices of “black men” can continue to speak and act within the space Malcolm helped create.

POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE

Although colonialism has existed since ancient times, it is most usually associated with European colonialism, which started in the 15th century across countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean Islands, and South America. The modern era of colonialism refers to the most prevalent period of colonialism. This period began when the Portuguese Prince, Henry the Navigator, initiated the age of exploration and colonialism by setting up trading posts in Africa. After Portugal made the first move, other European powers, namely Spain, Britain, France, The Netherlands, and Prussia (Germany) expanded their respective colonial reach as well.

Towards the beginning of the 18th Century, after America gained independence in 1776, the United States also participated in the colonization of areas all over the world, mainly Africa. This period is known for its brutality and lack of empathy and care for human lives. It was also during this time in which the slave trade reached its height. Mother countries, meaning the countries who conquered, drew boundaries with no concern for tribal lands or rivalries and plundered their natural resources. This set many people back hundreds of years within both social and economic

circles. The United States also imposed its own culture, ignoring hundreds of years of tradition and history.

While contemporarily most find these practices to be immoral, they were commonplace during the modern period of colonialism. Most countries that were colonized during this time have luckily won their independence, but the consequences have been long-lasting and violent, leaving most countries war-torn and unstable. For example, Nigeria before colonization was a series of powerful African empires and kingdoms such as the Oyo Empire and Islamic Kanem-Bornu Empire. However, after they were colonized by Britain, gaining their independence in 1960, the country was thrown into civil war and chaos due to the arbitrary borders the colonizers had drawn.

Postcolonialism is a period of reconstruction and healing for these countries, directly responding to the consequences of colonialism. One of the ways the world has reacted to colonialism is through the postcolonialism literary lens. Postcolonial literature is one of the most important ways in which the world has been able to assess the damage and cultural effects of colonialism.

Postcolonialism is both an academic framework as well as a temporal classification that deals with the period that came after the end of colonialism. Keep in mind that the end of colonialism is not a single, universal date. The colonial period varies for different countries that were formerly colonized.

Colonialism **is a** practice where a population is ruled by another country. Colonization involves extracting resources from the colony and imposing the colonizer's social practices and cultural values on the colonized. Colonialism is criticized today for its exploitative nature and for weakening and disrupting the indigenous economic and especially cultural traditions in the colony. There are different types of colonies based on the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer, such as settler and non-settler colonies. While many European nations such as Belgium, Spain, Portugal, and France had colonies in different parts of the world, Britain had one of the biggest colonial empires, and therefore, the history and impact of British colonialism are studied more widely.

Imperialism is a practice or policy of exerting control over a population through direct or indirect means. It is easy

to think that imperialism and colonialism are the same practice; they are closely connected but not synonymous. Although both are systems based on power and control, imperialism differs from colonialism in that it can be achieved through means other than direct rule or force. For example, Western countries today exert degrees of influence on developing nations economically, politically, and culturally. Imperialism continues to this day in different ways, whereas colonialism is no longer acceptable as a social system.

Postcolonialism in English literature

A good way to start any definition of postcolonial literature is to think about the origins of the term post colonialism and how it has been used in literary criticism, from roughly the late 1980s to present times. The term is sometimes written with a hyphen, sometimes left unhyphenated, with the two forms used to designate the same areas of interest by different critics. The **hyphenated** version was first used by political scientists and economists to denote the period after colonialism, but from about the late seventies it was turned into a more wide-ranging cultural analysis in the hands of literary critics and others. The **unhyphenated** version is conventionally used to distinguish

it from the earlier repetition that referred only to specific time period and to indicate a tendency toward literary criticism and the analysis of various discourses at the intersection of race, gender and diaspora, among others. In fact, the hyphenated forms are the older and more conventional. Some critics restrict the use of ‘post-colonial’ to ‘writing by those peoples formerly colonized by Britain’ and ‘the Anglophone literatures of countries other than Britain and the United States’.

A possible working definition for postcolonialism is that it involves a studied engagement with the experience of colonialism and its past and present effects, both at the local level of ex-colonial societies and at the level of more general global developments thought to be the after-effects of empire.

Post colonialism often also involves the discussion of experiences such as slavery, migration, suppression and resistance, difference, race, gender and place as well as responses to the discourses of imperial Europe such as history, philosophy, anthropology and linguistics. The term is as much about conditions under imperialism and colonialism

proper, as about conditions coming after the historical end of colonialism.

A growing concern among postcolonial critics has also been with racial minorities in the west, embracing Native and African Americans in the US, British Asians and African Caribbeans in the UK. Because of these features, postcolonialism allows for a wide range of applications, designating a constant interplay and slippage between the sense of a historical transition, a socio-cultural location and an epochal configuration.

Edward Said's Orientalism (1978) is considered as pivotal in the shaping of postcolonial studies. In Orientalism, Said argued for seeing a direct correlation between the knowledge that oriental scholars produced and how these were redeployed in the constitution of colonial rule.

Postcolonial literature includes literature from former colonial nations as well as works that are about the practice and legacy of colonialism and the postcolonial experience of the descendants of the colonized. Though postcolonial literature is not exclusively written in English, postcolonial literature in English enjoys more fame and attention, partially because of the dominance of English on the global stage.

The twentieth century was marked by anti-colonial rebellions and resistance movements from colonies all over the world. We can identify several contributing factors that inspired the rise of postcolonial literature:

- The introduction of English education made the native communities proficient in English, enough to be able to read, write, and speak English.
- Pro-independence movements against colonial authorities inspired the colonized subjects to write fictional and non-fictional accounts of life under colonial rule, sometimes as a part of the anti-colonial resistance.
- Globalization and the free flow of commodities across nations gave an incentive for postcolonial writers to seek global fame for their creative efforts in English.
- Writers of postcolonial backgrounds broke away from their regional modes of storytelling by adopting the language and narrative models of the West. This is seen as a consequence of cultural disruption as well as an act of co-opting the language of the colonial authority to express native sentiments and stories.

Postcolonial literature characteristics

Postcolonial literature is not a watertight genre that carries certain assured characteristics. It is an umbrella term used to group together works by writers from postcolonial nations and those written about the impacts of colonialism. However, there are certain overlapping or recurring themes.

Postcolonial literature challenges the mainstream narratives about colonialism and colonial populations by presenting the other side of the story and humanizing the characters who are often portrayed through colonial stereotypes. Postcolonial literature functions as a vehicle to display talent from erstwhile colonies and to present postcolonial cultures to counter stereotypical narratives around them.

Themes of postcolonial literature

Now we will explore the themes that usually feature in works of postcolonial literature.

Hybridity

The concept of hybridity was proposed by the literary scholar and theorist Homi K. Bhabha (b. 1949) to describe how the

encounters between different cultures create new identities that contain elements of both. Hybrid identities and belonging to different worlds at the same time are common themes in postcolonial literature.

Language

Cultural encounters are rarely only about power. Other aspects of culture, such as language, are always liable to influences. The language in postcolonial fiction is particularly worthy of mention as the writers attempt to capture their native situations and characters in a foreign language. As a result, creative deviations in the use of language are common in postcolonial writing.

History

The notion that history is a single, unified story is increasingly challenged by scholars and historians. It is sometimes the case that some groups or experiences are left out of popular history. Postcolonial literature also works as an alternative way of writing history from the point of view of an individual or a particular community.

Hierarchy of power

Most social relations include power struggles. Power is distributed in society along the lines of gender, race, wealth, religion and so on. The inequality in the relationship between the colonial masters and subjects is explored in remarkable ways in postcolonial fiction. The postcolonial condition or the consequences and impact of colonialism are present in postcolonial writing more often than not.

Intertextuality

Often, local themes, myths, and art forms make an appearance in postcolonial fiction. Sometimes the myths are directly inspired by epics and mythological narratives from folk or oral literature of the region. Intertextuality means the connection between two texts of the same or different formats, achieved through direct or implied references.

Others

A social practice stemming from overt or implicit biases that cause certain sections of society to be treated as less than or inferior to other, sometimes more dominant groups in a country. Othering may be based on race, language, religious beliefs, and nationality.

Postcolonial Literary Theory

Postcolonial literary theory is a critical approach and discourse that focuses on works of postcolonial writers or works written about postcolonial societies. Postcolonial criticism also includes reading a work of literature without direct colonial associations to look for underlying colonial themes.

Colonial and Postcolonial Literature traces the history of colonial and postcolonial literature. It represents all these conditions and comes from various sources and inspiration. Among the significant works on postcolonial theory are: *The Location of Culture* by Homi K. Bhabha, *Empire Writes Back* by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Wretched of the Earth* by Franz Fanon , One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, and *Orientalism* by Edward Said.

Shakespeare's Othello, Antony and Cleopatra and The Tempest have been taken as key texts for the application of postcolonial modes of analysis. This suggests that postcolonial literature is a broad term that encompasses literatures by people from the erstwhile colonial world, as

well as from the various minority diasporas that live in the west.

Conclusion

- Postcolonial literature refers to literary works originating from postcolonial nations and/or addressing the legacy of colonialism.
- Postcolonial literature tends to deal with the experience of colonialism and the evolution of cultures in the aftermath of colonialism.
- Common themes in postcolonial literature include identity, power, loss of culture, nostalgia, and belonging. Postcolonial literature speaks on themes of colonialism, nationalism, cultural identity, family, the future and the past, and more. Postcolonial writers often utilize the language of their colonizers effort to speak plainly and clearly about the effects that colonialism has had on their country and culture.
- Postcolonial theory is a critical analysis of the history and impact of colonialism used to evaluate fictional works.

- Postcolonial literature is incredibly important around the world. By reading and analyzing these literary works, whether they be poems or novels, readers are provided with valuable insight into the lives, customs, and struggles of various marginalized communities worldwide. These novels highlight perspectives that help readers understand the influence of colonialism worldwide.


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