

## **COURSE GUIDE**

**ENG216**

**SURVEY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE (II)  
RESTORATION TO PRESENT**

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## **Introduction**

### **ENG 216 Survey of English Literature (II) Restoration to the Present**

ENG216 is a one-semester course of two credit units. It is designed for students of English as well as others in related departments involved with studies in communication.

The course has fifteen units which cover important topics in English literary tradition such as why English Literature is the ‘ensign’ of England, troubleshooting approach to reading English Literature, hints from the sociology of English Literature, theme and style in English poetry, drama, and prose fiction. The course has been broken down into relevant ages/periods for study convenience. The early/rapid growth of English Literature and metaphysical poetries are also discussed. We have also reacted critically to English essays across the English literary period. We have ‘technically’ built in the aspect of essays into the text to teach another relevant perspective that is different from English genre, poetry, drama and prose. This course has been written to broaden your scope and understanding of English Literature which you have acquired in ENG122 and ENG123, *Introduction to English Poetry* and *Introduction to English Drama*.

We have designed the course material to expand your awareness of English Literature beginning from the Restoration period to the present. As you study the course, we help to boost your interest by consciously avoiding unnecessary terms, jargons or complexities. This means we have also tried not to allow irrelevant ideas to get in the way of this course so as not to hinder you from easy comprehension of its ideas. Our ideas are conveyed in clear, readable, and understandable prose to enable you have full access to the work.

ENG216 is specifically addressed to you to cater for your learning needs within the scope of this course. The course will serve as your ‘compass’ to understanding English Literature and how history has shaped the English literary tradition from the Restoration period to the present. We have written the course to offer you a comprehensive idea of England, her Literature and why English Literature may be humourously and correctly be described as the ‘ensign’ or the ‘flag’ of England.

## **Course Aims**

This course is designed to take you through a survey of English Literature beginning from the Restoration to the present. It is meant to:

- Acquaint you with the social environment of the Restoration period in England.
- Discuss themes and styles in select English literary texts across the genres/ages.
- Examine the factors that gave rise to the English novel.
- Update your knowledge of English literary phases and great writers/events that connect English literary writers across ages.
- Familiarise you with the various English essays across ages.

## **Course Objectives**

Objectives are those things we expect you to be able to do at the end of the study. These objectives will guide you when reading through the study and they will also help you in self-assessment and where you need to improve on your learning and study habits. By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Discuss the various approaches you can adopt for easy reading of English Literature.
- Assess the style of some English creative writers and the relevant ages of literary practice.
- Get familiar with the factors that gave rise to the English novel.
- Attempt a discussion of the sociology of English Literature.
- List themes in select English poetry, drama and prose fiction in the relevant ages.
- State and explain indices of the early/rapid development of English Literature.

## **Working through the Course**

There are fifteen study units which you have to go through in this course. You should study the contents in each unit before you attempt the questions. Also, you should pay attention to the objectives of each study unit to guide you through the unit. You must be ready to think along your reading and make some relevant notes as you read through this course material because we have designed it to make you do so. You will be assessed through tutor-marked assignments which you are expected to do and turn in to your tutor at the right time. You are also expected to write an examination at the end of the course. The time of the examination will be communicated to you.

## **Course Materials**

The major components of the course are:

1. Course guide
2. Study units
3. Textbooks
4. Assignment files
5. Presentation schedule

### **Study Units**

There are fifteen units in this course, and these are:

#### **MODULE 1 EXPERIMENTING WITH ENGLISH HISTORY AND LITERATURE FOR THE HUMAN GOOD (1649 to Present)**

- Unit 1 History and English Literature (I) (1649-1789)
- Unit 2 History and English literature (II) (1789-1900)
- Unit 3 History and English literature (III) (1900 to present)
- Unit 4 Themes and Style in English Drama (I)
- Unit 5 Themes and Style in English Drama (II)

#### **MODULE 2 RESPONSE TO CREATIVITY: IMPRESSIONS AND EXPRESSIONS IN ENGLISH POETRY (1608 to Present)**

- Unit 1 Nostalgia in the Poetry of John Milton (1608-1674)
- Unit 2 Reminiscences: The Poetry of John Keats (1795-1821)
- Unit 3 Poetry and Nature. A Discussion of the Poetry of William Wordsworth (1770-1850)
- Unit 4 Other Prominent English Poets: William Blake (1757-1827), Alexander Pope (1688-1744) and William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)
- Unit 5 Poetry in Depth: The 'Mathematical' Language of English Poetry

#### **MODULE 3 NARRATIVE DESIGN AND THE ENGLISH SOCIETY (1649 to Present)**

- Unit 1 The English Novel
- Unit 2 Theme and Style in the English Novel (I)
- Unit 3 Theme and Style in the English Novel (II)
- Unit 4 Theme and Style in the English Novel (III)
- Unit 5 Theme and Style in the English Novel (IV)

### **Assignment File**

In this file, you will find all the details of the work you must submit to your tutor for grading. The mark you obtain from the assignment will be added toward the final mark you obtain for this course. Additional information or assignments will be found in the assignment file itself as well as the section on assessment in this course guide.

### Presentation Schedule

The presentation schedule which have been included in your course materials gives you the important dates you are expected to complete your tutor-marked assignments as and when due.

### Course Marking Scheme

The table below gives a breakdown of the course mark:

Assignment	Marks
Assignment 1 – 15	Four assignments; best three marks of the assignments count for 30% of course marks.
Final examination	The final examination counts for 70% of overall marks
Total	100% of course marks

### Course Overview

Unit	Title of Work	Week's Activity	Assessment (End of Unit)
1.	History and English Literature (I) (1649-1789)	1	Assignment 1
2.	History and English literature (II) (1789-1900)	2	Assignment 2
3.	History and English literature (III) (1900 to Present)	3	Assignment 3
4.	Themes and Style in English Drama (I)	4	Assignment 4
5.	Themes and Style in English Drama (II)	5	Assignment 5
6.	Nostalgia in the Poetry of John Milton (1608-1674)	6	Assignment 6
7.	Reminiscences: The Poetry of John Keats (1795-1821)	7	Assignment 7
8.	Poetry and Nature. A Discussion of the Poetry of William Wordsworth (1770-1850)	8	Assignment 8
9.	Other Prominent English Poets: William Blake (1757-1827), Alexander Pope (1688-1744) and William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)	9	Assignment 9
10.	Poetry in Depth: The 'Mathematical' Language of English Poetry	10	Assignment 10

11.	The English Novel	11	Assignment 11
12.	Theme and Style in the English Novel (I)	12	Assignment 12
13.	Theme and Style in the English Novel (II)	13	Assignment 13
14.	Theme and Style in the English Novel (III)	14	Assignment 14
15.	Theme and Style in the English Novel (IV)	15	Assignment 15
		16	Review
		17	Review
		18	Review

### **How to Get the Most from the Course**

The study units in this course have been written in such a way that you will understand them without the lecturer being physically there with you. And this is why your programme is a distance learning one. Each study unit is for one week. The study unit will introduce you to the topic meant for the week; it will give you the stated/expected objectives for the unit and what you are expected to be able to do at the end of the unit. You only need to be focused and consistent in your study habit to find ENG216 exciting.

### **Assessment**

You will be assessed in two ways in this course – the tutor-marked assignment and a written examination. You are expected to do the assignments and submit them to your tutorial facilitator for formal assessment in accordance with the stated deadlines in the presentation schedule and the ‘assignment file’. Your tutor-marked assignments will account for 30% of the total course mark.

### **Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)**

ENG216 is a course that focuses on one of the periods of English Literature. You are expected to do the tutor-marked assignments at the end of every unit. You are expected to have read through the units before you meet your tutorial facilitator. You will be assessed on the contents of the various units, but some of them will be selected and used for your continuous assessment. Your completed tutor-marked assignments must reach your tutorial facilitator before the stated deadline.

The total marks of the best three will be 30% of your total course mark. Assignments for the units in this course are contained in the Assignment File. You should be able to complete your assignments from the information and materials contained in your set textbooks, reading and study units. However, you should use your other references to broaden your knowledge of the subject.

### **Final Examination and Grading**



The final examination for ENG216 will be a two and half hours paper in which you will be expected to answer three questions. The thirty marks for the tutor-marked assignments and seventy marks for the examination give a total of one hundred marks (i.e.  $30 + 70 = 100$ ). The patterns of the questions will not be very different from those you are familiar with in your tutor-marked exercises. You should revise the units very well before the date of your final examination.

### **Tutors and Tutorials**

There are 8 tutorial hours for this course. The dates, time, location, name and phone number of your tutorial facilitator and your tutorial group will be communicated to you. Feel free to relate with your tutorial facilitator who will mark, correct your assignments, and monitor your attendance/performance by phone or email if you have any problem with the contents of any of the study units.

### **Summary**

ENG216 is designed to introduce you to the literary and sociological experience of England from the period of Restoration to the present and across the genre of English Literature to improve your knowledge of the comprehensive literary experience of England. On completion, you should be well equipped with all the necessary skills needed to discuss English literary tradition across the relevant ages: historical and social information, cultural, political, religious styles in the major literary genres and essays from the Restoration to the Present.

I wish you the best as you go through this course. Give it a trial and you will like to study English Literature.

## **MODULE 1**

### **Experimenting with English History and Literature for the Human Good**

Unit 1	History and English Literature (I) 1649-1789
Unit 2	History and English literature (II) 1789-1900
Unit 3	Themes and Style in English Drama (I)
Unit 4	Themes and Style in English Drama (II)

## **UNIT 1 HISTORY AND ENGLISH LITERATURE (I) 1649-1789**

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3.2.1	English Literature and the Augustan or Neo-classical Age (1713-1789)
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMA)
7.0	References/further Reading

### **INTRODUCTION**

We have designed this unit to introduce you to the history of English Literature, the Restoration and Augustan or Neo-classical age. The purpose is to enable you understand the Literature of England from the perspectives of the periods. This will enable you discuss English Literature from a much more chronological and scholarly angles, with the understanding of the major events that distinguish one age from another, especially the literary output of the Restoration and Augustan age. You will then know that the social problems, including wars and conflicts, are also important or instrumental to the growth of English literary tradition as well as the eventual social, political and economic stability/growth of England of the relevant periods up to the present. This unit will enable you have a comprehensive awareness of the ideologies that defined the Restoration and Neo-classical or Augustan ages. Below are the objectives of this unit:

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain why the periods have been named Restoration and Augustan or Neo-classical respectively;
- Make an outline of some important events that characterised the Restoration age;
- Determine the major events that differentiate the Augustan from the Restoration;
- Equip yourself with some of the works of the major English Literary writers of the Restoration;
- State the works of the major English novelists of the Augustan age;
- Outline the causes and consequences of the revolution of the Restoration;
- State some of the writers of the Augustan period;
- Identify at least five writers and works of the Restoration;
- Compare the major conflicts of the Restoration with the Augustan;
- Differentiate the literary works of the Restoration from the Augustan;
- Review the history of the English Literature of the Restoration;
- Recognise the literary works that interest you in the Augustan age;
- Relate a specific writer with the relevant age;
- Select the events that interest you, either in the Restoration or Augustan periods (Neo-Classical).

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 The Restoration Age**

The Restoration Age is the re-establishment of monarchy in England with the return of Charles II in 1660. The period was marked by the creative experience of English Literary figures like Dryden, Rochester, Bunyan, Perys, Locke and the Restoration dramatists. One of the characteristic genres of the period is Restoration comedy or the comedy of manners which developed immediately the theatres were reopened. Its principal writers were Congreve, Etherege, Farquhar, Vanbrugh and Wycherley.

##### **3.1.2 English Literature and the Restoration Age (1649-1713)**

The Restoration (1649-1713) period in the history of England was characterised by years of conflicts, intrigues and wars between the King and parliament in the 1640s. In 1649, the Puritans, (Round heads) executed King Charles I shortly after they emerged victorious in the war; leading to the emergence of Oliver Cromwell as the Lord Protector. His son reigned in his stead after he died in 1658. The son's weak and unsuccessful reign made the parliament to invite the son of Charles I who was in France, and installed him as King Charles II.

The monarch was a puppet, as the parliament controlled power, but with the emergence of two strong parties, the Whigs and Tories, supported by the minister, the country moved on in her usual crisis. Charles II died in 1685, and was succeeded by

his brother, King James II. When he became a Catholic, his reign came to an abrupt end with what was described as “glorious or bloodless” revolution of 1688. That brought the monarchical reigns to an end in England of the Restoration. Afterward, and with the reign of Mary (sister of Charles) and James (her husband), William of Orange from Holland, the new ideology of the society shifted to non-revolutionary consciousness.

With the first half of the century dominated by Revolution, society was no longer interested in Revolution. The middle class members of the society were no longer interested in anything that would hinder progress and wealth creation. This was the era of individual’s economic advancement and general stability of the society fostered by scientific advancement and growth in commerce, especially with the establishment of the Bank of England in 1694.

The philosophy of the second half of the century entered into imaginative English Literature, with Thomas Hobbes’s *Leviathan* which was published in France in 1651. This allegorical novel is about a huge animal character, *Leviathan*, a metaphor for England. The writer is of the opinion that a strong government is necessary to control the citizen of any nation because only a strong and powerful government can prevent the outbreak of another revolution, and this was the picture of Britain after the Restoration. Also, the citizens of the state needed to be totally controlled.

After Europe had gone into war with the Spanish between 1710 and 1713, the Treaty of Utrecht took place and the United Kingdom became temporarily united when the union of the parliament of England and Scotland took place in 1707, but with Ireland still uncooperative. When England took the title, Commonwealth, under the reign of Oliver Cromwell, Andrew Marvel’s poem ‘An Horatian Ode Upon Cromwell’s Return from Ireland’ (1650) that commemorated/documentated the heroic return of Oliver Cromwell. This was a notable political poem in English. The poem earned Andrew Marvel the unofficial Poet Laureate during the Commonwealth. Also, Richard Lovelace’s, ‘To Lucasta, Going to the Wars’ is a feeling of nostalgia combined with regret and complaint of having to leave his loved ones for the war unavoidably.

The Restoration writers combined politics with the philosophy of man and his society. John Milton, (1608-1674) was one of the great poets in England who believed in Latin tradition and gave himself to the styles of some English poets including Chaucer, Classical and Christian influences run through his works; some of such are ‘On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity’, ‘Lycidas’ (1637) and ‘Paradise Lost’ (1667), a major epic poem in English. The poem uses the Biblical creation myth and place Satan and God side by side. Eve disobeys God and ignores the divine path and prefers to be separated from God. The allegory of this is that Eve chooses the human path of knowledge and freedom.

John Milton was also a prose writer on controversial issues of his time. Some of them are war, divorce, politics, religion, freedom of the press and education. He also wrote

‘Paradise Regained’ and ‘Samson Agonistes’. Another English poet, John Bunyan, in the second half of the seventeenth century, wrote ‘The Pilgrim’s Progress’ (1678) and ‘Second Part’. It is a fictional account of a Christian’s difficult journey through this world, while he looks up to the unknown God. He faces hardships from the Giant Despair and the slough of Despond (depth of depression) to Vanity Fair (pride), bringing to serious questioning the value humanity attached to life or the world of materialism. Ultimately the pilgrim recognises the more valuable existence of the Christian faith. The poem, ‘Pilgrim’s Progress’ is still being widely read in England.

Another religious writer of the Restoration, John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, was reckless, gave his life to extensive sex and alcohol, but died a Catholic. He was a symbol of the Restoration. His poetry is humorous, rude, satirical and celebrates the pleasure of society, especially during the life and time of the merrymaking, fun-loving King Charles II. Also, John Dryden, a poet, playwright and essayist wrote ‘To His Sacred Majesty’, ‘Absalom and Achitophel’ (1681), *Mac Flecknoe* (1682), *Of Dramatic Poesy* (1608) and the *Secular Masque* (1700). Some of Dryden’s numerous plays are *Marriage- a-la mode* (fashionable marriage) (1672), and *All for Love* (1678). Other writers of the age are George Ethereges, who wrote *Comical Revenge* (1664), *Man of Mode* (1664). Another writer, William Wycherley, wrote *The Country Wife*, (1675). The play is the playwright’s attempt to revive loose morals of London’s society. William Congreve wrote ‘The Way of the World’. Other writers are George Ferguher, Aphra Behn and Mary delà Riviere Manley. The works of Dryden and Shadwell copied the style and version of William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlow.

### **3.2 The Augustan or Neo-classical Age**

Augustan period, also known as the age of Pope, (1713-1789) is a term derived from the period of literary eminence under the Roman Emperor Augustus (27 BC-AD.14) during which Virgil, Horace and Ovid flourished. In English Literature, it refers generally to the early and mid-18<sup>th</sup> century Augustan writers such as Pope, Addison, Swift and Steele.

#### **3.2.1 English Literature and the Augustan or Neo-classical Age (1713-1789)**

The Augustan period (1713 –1789) was a clearly marked age of rebellion. The German house of Hanover evaded and took over the British throne. The grandson of James II, a Catholic, led an invasion but lost power to the Parliament and the Prime Minister between 1715 and 1745. The event coincided with the time of great revolutions in agriculture, industry, and the Declaration of American Independence in 1776 as well as the French revolution in 1789. Britain became threatened as she preferred to see her agricultural market grow as it did during the revolution of 1649. The theatre License Act of 1737 made drama infamous and the Classical idea of the Augustans was replaced by a more rational society where people had the freedom of independent thinking in a world that became friendlier with nature. Thus, the novel grew in popularity. As English readership increased and people left other jobs for agricultural economy, novels were more in demand among women.

The novel genre began as early as 1700. It emerged with the works of Thomas Nash after the Restoration of 1660. Aphra Behn wrote about thirty novels, some of which are in the form of love letters between a nobleman and his sister (1683). Aphra Behn wrote *Oroonoko* (1688). Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift's works were followed by Samuel Richardson's and those of Henry Fielding. Defoe wrote *Robinson Crusoe* in 1719. The hero of the novel, Crusoe, makes a home of the Island where he found himself after the ship in which he was traveling was wrecked. Being the sole survivor of the wreckage, he lived in the island for more than twenty-eight years. Crusoe's first human contact, Man Friday, and later his bird, Poll, became his companions in the Island. The famous story may be read as a fable of survival in place of human spirit. Man Friday comes with inferior value and ideology of his own kinsmen into the island, but Crusoe's European philosophy overpowers his and he becomes a model for the new capitalist Europe. Defoe recounts the story using the first person narrative technique, 'I'. The story was inspired by that of Alexander Selkirk who was marooned in an island for many years.

Daniel Defoe also wrote *Moll Flanders* (1722), the story of a woman who has been a thief, prostitute, committed incest and has been in and out of prisons. The woman tells her own story as a refined citizen of her society. The novel reflects the immoral nature of the Augustan age or eighteenth century. But Jonathan Swift's *Battle of the Books* (1704) tells the differences between the ancient (classical writers) and moderns (literary ideology after Augustan period). The work appeals to the ancient to give the modern a room for creative expansion. Swift's *Gulliver's Travel* (1726) reflects the sense of the satire and humour that took over the English creative space with its humorous way of telling the world what he saw that was really wrong with it. In the novel, which is in four parts - Gulliver travels to Lilliput, meets the small inhabitants but meets more 'gigantic' people when he gets to Brobdingnag. The king of Brobdingnag, when he hears the description Gulliver gives of the people of England, concludes that the English are "the most pernicious race of little odious vermins that nature ever suffered to create upon the surface of the earth." The third part of the book reveals the Royal Society of 1662 and 1663 that was founded for the improvement of natural knowledge (science and culture). But, in the fourth part of the book, Gulliver meets the more cultured horses, the houyhnhnms, and compares their culture to that of the naughty monkey-like social yahoos called man. Swift also wrote *A Modest Proposal* (1729).

Samuel Richardson wrote *Pamela* (1740), and *Clarissa*, 1747-49, while Henry Fielding wrote *Joseph Andrew* (1742), *Tom Jones*, (1749). Charlotte Lennox wrote, *The Life of Harriot Stuart* (1750), Harace Walpole wrote *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). After John Dryden died, Alexander Pope wrote *The Rape of the Lock*, (1712), *Dunciad*, (1728,) Dryden had also published *Mac Flecknoe*, *Essay on Criticism*, 1711, and *Essay on Man*, 1733-4. Other writers of this period include Thomas Gray, 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard' (1750); Edward Young, 'Night Thoughts' (1742); Robert Blair, 'The Grave' (1743); James Thompson, 'The Seasons' (1726-1730); and Oliver Goldsmith's, 'The Deserted Village' (1770).

With the growing demand for the printed word among the middle classes, writing became a profession, as people became full-time writers of poetry, prose, plays, essays as well as journals. Magazines and journalism too became popular; thus there was growth in information and communication about Scotland, her capital, Edinburgh, and the English capital city, London.

Philosophical writings too became part of the developments of the eighteenth century with the works of the Economists, Adam Smith and David Hume. Richard Steele started *The Guardian* and the *Englishman Magazines* (1793-1714). These magazines were often about the socio- economic and political developments in England; such issues often caused controversies whenever discussed in the magazines. As a result, many writers and editors were often imprisoned for expressing their opinions too frankly or disparagingly. For example, Daniel Defoe was imprisoned for writing a pamphlet, *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (1702). Samuel Johnson wrote the *Dictionary of the English* (1755), *The Lives of English Poets* (1779- 1781), and a preface to William Shakespeare (1765), a work that marked the beginning of critical writings on Shakespeare. Johnson's impressive comments on the works of William Shakespeare promoted the aesthetics of his works as well as Shakespeare's personality. James Boswell wrote *Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791), which is the first great biography in English. Oliver Goldsmith wrote *She Stoops to Conquer* (1767). All kinds of writings existed in the period; letters and diaries such as Lord Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son* (1774), described as a book of manners. Many critics, including Samuel Johnson, disliked the kind of manner the letters described.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

What is the Restoration Age?

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit, we have defined the Restoration as well as the Augustan ages. We have also explained the reasons the Restoration and Augustan periods are so named. We have also provided useful information on causes of the various rebellions and conflicts in the Age of Restoration as well as Augustan. We have mentioned the names and works of great writers in the Restoration as well as the Augustan. Reading through the unit, you will realise that the Restoration and Augustan ages overlapped. The point at which they appeared separated is clear in the unit.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:

- The reasons Restoration and Augustan ages have been so described;
- That it is important for you to know the causes of the major rebellions in the Restoration and Augustan ages;
- The Restoration period is different from the Augustan period, but related events characterised the periods;
- How the Restoration and Augustan evolved;
- The chronology of the works and popular genres of the Restoration and Augustan periods.

The next unit will focus on another aspect of the history of English Literature, the Romantic and Victorian periods.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMA)

Read and answer the questions below:

1. (a) What is Restoration?  
(b) Define the Neo-classical or Augustan age.
2. How is the age of Restoration different from Neo- classical or Augustan?
3. (a) List at least five major writers of the age and their works.  
(b) Outline the themes of the works.



## 7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READING

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## **UNIT 2 HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE (II) 1789-1900**

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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

We have written and designed this unit to further explain the history of English Literature that begins this module. This unit discusses the literary experience of the Romantic and Victorian ages of English Literature. It identifies the literary developments with the related socio-political and economic events that essentially differentiate the Romantic from the Victorian period. Such experiences include the English literary and other developments across the periods. The specific events that clearly marked the ‘borderline’ of the Romantic and Victorian have been highlighted. Below are the objectives of this unit:

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Relate the early events of the Romantic Age in your own words;
- List the common literary experiences of the Romantic and Victorian Ages separately;
- Outline the writers and works of the Romantic and Victorian Ages separately;
- Explain briefly how the idea of the Romantic Age differs from that of the Victorian;
- State the chief events of the Romantic and Victorian periods separately;
- Compare the major historical facts of the Romantic age with the Victorian age;
- Relate the early literary experiences of the two periods;
- Underline the specific works of the Romantic and Victorian periods and state why you will like to read one of them;
- Compare a specific written work of the Romantic age with the Victorian age and state what endeared you to these works;
- Review the history of the Romantic Age;

- State some non-literary events that endeared you to either the Romantic or Victorian Age;
- Identify two genres each from the Romantic and Victorian periods as well as their writers, revealing any similarity in the writer's works.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 The Romantic Age**

The writings and beliefs of the Romantic Age (1789-1832) are quite different from those of the preceding periods, like the Restoration and Augustan periods. This is because the Romantic ideals favoured innovation in place of traditionalism, as seen in the themes, styles, and general subject matters of the literature. In *Lyrical Ballads*, for example, William Wordsworth takes his materials from 'common life'. Though John Keats and Coleridge explore the supernatural and distant past, the works of William Blake, Percy Bysshe Shelley and William Wordsworth show that these are visionary poets. The Romantics celebrate the beauty of the landscapes; they also write about themselves, defining many of their characters as rebels.

##### **3.1.2 English Literature and the Romantic Age (1789-1832)**

Beginning from the French Revolution in 1789 to the Reform Act of 1832, the Romantic period lasted forty years. Great and notable revolutions are identified with the Romantic period. Some of them are the American Revolution of 1776 and the French Revolution that came with the policy of liberty, equality and fraternity; these features all combined to re-christen the Romantic age as the Age of Revolution.

The revolutionary ideals and temper of the period are part of the reasons the poetries of the Romantics are noted for their celebration of freedom and change. Wordsworth and Coleridge's 'Lyrical Ballads', (1798) are about war at a time the society was becoming industrial and the power of the middle class grew and the government moved towards voting reform and popular democracy. English soldiers who fought against the army of the French Napoleon Bonaparte in the battle of Waterloo in 1815 became disillusioned, suffered depression and unemployment. All these increased the social, economic and political problems of the period.

The prevailing revolutionary spirit flowed into English imaginative literature, especially poetry. Wordsworth and Coleridge wanted a radical change in the language of poetry and supported popular themes. This literary ideology differed from that of the Augustan age marked by conservative techniques of order and tranquility. The quest for independent reasoning and exercise of the imagination induced many of the writers of the period to go on self-exile, away from the government that considered intellectual freedom dangerous and unacceptable.

Indeed, the term, 'Romantic', was not immediately given to the period, until the philosophy of independent reasoning, (freedom) and hope became recognised as an important moment of change in Europe. One leading poet of the period, William Blake, developed poetic ideal that was in contrast with the Augustan world. His best

known poetic collection, *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1794), reveals the lamb as a symbol of innocence and the tiger, a symbol of mystery, contrasting the world of nature with childhood innocence. But in his poem, 'London', he sees the society in which the individual is imprisoned in chain.

Wordsworth's autobiographical poem, 'The Prelude' probes into the heart of things; the feelings and thoughts of the individual expressed in the poem juxtaposes the past and the present. The Augustan writers believed that an orderly society was imperative, but the Romantic writers believed that the life of the individual spirit was important. These different views influenced the different use of language and mark of identities in styles. For instance, Wordsworth was known for using the simple language of the ordinary people to describe nature. He projects human memory as the (engine room), the mover of creativity and the world.

Although Wordsworth and Coleridge jointly produced *Lyrical Ballads*, there are different approaches in their creativity and philosophy. For instance, Wordsworth is more about the day-to-day activities of a person while Coleridge's poetry is more about the supernatural world. Wordsworth and Coleridge were known to have spent many days in each other's company from the moment Wordsworth moved into Alfoxden House in June 1797, four miles walk from Coleridge's cottage at Nether Stowey. Of the four poems Samuel Taylor Coleridge has in *Lyrical Ballads*, his best is 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'. In the poem, an old sailor tells how he shoots a large, white bird when his ship is stuck at sea. He later experiences terrible dreams, but he endures because he must suffer for what he had done. His suffering teaches him never to drink until his soul is refreshed and renewed. Coleridge also wrote *Christabel and Kubla Khan* (1797) but published it in (1816). In the poem, he creates symbolic sceneries or landscapes to probe the human imagination, which to him is the most powerful of the human senses. Both poets are of the opinion that poetry should be in a language of the average person. Their styles influenced many poets who expressed poetry in the style of modern writers.

John Keats (1795-1821), a second generation Romantic poet, was born three years before *Lyrical Ballads* was published. Most of his poems are in fragments but are very imaginative about the nature of literature, and his letters are considered critical. The most famous of Keats's poems are 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', 'Ode to Nightingale', 'la Belle Dame Sans Merci' (The beautiful lady with no pity), 'Lamia', 'The Eve of Saint Agnes' and 'Isabella'. His interest in mythical and ancient influenced his interest of medieval literatures. The main themes of the poems are the unnecessary search for lasting beauty in a temporal world where everything fades and gives way to death. For Keats, only the work of art is permanent and can keep human ideas and philosophy alive forever. For the poet, the expendable nature of a person is incomparable to the lasting aesthetics and happiness that the work of art can bestow. The poet's death came early in life, at the age of twenty-five.

However, Percy Bysshe Shelley felt the death of Keats very deeply such that he had to immortalise his death in his poem, 'Adonais' (1821), capturing the deep, painful, personal experience. Shelly's poem is similar to Blake's as he condemns the religion and morals of the age in his popular essay, 'The Necessity of Atheism' (1811), in which he doubts the existence of God. He wears the mask of politics in his long poem, 'The Mask of Anarchy' (1832) in which he responds to the Waterloo massacre of (1819) when a group of workers were attacked in Manchester for daring to ask for social and political reforms. Shelley predicts a new life of freedom for the individual in his 'Ode to the West Wind' (1819), metaphorically questing for a change of power the same way the wind blows away the particles of old life and, through dispersal by wind, plants new seeds to usher in a new life of freedom for all, something similar to a regeneration or re-newness (transformation). Shelly also wrote 'Julian and Maddalo' in 1818, but published it in 1824. In the poem, he reduces the modern world to a wasteland where people are individualistic in nature. He sees the poet as a hero who can build a better and more productive society capable of reforming the world. *In Defence of Poesies* (1840), he explores the problem of inequality in the English society of the Romantic period in which the richer became richer and the poor got poorer. His famous statement that poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world has come through the ages.

Another notable Romantic figure is Lord Byron, an influential poet known all over Europe in the nineteenth century. He attacks social conventions and authorities of the age who search for elusive peace. He satirises and questions unethical values of the society. His hero, Childe Harold, in the long poem, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, made Byron famous. He was the most popular, best selling poet in 1812 at the age of 24. Manfred, in Bryon's poem, *Manfred* (1817) and Childe Harold are heroes with passionate feelings who rebel against society. Manfred, in particular, is more an anti-hero than a hero, but he is an attractive figure to all readers of the poem. In *Don Juan* (1819-1824), Byron's satirical poem invites readers to laugh with him at his hero and to question their own value as well as the values of their society. Other poets of the period are Roberts Burns and John Clare. The former explores nature in his poem but John Clare was said to be the least of the Romantics notable for description of the rural countryside. He became insane and ended in mental hospital. He died in 1850.

Apart from poetry, prose writing also flourished in the Romantic age. Some of the novelists of the period are Thomas de Quincey, William Hazlitt, and Charles Lamb. Thomas Love Peacock had his works written in the Romantic and Victorian styles, satirising selected Romantic ideals and lifestyle in novels such as *Northanger Abbey* (1818). Other novelists are Jane Austen, Walter Scott, Fanny Burney, Evelina (1778) and Camilla (1796). Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein* (1818).

Women dominated fiction writing at the time; Jane Austen is different among the writers of the period because her interest focuses on an individual's moral consciousness and the psychological behaviour of characters. She presents these matters often in ironic sense, as seen in her *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), a novel which contrasts with the Romantic and Augustan periods. It is done in the metaphor of

two sisters, the more rational and self-controlled Eleanor (sense) and the emotional Marianne (sensibility). Other novels by Jane Austen are *Northanger Abbey* (1818); *Pride and Prejudice* (1813); *Mansfield Park* (1814); and *Emma* (1816). The novels of Jane Austen generally caution against hasty choice in life especially in marriage, as one needs to know oneself in order to make the right choices in love and marriage. Sir Walter Scott writes about social change, history and revolution. Scott is identified with the novel as a popular genre in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially as he identified with Great Britain in his work by creating memorable characters. All these earned him fame as an influential writer across Europe, earning him the status of the best selling author of his time. With these, the novel grew rapidly in a period of social and political awareness and became a major medium of exploration of the English society for the human good.

### **3.2 The Victorian Age**

The Victorian period (1832-1900) produced the type of writing that reveals the social, economic and intellectual issues of the time. Some of them are the industrial revolution, Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, and developments in science and knowledge. Some writers of the period are Robert Browning, Alfred Tennyson, Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy, George Eliot and Mathew Arnold.

#### **3.2.1 English Literature and the Victorian Age (1832-1900)**

In English history, the Victorian Age is often said to begin with the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte of France in 1815. But in English Literature, the period opens with the death of Sir Walter Scott. Queen Victoria (1832-1900) inherited social problems with her reign. Trade unionism was forbidden with the Corn Laws that kept the price of bread high. The population of England increased from two million to six and half million, leading to Britain's status as the world richest manufacturer of bread. But the crime and war of 1854-1856 which lasted for forty years, increased the social problems of Britain, coupled with the Indian mutiny of 1857. The death of Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, in 1861 was an added problem.

Reducing the status of the Queen to a widow for forty years, William Gladstone or Benjamin Disraeli became the prime minister for most of the second half of the century. Then, rebellion rose against the monarchy and a powerful Republican movement grew in the 1870's. But Disraeli challenged this and increased the social status of the Queen who became the Empress of India as well.

In the Victorian period, the popularity of the novel increased in Britain and all over the world; the novel became the most important literary form. This was as a result of the acceptability that was attached to the novels of Sir Walter Scott that became bestsellers between 1814 and 1832. Some of them were serialised, thus the reading public had access to Sir Walter Scott's historical novels through private commercial libraries. While Sir Walter Scott had a tradition of seeing the English society from the perspective of history, Charles Dickens brought the social concern of the English into the novel. He published thirteen novels. He was one of the widely read English writers. Dickens wrote *Sketches by Boz* (1836); *Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870);

*Oliver Twist* (1837-1838); and *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-1839); he also published *The Pickwick Papers* (1836-1837). In these novels, Dickens was interested in the social problem of the youth in the city where they are never given a fair deal in the self-growth and development of the society including education. His young characters, like Oliver and Nicolas, got swept off by the tides of the English society; they lose focus and become social miscreants, criminals and gluttons. The social problem of the Victorian world, particularly of England and how it affects school age children, dominates the creative energy of Dickens. He extends his creative lens to the English society generally, seeing beyond how children have no chance to be educated. In *David Copperfield* (1849-1850), the novelist explores the type of social status the Victorian society admired and, in a way, is a parody of Dicken's childhood and success. His other partly autobiographical novels are *Great Expectation* (1860-1861) and *Hard Times* (1854). *Little Dorrit*, (1855-1857) and *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-1865) are his later novels that show his hatred for the city of London. *A Tale of Two Cities* is his literary review of the 1789 French Revolution.

Social education and industrial issue were not the concern of Thomas Carlyle whose philosophy of the time was a critique of the economy, the search of ideal democracy and sympathies with the industrial poor. Some of his works include *Heroes* (1841); *Past and Present* (1843); and *The French Revolution* (1837). The great revolutionary writings of Fredrick Engels and Karl Marx were important in influencing social thought and the image of the exploited working class. Not comfortable with the condition of the workers in Manchester, Engels published the book, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845) but Marx's political theory in *Das Capital* (1867-1895) criticises capitalism for the exploitation of the workers by the capitalists or bourgeoisie. Marx had lived and worked in Britain from the 1840s to his death in 1883. He and Engels projected that the working class or proletariats would grow in consciousness and make a revolution to overthrow their oppressors and establish a socialist system of equity and justice.

Other important writers of the time are Elizabeth Gaskell who wrote *Mary Barton* (1848) and *Northland South* (1855). Emily Bronte, who wrote *Wuthering Heights* (1847); and Ann Bronte, youngest of the three Bronte Sisters, wrote *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848). As explained in an earlier section, beginning with Aphra Behn in the late seventeenth century, there had been many women novelists, the greatest of whom was George Eliot (her real name was Mary Evans). She was an experienced translator and writer, who on the advice of George Henry Lewes, began to write fiction. Eliot wrote *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1857-1858), a collection of short stories. Her first novel is *Adam Bede* (1859). She is known for themes that relate to home, marriage and women. Her *Middlemarch* (1871-1872) is considered the biggest novel in the English language; it was set in 1832 during the first Reform Act. The fictional setting is a town in central England with women, voting systems and advent of rail transport as themes. William Makepeace Thackeray and Anthony Trollope are other fiction writers. Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847- 1844) is a historical novel, a satire of the upper-class in London. The novel is similar to his other novels, *Henry Esmond* (1852); *The Virginians* (1857 1859); and *The New Comers* (1853 - 1855).

On the basis of the output and influence of his novels, Thomas Hardy is one of the most celebrated writers of the Victorian era. His books reflect a part of the century with fictional Wessex in the South–West of England in *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Return of the Native* (1878), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895) are some of his other novels.

In the English poetry of the Victorian age, William Wordsworth, who was the last Romantic poet, became the first of the Victorians. Before and after his death in 1850, a new language of expression had taken over the English poetry. Alfred Tennyson (also addressed as Lord Tennyson) began his career as a verse writer in 1830 when he published 'Chiefly Lyrical', a concept which had earlier been used by Wordsworth and Coleridge in their *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. But Tennyson's use differs in the language of expression of the Romantic. He is best known for 'In Memoriam A.H.H.' (1833-1850), an elegy to a friend of his, Arthur Hallam, in which he expresses his sadness about the loss. Themes and mood appealed to the English readership in the second half of the century. For instance, the poem became the favourite of Queen Victoria when she became a widow after the death of her husband, Albert, in 1861. Tennyson's other poems in dramatic monologue in which a telling voice reveals the thoughts and ideals of the character are 'Ulysses', who, in old age, was desirous of finding a new ambition. Tennyson was not known only as a writer of poem in which he shows unhappiness, but as an English national poet who wrote on historic issues like the crime and war which he explored in the poem, 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' (1855). The poem is in praise of the heroes of the war and in recognition of soldiers who died in the war. Towards the end of his life, Tennyson continued to write poetry of sadness such as 'Legends of King Arthur', and 'Knights of Round Table'. He began working on twelve poems in the 1830's until they were published together in 1891.

Apart from the works of Tennyson, the word 'lyric' came up in the poetry of another Victorian, Robert Browning, in 'My Last Duchess'. This appeared in 1842 in a volume called *Dramatic Lyrics*. This is where the word "lyric" assumed poetic resonance, but Browning's many dramatic monologue reveals violence of concealed emotions, exposing the hidden and unknown sides of the Victorian society and behaviour which were not noticed or popular. For instance, in 'Porphyria's Lover', a man discusses his love for a woman, who is sitting on his knees, but whom he has just killed. Browning became more famous when he ran away with a female poet, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, with whom he lived in Italy for many years. Some of her beautiful poems of love to her husband are 'Sonnets from the Portuguese' (1850). Her 'Aurora Leigh' (1857) is a long poem on women's themes. Browning's poem are set in Italy which he loved, perhaps because he lived there with her wife for many years; thus he was not as famous as Tennyson.

In Mathew Arnold's 'Dover Beach' (1867), the poet looks over the English Channel from Dover, but seeing the calmness of the sea that seems to hide-something, the struggles and changes which affect everyone, somewhat predicting the pessimistic



nature of the Victorian writing. Every writing of the Victorian period was not about poems and novels; there were essays too written in magazines edited by Thackeray, Dickens and others. Charles Lamb was a great essayist of the 1820's. His essays of Elia got published in a London magazine but later in book form in 1833. Arnold is very important in the poetic culture of the era, particularly for his energetic defence of conservative values. He was both a poet and critic of note. His book, *Culture and Anarchy, Essay in Criticism* (1865 and 1888) changed the reading perception of his generation as defence against societal lawlessness and social disorientation. As the Victorian age moved toward its close the playwright and novelist, Oscar Wilde, published *The Soul of Man*. His other works include *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891); *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892); *The Happy Prince and Other Stories* (1888); and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895). *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* in 1898 was his experience in a London prison where he spent two years after he was charged with homosexual offences. He was suspected to have written a homosexual novel, *Teleny*, which was published privately in 1893. The first novel on gay culture reveals the merit of being a gay and as a form of love one should be ready to die for; but such themes were kept out of English writing for many years.

Rudyard Kipling, the first English writer to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1907, was another important writer from the colony of India. He wrote the *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1888), *The Jungle Book* (1894), and *The Second Jungle Book* (1895). Charles's Kingsley was one of the English writers who wrote moral children's stories in the Victorian period. His *The Water Babies* (1863) is one of the famous moral stories of the time; Queen Victoria read it to her children. In the story, a chimney-sweeper falls into the bedroom of the little children, runs away into a river leading to series of adventures after which he emerges a good child willing to return to the middle-class. *Tom Brown's School Days* (1857) by Thomas Hughes is a famous school novel. One of the first modern writers, Lutwidge Dodgson, wrote *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* (1865) for Alice, the daughter of a friend of his. The story continues *Through the Looking Glass* (1871).

The Victorian period also witnessed the beginning of the writing of modern science fiction. The genre of science fiction explores science and scientific investigations and proof to explain the mystery about planets, nature, and human existence, amongst others. H. G. Wells wrote *Time Machine* in 1895, *The Invisible Man* (1897), *The First Men in the Moon* (1901), and *The War of the Worlds* (1898). Samuel Butter published *Erewhon* (1872), a novel in the same class of thought as *Gulliver's Travels* of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. William Morris published *News from Nowhere* (1891).

Drama in the early years of the Victorian period was not considered part of serious literature. Farces and melodrama were types of plays produced in the Victorian era until the 1850's when George Bernard Shaw came into the scene as playwright with his controversial plays, *Widows Houses* (1892), *Arms and the Man* (1894), and *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1898).

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- i. Review the Romantic Age
- ii. Summarise the Victorian Age

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit, we have discussed the philosophies of the Romantic and Victorian writers. We have also given you a condensed literary history of the two periods. Reading through the unit, you will realise that we have identified the various revolutionary changes that influenced how a particular age ends as well as the beginning of the next age. It is clear that sometimes a writer may live in two ages, and this may reflect in the creative works.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt

- How the various human experiences differentiate one English age from the other i.e. (Romantic from the Victorian).
- The factors that evolved into the Romantic as well as the Victorian ages.
- The popular writers and genres of the Romantic and Victorian eras.

In the next unit, you will read about themes and style in English Drama (I).

### **6.0 TUTOR- MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMA)**

Read and answer the questions below:

1. Outline how the age of the Romantic differs from the Victorian.
2. Mention some popular writers of the Romantic and Victorian ages and their works.

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## UNIT 3: THEMES AND STYLE IN ENGLISH DRAMA (1)

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## INTRODUCTION

We have designed this unit to introduce you to the themes and style of the English playwrights we have selected for our study in this unit. We will discuss Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* and George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man* to make you familiar with how they represent England in their works. You will also learn the subtypes of drama as well as the elements of drama. Please, read carefully. Below are the objectives of this unit.

## OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- State the subtypes of drama with examples;
- Explain the elements of drama;
- Summarise George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man*;
- Comment on the style of the playwright in *Arms and the Man*;
- Outline the themes in Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man*;
- Summarise Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*;
- State and explain the themes in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*;
- Reveal the style of Oscar Wilde in *The Importance of Being Earnest*;
- Compare the creative designs of the English playwrights;
- Identify the main themes of the plays on the basis of their literary qualities;
- Chose a character from each play and explain the qualities that make the characters memorable.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Drama

Drama, which is taken from the Greek word 'dran', means to perform, act or do. It is an imitation of action in which characters act or play roles representing imaginary events and person. Drama may also be defined as a composition in prose or verse or a combination of both. Plays which are meant for the purpose of being performed on stage are often acted by actors and actresses in the presence of an audience. The person who creates or composes a dramatic work is a dramatist or playwright. Drama as a genre of literature has its own features, some of which it shares with the prose and verse genres. The essential features are theme, plot, acts and scenes, actors/characters, audience spectators and dialogue. Scholars have traced the roots of drama to ancient rites, ritual, and festivals. Africa is generally acknowledged as the cradle of dramatic performances. The traditional forms of drama have survived even in modern, scripted drama. Scripted or written plays are the focus of the study in this unit. All the genres of literature; poetry, drama, and prose, tell stories all attempt to interpret or mirror or reflect the society but as the narrator may tell his/her story directly, the dramatist narrates/imitates his/her story or the action.

Drama presents stories in the present, as if such stories are just happening. When we watch a play, we do so with the hope and anxiety to know or see what will happen next, we pass through this experience from the beginning to end of the play, keenly following the plot or unfolding of the conflicts until they are finally resolved. Drama is also different from other genres of English literature in its objective ways of presenting a story. In drama, each of the characters expresses opinion individually. This is unlike in poems, where it becomes difficult to differentiate the voice and opinion of the poet. In plays, even where flashback is used, events are still narrated in the present.

The playwright economises time and word (do not waste time/words). This is because a play is expected to be acted within a period of time; it could be a few hours. No matter the length of the story, it is actually dramatised. The time of action is usually less than the actual period in real life when acted on stage. It has time limits/ time schedules, even as events in a play are divided into acts and scenes. This does not mean that dramatic texts can not be enjoyed when read alone in private, but the literary potentials of drama are best realised when events in the play are represented in real life situation acted on the stage. When such is done, ‘drama as a public art achieves its role of attending to more people at a time than poetry or prose. That is why drama is often described as the “genre of literature that walks and talks”.

### **3.2 Subtypes of Drama**

Subtypes of Drama are Comedy, Tragedy and Tragicomedy.

#### **3.2.1 Comedy**

A Comedy entertains with intention to make people laugh. An example is William Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*.

#### **3.2.2 Tragedy**

A Tragedy is a play with a very sad event that causes people to suffer or die. An example of this is William Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*.

#### **3.2.3 Tragicomedy**

A Tragicomedy is a play that combines the qualities of comedy and tragedy; example is William Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure*.

### **3.3 Elements of Drama**

Some of the elements of drama are identified and explained briefly below.

#### **3.3.1 Plot**

The Greek writer, Aristotle, in his *Poetics* has said that plot is one of the most important elements of drama. He adds that plot is not the same thing as story. The story is like a raw material that the playwright has fashioned or formed into a plot. Some plays are based on history. In the convention of drama, there are usually five sections namely, introduction, raising action, climax, falling action, and resolution or denouement.

Introduction - Audience develops sense of awareness, meets characters in the play, becomes aware of the situation, setting, etc.

Rising action - Events occur in consequential order, leading to climax of the story.

Climax - Main events happen; the turning point often leads to catastrophe in a tragedy.

Falling action - Falling action moves swiftly in the play towards conclusion.

Catastrophe - This applies to tragedy only.

Resolution/Denouement - This is a point at which conflicts are resolved in a play.

#### **3.3.2 Dramatic irony**

Dramatic irony occurs, in a play when a character says the opposite of what he/she really means. The audience usually understands this whenever it is used in a play, but the character to whom the irony is directed may not understand it.

#### **3.3.3 Situation**

This refers to the logical, physical, chronological and general circumstance of the play. This is more than setting which simply refers to the physical location and its characteristics. Situation includes the setting, the prevailing atmosphere and the general state of mind of the characters.

#### **3.3.4 Performance**

The main purpose of the written text is for it to be performed on the stage for people to see, feel entertained and educated. The written text brings the distant or remote event written about in the text to the view of the audience.

### **3.4 Summary of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest***

Algernon Moncrieff, Jack Ward, Cecily Cardew and John Worthing are in pursuit of Gwendolen Fairfax. These men lead double or 'invisible' lives as Jack is known in town as Ernest while pretending in the Country that he has a wicked brother. Ernest, a fictitious character, always visits the sickly Bunbury whenever he has engagements in town, especially with his formidable aunt, Lady Bracknell. After many conflicts,

confusions and confessions of identities, it is revealed that Cecily's governess, Miss Prism, had once mislaid Jack as a baby in a handbag at a Victoria train Station. At last, it becomes exposed that Jack and Algernon are indeed brothers and Jack's real name is actually Ernest. All objections to pairings, misgivings and conflicts are at last settled and Gwendolen's likeness to the name of Ernest is fulfilled. Ending the play happily and humorously is a reflection of the social trivialities of Victorian England.

### **3.5 Themes**

A number of themes can be identified and discussed with examples drawn from the play.

#### **3.5.1 Materialism**

The play ridicules the Victorian upper class that controlled the wealth of the period. It questions, the ideals of the ruling class of the Victorian age as seen through the ways in which the characters are portrayed. Lady Bracknell represents the example of the upper class whose members distance themselves from the lower and middle class people. But there are other leading factors or qualities that are often considered before marriage is allowed among the upper class. In the play, Lady Bracknell typifies the overriding importance of material wealth and class distinction; hence she opposes the engagements of Gwendolen Jack and Cecily to Algernon.

#### **3.5.2 False Appearance**

Jack is questioned about his parentage and parental social status, wealth, politics and relevance among the upper class members. The upper class measures people by their social worth, economic status and general societal importance and success. The playwright further ridicules the social, economic, and political pursuits of the Victorian age. To the upper class of the age, everything is possible; the height of socio-economic ladder of wealth is attainable and possible as it defines the true humanity and character of a human being. Algernon pretends to be dandy and dresses to impress, concealing his true identity in the play as a debtor. He represents the life of hidden filth, lies, corruption and duplicitous existence that characterised the age. The belief in false appearance among the upper class is also depicted in the life of young Lady Lancing who is transformed within three months by a French man such that "her own husband did not know her and after six months nobody knew her "(p.59).

#### **3.5.3 Worthlessness of Marriage**

From the beginning of the play, we are made suspicious that marriage is considered unimportant and of worthless value by the aristocratic class of the Victorians society. Marriage, the cherished social institution, is presented in the English society as socially misleading and valueless. When Algernon asks the reasons for the high depletion of the stock of his champagne, she is told that "in married households the champagne is rarely of a first rate" (p.7). This means that married couples have low social status and hardly associate with or know what is good for them and the society, particularly the finest of wines.



### **3.5.4 Upper Class Concept of Marriage as a Contract**

The moral decadence of the era is reflected in the assumption that ideological reason in marriage is different from the views expected of the learned members of the society. The upper class sees marriage as a contract and not a life-long affair. For instance, Algernon sees marriage as the unfortunate edge of the pleasure of life; thus he advises that every man should be satisfied with the pleasure of life before even thinking of getting into marriage, which ends all pleasures and freedom. For example, Dr. Chasuble, when taking a walk with Miss Prism, exposed the woman's view that "no married man is ever attractive but to his wife". This indicates that marriage is never a safe haven for immorality.

The Victorian aristocrats, it appears, do not know the true meaning that is attached to love and marriage; as a result, they are often tickled or tricked into getting involved in meaningless love by trivialities. The trivial and ridiculous way the Victorian characters in the play discuss love, courtship and marriage reduces the idea of marriage to the ordinary, an unserious engagement or common contractual arrangement that may even be broken at will.

### **3.5.5 Lower class members of the Victorian age as Underdogs**

The sermon of Dr Chasuble on the discontent among the upper class virtues at the expense of other classes has the intention to favour the upper class members of the society. The sermon is calculated to uphold their dignity and further empower and make them have a stronghold on the society. That is why Lady Bracknell is against inter-class marriages and condemns as unfashionable and of low social value the 149 Belgrave Square environment where Jack says his house is.

For the propertied class, the education and self-worth of the masses are unnecessary; education, to her, is better for the upper class so as to be the ruling class. The lower class masses are kept lower and away from being educated to avoid their upward advancement.

## **3.6 Style**

Some of the stylistic features of the play are explained with examples drawn from the play.

### **3.6.1 Dramatic Irony**

In this technique, the audience, through the utterances of the characters, knows some things which are not known to some of the characters. The playwright uses this technique to create room for comedy in the play. Dramatic irony is used in the play in the following instances.

When Jack arrives from London, he appears mournful even in his way of dressing, saying that his brother, "Ernest" died of severe chill at the Grand Hotel in Paris. Mrs. Prism and Dr. Chasuble console him; but the audience is aware of his treacherous lies. He is the same Ernest who is now pronounced dead, so he really does not have a brother by the name Ernest who is in London. In reality Jack has been going around

London enjoying himself; he only comes to his objects of mockery to wear deceptive looks. Always and everywhere in the play, whenever Algernon assumes the name, Ernest, ironic situation comes to play. Apart from the characters themselves, everyone falls for the deception. At last, the principal player ceases not to be Ernest when he assumes the name “Ernest”.

### **3.6.2 Paired/duplication of Characters**

Some of the characters are presented in a way that they parallel the other. For example, Jack Worthing and Algernon Mancriff are characters that are paired with Gwendolen, Fairfax and Cecily Cardew. Jack is in love with Algernon’s cousin while Algernon is also in love with Jack’s ward. They are all from the upper class. They assume a life of duplicity, paralleling the other characters in the same act. Each woman falls in love with the other’s relatives. They both fall in love for no serious reason. They are presented as smart in the way they pursue their intentions, as being capable of outwitting the authorities under which they exist. For instance, Gwendolen outsmarts her mother to fall in love with Jack the same way Mrs. Cecily manipulates Miss Prism to give up German grammar lesson and outwits Jack in the process.

### **3.6.3 Epigrammatic or Conversational Humour**

The play is a comedy of manners as it provokes laughter, not from action but from what is said. The playwright uses epigram to invoke humour. When Jack says he won’t be interested in Bunbury once married to Gwendolen, Algernon jokes about it by saying “You don’t seem to realize that in married life, there is company and two is none”. (p.14)

There are many instances of the use of dark humour in the play. Perhaps the subject matter of the play which deals with love, courtship and marriage helps the playwright to achieve this. Wilde may have chosen to discuss love and marriage to be able to re-enact the social experiences of the Victorian age which are manifested in the institution of marriage. While disagreeing with Jack on how best to relate to a woman, Algernon offers his own humorous view of woman, love and marriage, though his view reduces the woman to mere article that can be used and discarded, “if beautiful, but unusable if not pretty”. To him, women are sensuous and necessary “snare” desirable by man. Man’s love for woman should not exceed cupboard’s love.

### **3.6.4 Use of Symbolism**

The playwright uses some characters and names as symbols to represent the Victorian aristocratic class. For instance, Lady Bracknell and her daughter and Gwendolen symbolise the era’s earnestness and autocratic and oppressive value of the upper class. Their desire is to keep the people of the lower class down the bottom of the ladder, socially stagnant and backward economically. In contrast, they work to feed the high class members of the society beyond the reach of the commoners, lower and middle class members of the Victorian society. Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble as well as Jack and Algernon are the primary symbols of the deceptive life of the Victorian age, and this is seen in the dual life pattern of the characters. Also, Miss Prism (light of

multifarious colours, rainbow appearance) symbolises that which functions to process light into various attractive colours.

### **3.7 Summary of George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man***

The play begins with a memorable night in Bulgaria with Raina Petkoff, Catherine Petkoff and Raina's househelp, Louka. They are discussing the news of Bulgarian soldiers' victory at the war front in Slivnitsa. The victory is led by Raina's fiancé, Sergeant Sergius Saranoff. Raina reacts appreciatively, promising a gratifying welcome back home for her fiancé when the war ends. While she celebrates the hero in god-like image, sporadic gun shots interrupt their discussion, puncturing the quiet Bulgarian night. A fleeing Swiss soldier, Captain Bluntschli, known as Chocolate Cream Soldier, escapes from the battle field into Bulgaria. He climbs across the water trough into Raina's bedroom chamber through the shutters. Louka announces the arrival of a search party that had been after the mercenary soldier fighting on the side of the Serbs. She protects the professional fighter from being seen by the search party. The soldier's revolver frightens her, but the man confesses that he stuffs his gun's cartridge with chocolate cream and not ammunition "I've no ammunition. What use are cartridges in battle? I always carry chocolate instead; and I finished the last cake of that hours ago" Raina marvels at the revelation; but the soldier explains further that such acts reveals the professional worth of an experienced soldier, adding "that young ones carry pistols and cartridges, the old ones grub" (p. 21)

The soldier's idea or art of war as well as his high social class attracts Raina - "my rank is the highest known in the whole of Switzerland." She is also from the Petkoff's, a family of the upper class in Bulgaria. Thus, Raina falls in love with the soldier, who now feels safe and requests that Raina tell her mother about his secret presence for days in the family. He leaves disguised in the raincoat of Raina's father, Major Petkoff. This is revealed as the reason for the unprofessional display of Sergeant Sergius Saramoff. After the war, he becomes frustrated, disillusioned, and resigns from the army on the advice of Captain Bluntschli. At last, Louka betrays Raina to Sergius Saranoff, falls in love with the latter while Raina falls in love with the Swiss soldier. Unable to cope with the realistic lifestyle of Raina, Sergius promises to marry Louka. He assures..." if these hands ever touch you again, they shall touch my affianced bride" (p.76)

### **3.8 Themes**

There are some interesting themes in George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man*. These are:

#### **3.8.1 Patriotism**

The soldiers are driven to the war by patriotism, the allegiance to their nations. This is why Sergeant Sergius Saranoff and Major Petkoff fight for Bulgaria while the Swiss professional soldier, Captain Bluntschli, is devoted to Switzerland. Even when he later escapes into the enemy country, he is still proud of his patriotism for his home country, Switzerland. Captain Bluntschli exclaims to Raina "My rank is the highest known in the whole of Switzerland". Catherine also demonstrates a high sense of

patriotism while reacting to the rumoured victory of Bulgarians in the field of battle, particularly the cavalry charge by Sergeant Sergius Saranoff. She soliloquises “The campaign has improved you. Everybody here is mad about you. We were all mad with enthusiasm about your Cavalry charge” (P. 10)

### **3.8.2 Co-operation**

Naturally, war is often characterised by hostilities as seen in the confrontation that involve the Bulgarians and Serbs and their Swiss and Russian allies. But, in this case war promotes co-operation. Ironically, at the end of the war at Slivnitsa, the warring factions meet, honouring a gentlemanly agreement to exchange their prisoners of war at Parrot. Also Captain Bluntschli becomes friendly with Sergeant Saranoff and advises the latter to quit soldering. The Swiss soldier is even warmly welcomed as a friend by Major Petkoff and Sergius: “My dear Captain Bluntschli,” and “Welcome our friend, the enemy.”

### **3.8.3. The English Aristocratic Class**

The play reflects the nature of the English aristocratic social class. This is obvious in the behaviours of Nicholas who had spent ten years as a servant, working for the Petkoffs (who symbolise the English aristocratic family). In spite of that, Nicholas intends to join the aristocratic class by hoping to start a business (shop) in Sofia. Even those who are already members of the upper class are ready to do anything to maintain their position, hence, Raina prefers Captain Bluntschli to Sergeant Sergius Saranoff. This implies a movement by marriage from one aristocratic class to another, but in different countries (Bulgaria to Switzerland).

### **3.8.4 Love, Courtship and Marriage**

The playwright reveals this theme gradually, juxtaposing war and love as reflective possibilities. Both exist in the conflictive progression of the human society but with one trying to outdo the other. The complexity of war cannot hinder love from blossoming where man and woman are present. We see how Captain Bluntschli and Raina are caught in the web of love that connects the soldier and a Major’s daughter in the time of war. The unpredictable circumstance, too, explains overriding mysteries and possibilities of love in any situation. The heroism and confused existence of Sergeant Segius Saranoff find therapy in Louka, Raina’s househelp.

### **3.8.5 War**

The play discusses the theme of war. The Bulgarians are at war with the Serbs and the Austrians. They invite the Russian war general, Colonel Cossack. With the union of the various war mercenaries, the war goes on. This is because the war experience of the foreign soldiers strengthens that of the home soldiers. The war ends with the defeat of the Serbs the wrong way through the unprofessional conduct against the ethics and principles of warfare by Sergeant Sergius Saranoff of the Bulgarian army. At last, the warring parties exchanged Prisoners of War at Parrot, a gesture that suggests the futility of warfare.

### 3.8 Style

Below are some of the stylistics features of the play.

### 3.9 Language

The language used by Shaw suits the situation and the characters. In the idealist concept, Raina, Catherine and Major Paul Petkoff at different times discuss dazzling dreams conveyed in the colourful words of Bernard Shaw. Catherine explains:

You touch a button, something tinkles in the kitchen and then  
Nicolas comes up...civilized people never shout for their servant.  
I've e learnt that while you were away (p.39)

#### 3.9.1 The Use of Comedy

Shaw employs comedy in his play, similar to some of the plays of William Shakespeare. All the problems of the play get resolved as each romantic bird ends up having his/her partner. The love inscription on the portrait that Raina inserts in her father's rain coat for Captain Bluntschli to escape from Bulgaria in the period of war is humorous and entertaining.

#### 3.9.2 Use of Contrast

The romantic and dreaming nature of Raina in the beginning of the play contrasts with the night. The unkept appearance of Captain Bluntschli in the play is in contrast with the smart appearance of Sergius in the photograph hung on the wall of Raina's bedroom. The exchange of love interests and desires as seen in Saranoff and Louka, Bluntschli and Raina indicate contrasts.

#### 3.9.3 Dramatic Irony

This is expressed when Captain Bluntschli condemns Sergius's risky and unwarranted Cavalry charge in the battle field as amateurish and as an invitation to die, not realizing he was Raina's lover, but the audience knows the truth.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Compare the artistic merits of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* and George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man*.

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed the concept of drama, subtypes of drama as well as the elements of drama. We have also given a summary of and themes and techniques of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* and George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man*. In addition, we have explained the stylistic features of the two plays.

### 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt about:

- Elements of drama;
- Subtypes of drama;

- Summary of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* and George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man*;
- The styles in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* and George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man*;
- Themes of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* and George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man*.

In the next unit, you will read about themes and style in English Drama (II)

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMA)**

Read and answer the following questions:

- 1a. What is drama?
- b. With reference to a text, explain the plot as an element of drama.
2. Summarise Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*.
3. Discuss the theme of class status in George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man*.

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## UNIT 4: THEMES AND STYLE IN ENGLISH DRAMA (II)

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

We have designed this unit to continue our discussion on the themes and style in selected English drama. Understanding these in Howard Brenton's *Weapons of Happiness* and Richard Sheridan's *The Rivals* will widen your scope of the knowledge of English drama and how the selected playwrights have been able to represent the events that characterised their periods. The works will then give you the chance to evaluate how such plays mirror England. Below are the objectives of this unit:



## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Write a summary of Howard Brenton's *Weapons of Happiness*;
- Discuss the themes in Howard Brenton's *Weapons of Happiness*;
- Explain the language and style of the playwright in *Weapons of Happiness*;
- Outline the summary of Richard Sheridan's *The Rivals*;
- Review the themes of Richard Sheridan's *The Rivals*;
- Compare the main concerns of the playwrights in *Weapons of Happiness* and *The Rivals*.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Summary of Howard Brenton's *Weapons of Happiness*

Josef Frank, an ex-convict from Czechoslovakia, migrates to live and work in a factory in London. He meets Ralph, Janice, Billy, Ken, Alf, Lizy and Stanley who all migrated to work in London factory. They contend with London's harsh social-economic system of overworked and underpaid manual job environment and the prejudice, unemployment, and discrimination against foreigners. Each of the migrants struggles to survive and discusses with friends on how to cope with the ordeals and police harassment whilst they keep abreast of the news back in their home countries.

The situation they find themselves in is demeaning and critical. Ralph Makepeace walks in, meets Josef Frank who has been discussing the general condition of London immigrants, including the difficult, unethical working conditions, starvation, sleeplessness, and homelessness. They discuss how they have been trying to cope with their conditions of living. Suddenly, some young London rascals appear, attack and injure Ralph Makepeace. The gangsters seize his car keys and one of the gangs orders: "Flash away with his flashy car". Miller, a police inspector, is invited to the scene of crime. He asks Josef Frank to write a statement on his previous attack. The police officer suspects Frank's co-workers, and decides to interrogate workers in the factory where the victim works, but the victim declines. Inspector Miller insists "All I need is a simple statement. Tell what happened. I will write it down. You can read it through in your own good time and make any amendments" (p. 15)

The victim agrees but consoles himself over the pain and the injuries he sustained from the previous attack, "a blow healed with time". The police officer, a queer, slippery and crafty fellow, quickly accuses Frank of being a criminal and spy. Frank recalls the bitter experience of police detention, the starvation, handcuffs, blindfold, with sandwich only as food, and the possibility of being beaten against the wall. Inspector Miller is not comfortable with Frank being a foreigner. Miller questions the workers, "who really attacked Makepeace?" Frank and Clement discuss the social and economic aspect of the trade agreement between Soviet Russia in London, with foodstuffs and grains to be exchanged for steel and iron. Frank gets frustrated, compares the world to a filthy, empty room from which all humanity flee for safety; whereas there is really nowhere that is safe in the world where people kill at will. Through the discussion between Frank and Janice, we get to know that the former had

been imprisoned at the age of fourteen for twenty-five years when the Russian government found a communist leaflet under his bed. Janice then reveals the wickedness and insensitivity of communist government when she says the first book she read about communism was called 'The Evil that was Lenin'.

The play focuses on the individual character's experiences back in their countries and in London. We become aware through Ken that Stanley, a foreman in the factory, lost a finger to a manual machine. With the general social unrest, insecurity and economic hardship, the factory workers consider a strike action. The conditions make them get involved in questionable life styles. Janice is into prostitution, confesses that Billy, though a writer and poet, is promiscuous. She admits, "He's going to screw us, throw us away like we were nothing, you understand. That's why we got away..." The London setting of the playwright is characterised by various abuses, bribery and corruption, rape, drunkenness, prostitution, robbery, racism. When Stanley reports to Sylvia that the factory is broken into the previous night, she suggests they inform the police; but she is indifferent when she remembers police corruption and the death of some of her friends in detention. Frank advises Janice not to get pregnant, but she confesses that she is divorced. At last, the various characters end without realising their desired dreams, only trying to cope with the challenges of life in London, while still in search of the weapons of happiness.

### **3.2. Themes in Howard Brenton's *Weapons of Happiness***

Below are some of the themes identified in the play:

#### **3.2.1 Hatred for London Immigrants**

London immigrants are discriminated against not only for reason of colour, but for other reasons. Foreigners in London are attacked or denied employment for trivial reasons. Ralph Makepeace is attacked and injured by the young London rascals who also made away with his car because of the hatred they have for aliens who have come to work in London. The young woman among the rascals exclaims, describing him humorously as "foreign gift".

#### **3.2.2 Survival Instinct**

Every foreigner in London is armed with survival instincts due to the terrible conditions of work. They are overworked and underpaid and job insecurity is a great problem to the immigrant workers. Stanley has worked for years in the manual factory where he rises to the position of a foreman. He loses a finger to a machine in the factory. Frank says "work is work": Ralph supports his view, "what? Ah yes".

#### **3.2.3 Unemployment**

This arises principally from the immigrants' illusion that the streets of London are paved with money, gold and jobs. On arrival, they are soon disillusioned as no jobs are available in the streets. They are soon frustrated by the non-availability of jobs. Ralph recalls that "my father always made a point of sprinkling the work force with foreigners, foreign people. And disabled... disabled people. We get by, don't you think?"

### **3.2.4 Complacency**

Many of the characters are contented with their socio-economic conditions of life. They hardly nurse any ambition greater than working in a manual London factory. It appears they are satisfied with their conditions of existence. For instance, Frank refuses to pick up appointment to teach history at Cambridge University, London; Janice never nurses the ambition of getting married. Frank and Ralph are contented with their working conditions in London factory and are proud of it. Although Frank hopes to work in a place of “reasonable height” he does not pursue his goals as he merely speculates.

### **3.2.5 Police Corruption and Brutality**

The play reveals the very corrupt and harsh London Police. Inspector Miller subjects Frank, an alien, to a vigorous interrogation because he is a foreigner. He even volunteers to help him write a statement and make possible changes. The Metropolitan Police often maltreat, blindfold, feed criminals with sandwiches or get them starved and beaten against the wall. The police ignore the young London criminals who “flashed away” with the car of Ralph Makepeace. Instead, they prefer to question his co-workers whom they suspect for the attack.

## **3.3 Style**

Below are some of the stylistic features of the play:

The playwright deliberately mixes Standard English diction with London street language or jargons so as to capture the speech suitable for his characters. He lets his characters themselves speak their own language. This confirms the character’s plausibility. With this style, Brenton avoids tedious narration in often unrealistic language. For example, Miller, the Police Inspector, uses appropriate language of expression: He says: “All I need is a simple statement; tell me what happened I will write it down. You can read it through in your own good time and make any amendments” (p. 11)

The police question Ralph further, “Are you a registered alien sir, or do you hold a British passport?” The young London hoodlums use a language that suits their lawless behaviour. When they came to rob Ralph, the first man orders, “flash away in his flashy car”. The second young man employs invectives on their victim, “case we wan, idiot”. The woman among them uses a coded expression to hasten them away from the scene of crime: “split let’s split”.

## **3.4 Summary of Richard Sheridan’s *The Rivals***

Captain Absolute, the son of Sir Anthony Absolute, falls in love with Lydia Languish, the niece of Mrs. Malaprop. But Lydia prefers Lieutenant to the heir of a baronet of three thousand a year. He assumes at birth the character of Ensign Beverley. Lydia would lose part of her fortune if she marries without her Aunt’s approval and Mrs. Malaprop will not say a word to a beggarly ensign. Sir Anthony arrives at Bath,

unaware of his son's intention to propose a match with Lydia Languish, a proposal favourably disposed to by Mrs. Malaprop.

Humour sets in as Captain Absolute hides his deception of Lydia while Bob Acres remain his rival. The latter has heard of Ensign Beverley and of how Sir Lucius Trigger has been encouraged to go into a relationship with Lydia. Lucius Trigger asks Captain Absolute to challenge Beverley. Sir Lucius has been deceived to believe that the letters received from Mrs. Malaprop are from Lydia; he meets and challenges Captain Absolute. When Acres finds that Beverley is his friend, Absolute bows out of the fight. Sir Lucius is disabused by the arrival of Mrs. Malaprop and Lydia; the latter quarrels and forgives her lover who makes it possible for her to elope.

### **3.5 Themes**

There are some interesting themes in Richard Sheridan's *The Rivals*. Some of them are:

#### **3.5.1 Gender Discrimination**

The playwright recreates this problem that was prevalent in the English society of the period. The society believed that there is always a stop line for the female gender in the English society, that she cannot do as much as her male counterpart. The prevailing social vices among children can hinder the educational goals and desires of parents for them. Young women do not have the freedom and power to make a choice of spouse for themselves; it is the exclusive right of their parents.

#### **3.5.2 Class Conflict and Materialism**

The English/rich class ensures that her wards and children are within the desired social class of the society. Girls/women of a particular social class are forbidden to cross the 'red dotted line' that demarcates or separates the classes. The rule must be adhered to by any eligible spinster of the English society; even when her parents dies, she will exercise the right to her parent's will based only on her strict adherence to the code of conduct required by her parents. This is exemplified in the case of Lydia; Mrs. Malaprop, her administrator, reminds her of such needful compliance. Also, Julia Melville obeys her father who wishes she must get married to Mr. Faulkland before he dies.

Even Sir Anthony wondered why Lydia should have a contrary view of what is a societal norm in England. He criticises Lydia's defiance on the ground of her education that teaches girls to probe common societal norms. Mrs. Malaprop also argues that on no account will she ever encourage any of her daughters to be educated because education, which to her is "diabolical knowledge", gives girls excessive freedom. The play reveals a great deal about discrimination that girls suffer in the English society for reasons of materialism and social advantage.

#### **3.5.3 Female Restriction**

Sheridan presents Lydia as a character who is unyielding and incorrigible, not willing to agree to societal practice. She rejects Beverley whom she later discovers to be Captain Absolute, and Mrs. Malaprop exhibits the adamancy of the age to certain norms as she consistently cautions and harasses Lydia, insulting her and trying to force her to accept arranged love proposals. At a time she chastises and queries Lydia:

She's as headstrong as an allegory on the bank of Nile.  
Thou unblushing rebel - didn't you tell this gentleman to  
his face that you loved another better? Lydia, Lydia, you  
ought to know that lying didn't become a young woman!  
Didn't you boast that Beverley- that stroller Beverley-  
possessed your heart? (p. 19)

The society restricts women, particularly spinsters, who must accept unquestionably the love proposals presented to them. Girls are also denied education so as to limit their social-economic visions and participation in the English society. Apart from getting them perpetually devalued, the restrictions do not bother about implications such practice can have on women and the English society generally.

### **3.5.4 Inheritance as Bait for Marriage**

Lydia has a thirty thousand pound inheritance; she is betrothed to Fankland by her father while Captain Absolute plays around, using deception to win over Lydia but he fails as Lydia prefers to lose her inheritance and marry a man of her choice, putting every suitor on his toes, including Captain John Absolute, the first son and heir apparent to Sir Anthony.

## **3.6 Style**

The playwright uses various dramatic techniques in the exploration of the English society of his time.

### **3.6.1 Comedy of Manners**

The play is an example of comedy of manners because it satirises the follies, vanity and social foibles of the English society of the Victorian age. The play is humorous as it ridicules the conventions and practices of the Victorian society in which the members of the society pay little attention to virtue in marriage; rather they employ deceit and reduce marriage to a worthless article of trade that can be bought at will. To them, emotion has little or no place in love and marriage; the question of personal choice becomes unnecessary. For instance, Sir Anthony Absolute is kept in the knowledge of Captain Absolute's proceedings as he proposes a match between his son and Miss Lydia Languish, Mrs. Malaprop's niece, with a huge inheritance of thirty thousand pounds. Mrs. Malaprop hears Ensign Beverley is in love with Lydia, and has intercepted their correspondence but had not seen him. But Mrs. Malaprop is also eager to get Lydia. The involvement of most of the characters in the issue of love, playing with the hearts of spinsters reduces love and marriage to a 'humorous tragedy', as they provoke laughter in the play.

### 3.6.2 Suspense

Sir Lucius O. Trigger challenges Captain Absolute. Sir Lucius draws a sword while pretending to be on behalf of Mr. Bob Acres. It is surprising that he later directs his challenge to Captain Absolute. But, the truth is obvious to the audience who knows that Captain Absolute has no business to do with Delia or Celia, as Lydia, Lucy and Mrs. Malaprop have indicated. Lucy reveals Sir Lucius's dilemma.

### 3.6.3 Paired Characters as Comedy

Characters are paired, not by any arrangement or logic, but by the desires of other characters in the play, by age, social and class rankings. For instance, Lydia is paired with Absolute and Julia with Faulkland, to deliberately create contrast and charge the atmosphere of the play to cause conflicts among the different lovers. For instance, where Captain Absolute is cool, calm, self-confident, and unassuming, Faulkland is apprehensive and restless. Mrs. Malaprop describes Captain Absolute to Miss Lydia and Miss Lydia to Captain Absolute by Sir Anthony as ravishing and to provoke immediate and anticipated results on the character to whom a subject is described.

### 3.6.4 Allusions

There is the use of Biblical and classical allusions and apostrophe. In the play, Faulkland anxiously addresses love as if it is ever physically present.

“O love-tormentor friend whose influence likes the moon acting on men of dull soul's makes idiots of them but meeting subtler spirits, betray their course”, “Love Thomas who had been a masquerader ever since the days of Jupiter”. Reference is made to one of the planets, Jupiter, a classical Greek god who sometimes assumes the shape of a bull in hot pursuit of a woman. This classical reference reveals the rivalry among the lovers in the play.

Sir Anthony describes Miss Lydia: “her eyes shall be the Promethean torch to you” if Lydia marries Captain Absolute. Prometheus is a being which, according to Greek legend, has two horns. This means Lydia's glazy eye balls that outsmart that of the gods will give life to Captain Absolute. Sheridan's introduction of the name Mrs. Malaprop, aligns the play with the literary techniques of malapropism as a character. Julia foreshadows Mrs. Malapropism with the careful manner in which she selects and uses words with precision, accuracy and comparison, particularly metaphors. She describes Miss Lydia's attitude and refusal to yield to any match as “headstrong as an allegory on the banks of the Nile, progeny learning”.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Outline the artistic qualities of Howard Brenton's *Weapons of Happiness* and Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The Rivals*.

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have produced the summary of Howard Brenton's *Weapons of Happiness* and Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The Rivals*. We have also discussed the themes and styles of the two plays.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:

- about the summary of Howard Brenton's *Weapons of Happiness*;
- themes in Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The Rival*;
- the summary of Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The Rival*;
- themes in Howard Brenton's *Weapons of Happiness*;
- styles in Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The Rivals* and Howard Brenton's *Weapons of Happiness*;

In Unit One of Module Two, you will read about the poetry of John Milton.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMA)

State and explain the themes in Howard Brenton's *Weapons of Happiness*.

Discuss the style in Richard Sheridan's *The Rivals*.

Discuss language and style in Howard Brenton's *Weapons of Happiness*.

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## MODULE 2

### RESPONSE TO CREATIVITY: IMPRESSIONS AND EXPRESSIONS IN ENGLISH POETRY

- Unit 1 Nostalgia and the Poetry of John Milton (1608 – 1674)
- Unit 2 Reminiscences: The Poetry of John Keats (1795 – 1821)
- Unit 3 Poetry and Nature: A Discussion of the Poetry of William Wordsworth (1770 – 1850)
- Unit 4 Other Prominent English Poets: William Blake (1757 – 1827), Alexander Pope (1688 – 1744) and William Butler Yeats (1865 – 1939)
- Unit 5 Poetry in Depth: The ‘coded’ Language of English Poetry

#### UNIT 1 NOSTALGIA AND THE POETRY OF JOHN MILTON (1608 – 1674)

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 A Discussion of Poem No. (1) ‘*When I Consider How My Light is Spent*’
  - 3.2 A Discussion of Poem No. (2) ‘*How Soon Hath Time*’
  - 3.3 A Discussion of Poem No. (3) ‘*At a Solemn Music*’
  - 3.4 A Discussion of Poem No. (4) ‘*Paradise Lost*’
  - 3.5 A Discussion of Poem No. (5) ‘*At a Vacation Exercise in the College, Part Latin, Part English, the Latin Speeches Ended, The English thus Began*’
  - 3.6 A Discussion of Poem No. (6) ‘*An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatic Poet W. Shakespeare*’
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMA)
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This module has been designed to discuss and interpret the selected poetry of major English poets. Specifically, this unit has been written to interpret the selected poetry of John Milton, our choice of poet for the Restoration. We have written to identify the various themes which the poet explores. We have treated the chosen poems as though they are prose. Our effort also brings out the general aesthetics of the poems. Below are the objectives of this unit.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- give your own interpretation of the poem, ‘*When I Consider How My Light is Spent*’;
- explain the themes in ‘*How Soon hath Time*’;
- outline the major issues raised by the poet in ‘*At a Solemn Music*’;
- state the poet’s impression in ‘*At a Vacation Exercise in the College, part Latin, Part English, The Latin speeches Ended, The English thus Began*’;
- compare the related issues raised in the poems;
- give your own interpretations to the poems of John Milton;
- Identify the real and potential matters in the poems of John Milton;
- underline some key words in each of the poems;
- review Milton’s ‘*An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatic Poet W. Shakespeare*’.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 When I Consider How My Light is Spent

In this poem, John Milton examines the temporal nature of people or the transience of life. The terrestrial or earthly is placed side by side or compared with the celestial. John Milton reminisces about his and people’s activities on earth and what God expects of humanity at the end of life. The title of the poem is deliberately metaphorical as the poet compares his life to “light”. “Death is a talent” that no man can hide, as it will deprive a human being of his most cherished soul. As he begins eternal journey to serve his maker he is bound to present his “true account”.

The poet probes his own conscience, asking if God really needs a person’s work. The poet answers his own question, that God do not really need man’s work or labour. Instead God bears man’s burden, “the yoke of thousands at his bidding which He bears”. Man relies on His grace, but God requires that man serve as the “land” and “ocean” also serve God restlessly.

Milton had become blind when this verse was composed. Thus, he juxtaposes his blindness to his soul as both the eyes and soul function as light of humanity. With blindness, the poet became even more conscious of death; so he speaks like one who is prepared to die, and ready to give account of his journey in the world when he finally returns to God.

### 3.2 How Soon Hath Time

The poet discusses the themes of death, anxiety, longevity, time, endurance, and hope. He places time at the forefront of a person’s total existence, longevity or otherwise. We see time in this poem as the sole determinant of every aspect of a person’s existence, his youthfulness, ageing, death, success, desires and failure. Whatever the

ambition, time becomes a major determinant of every goal. Milton questions, “How soon hath time, the subtle thief of youth, stol’n on his wing three and twentieth year”.

In this poem, Milton describes the overpowering influence of time that has quickened his age. Time parallels the poet’s career at a young age, moving at a fast pace through all the seasons such that time advances the youthful appearance of the poet toward manhood. It appears the poet dislikes this natural process and role played by time in his life, because, if he had a choice, he would have preferred to be ever youthful and agile. The poet says his youthful appearance was descriptive and that time inevitably stole in to advance his age” to manhood “am arrived so near” inwardly:

Time leads me, and the will of Heav’n  
All is, if I have grace to use it so

The poet ends the poem on a note of grudging and indifference as he surrenders to time and concludes that he has no grace to change time’s eternal motion of making youth grow old and drawing nearer to heaven. He also recognises that the power of humanity to take the advantage of time is by the “grace” of God.

### **3.3 At a Solemn Music**

In this poem, John Milton praises the serene and harmonious nature of the rhyme. He describes the verse as the synonym of music, the heavenly choreography that keeps Angels busy and dutiful “... pledges of Heaven’s joy ... voice and verse, that is made in Heaven, divine sounds”. So powerful is the divine excellence that is attached to the verse that is capable of penetrating the soul. The verse is purified, admirable sound of “sapphire coloured” capable of radiating around the throne of God, where the heavenly saints “saintly shout and solemn jubilee”. The “seraphim” in orderly “burning row” the Angel trumpets blow the cherubic host in thousand choirs” are all busy singing with inertial Herpes of golden wires” while the glorious spirits too were busy in the apparel of “victorious psalms... Hymns devout and Holy psalms” the primary duty of the heavenly Angels is to sing “everlasting.”

The poet compares the spirituality of heavenly Angels with human-made melodies and concludes that man-made songs are inferior to heavenly hosts as ours is coloured by sins, devoid of love and goodness. The last few lines of the poem predict people’s transformation into the celestial, where the mortal will be united with God and sing in “endless mourns of light”:

That we on Earth with undiscording voice  
May rightly answer that melodious noise  
As once we did, till disproportio’d sin  
Jarrid against Nature’s chime, and with harsh in  
Broke the fair music that all creatures made...  
In first disobedience, and their state of good  
And keep in tune with Heaven till God are long  
To His celestial consort us unite.

Milton's poem refers to the songs of people as filthy melody engineered by their sins, the sins of Adam and Eve and people's sins bring them to disrepute with the Almighty God.

### **3.4 'Paradise Lost'**

The theme of the epic poem is of universal significance. The poem deals with the genesis or beginning of the suffering of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, as presented in the book of Genesis of the Bible. Adam and Eve took the path of Satan who deceived and lured them away from the presence of God. The fate of the hero and his experience in Milton's poem typifies the fate of every human. Other themes of the poem are deception, suffering and pain.

The first few lines of Milton's epic indicate Satan's readiness to cajole and mislead Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. He had come to engage Eve in discussion as a friend, but underneath the discussion and his appearance of innocence was deception – "eyes sparking blazed". Thus, the tenants got swept away by the beguiling spirit the same way disobedient children of Adam and Eve were swept off by the great flood. Adam and Eve floated around like the victims of the flood, as they lost the garden, the path of God, chose the path of Satan and became homeless. They got more than they bargained for through their disobedience of God as their problems became worse, towering monstrously huge or giant" Titanian" leviathan". Apart from the main theme of deception in the poem, other themes are conviction, pride, determination, pride, innocence, suffering, separation, disfavour and disaster.

The poem is written in elevated style with generous use of imagery, use of historical, Biblical and classical allusions. Examples are "Satan flood "Briareas" ancient Tarsus" sea beast "Leviathan" God, "Norway foam". The beauty of the poem also lies in the generous use of ancient, Latinate expressions and syntax that elevate the themes of the poem above the ordinary level of verse compositions. Milton's use of metaphor, extended simile and ironies predominates in the poem. The poem combines natural setting with classical landscaping pitched against a historical context. In the epic poem, Satan, it seems, played the hero as juxtaposed with Adam and Eve. This can be seen in the long-time effect of Satan's craftiness, the successful but subtle way of making enmity of the beautiful relationship that had existed between God and man.

The first few lines of the poem contrast different personalities by placing together Satan and Eve (antithesis). The lines also double as euphemism; there are also inversion (change in normal sentence order) in the poem order as seen in "with head uplift above the wave and eyes lay floating many a road in bulk as huge Leviathan which God of all his works."

### 3.5 'At a Vacation Exercise in the College. Part Latin, part English. The Latin Speeches Ended, the English Thus Began'

This poem of Milton praises his native language/mother tongue, the English that belongs to the group of languages that include German, Dutch, Flemish, Danish, Swedish and Norwegian. Consider the way the poet salutes the English language: "Hail native language that by sinews weak, didst move my first endeavouring tongue to speak". The poet emphasises his connectivity to his language and culture of first contact: "Half unpronounced, slide through my infant lipps".

Milton reminisces about his affinity with his English culture as an infant, but now "pardon ask", for the brief disconnection he experiences with his mother tongue. He regrets his temporary dissociation with his mother tongue. The poet confesses that he could not do without his language which he "now use thee in my latter task". He is caught in-between the Greek and Latin civilisation that competes with his mother tongue. Despite the obvious competition experienced by the culture contacts, the poet is comfortable with himself, expressing the multiplicity of idea and the refinement of thought in his native English tongue.

He sees the English language as asset and pleads that he be not denied his culture as he is not willing to deny his literary expression and communications, despite the mixed character of the English language vocabulary. The poet considers the language a treasure, rich, and "gladdens pleasure giving's" "thy wardrobes bring thy chaffiest treasure". Milton states that the burning thought and knowledge that grows in him can only be clothed appropriately with his mother tongue. He considers the English language as the best and befitting one for cultural expression, better than the Greek, Latin and German languages he had contact with. The poet's spiritual connectivity to his language of birth is deeply expressed. He merges the terrestrial with the celestial reviving the aesthetic relevance of the English language, as he says:

I have some naked thoughts that role about  
And loudly knock to have their passage out,  
And wearies of their place do only stay  
Till thou hast deck't them in thy best array;  
That so they may without suspect or fears  
Fly swiftly to this fair Assembly ears;  
Yet I had rather if some graver subject use

The poet elevates his native language to the high heavens, decorating it in god-like status in power and strength as "blissful Deities"... Apollo sings." "Nectar". "Neptune". The English language is capable of representing wonderful thoughts conceived in the poet's mind, able to sustain" substances with canons" To Milton, the English enjoys exceptional advantage over all other major Europeans languages.

### 3.6 An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatic Poet William Shakespeare

The poet combines a discussion of the ephemeral nature of life with the lasting beauty of the work of art in his eulogy of the English poet and dramatist, William Shakespeare. The poet argues in favour of the English poet's honour, "labor of an age implied stone a",... a star- y pointing pyramid". Milton addresses the deceased with a deep expression of love and nostalgia, but questions the weak and unpopular respect accorded Shakespeare in death:

Dear son of memory, great heir of fame.  
What needs't thou such weak witness of thy name?

The poet observes that Shakespeare's "excellent" artistry should not have been "(hidden) under a pyramid" "that will wither after all". The English poet, he adds, has fashioned a credible and lasting image for himself, as demonstrated in his creativity "while alive" show – endeavoring art" that became a gratifying source of human wisdom and knowledge and many bear testimony to his numerous books, though many found it difficult to value "thy unvalued book". Milton regrets being bereaved by the death of valuable William Shakespeare and his arts. But the poet is satisfied that the creative works of the English poet and dramatist was his ideal marble and already immortalised him, "sepulchered in such pump dost lie". The kings and honourable men of this world will prefer Shakespeare's stately honour which his art earned him even in death. His works are themselves more reliable marble in comparison to the honour accorded his "bones" and "labor" of a whole age that is now "in piled stones."

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Discuss the themes in John Milton's '*When I Consider How My Light is Spent*'.

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have treated several of John Milton's poems - '*When I Consider How My Light is Spent*', '*How Soon Hath Time*', '*At a Solemn Music*', '*Paradise Lost*', '*At a Vocation Exercise in the College, Part Latin, Part English The Latin Speeches Ended, the English Thus Began*' and '*An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatic Poet W. Shakespeare*'.

### 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:

- the poet's impression in '*When I Consider How My Light is Spent*';
- the themes in '*How Soon Halt Time*';
- the poet's perspective in '*At a Solemn Music*';
- the universal relevance of the themes in '*Paradise Lost*';
- the relevance of '*At a Vatican Exercise in the College, Part Latin, Part English, the Latin Speeches Ended, the English Thus Began*';
- how Milton celebrates William Shakespeare in '*An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatic Poet W. Shakespeare*'.

In unit two, you will study the poetry of John Keats.

**6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMA)**

1. Discuss the themes in John Milton's *'Paradise Lost'*
2. Discuss the poet's impression in *'When I Consider How My Light is Spent'*
3. Compare Milton's *'How Soon Hath Time'* with *'An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatic Poet W. Shakespeare'*

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## **UNIT 2: REMINISCENCES: THE POETRY OF JOHN KEATS (1795 – 1821)**

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- 2.0 Objectives
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  - 3.2 A Discussion of Poem No. (2) '*Ode on a Grecian Urn*'
  - 3.3 A Discussion of Poem No. (3) '*This Living Hand, Now Warm and Capable*'
  - 3.4 A Discussion of Poem No. (4) '*Ode to a Nightingale*'
  - 3.5 A Discussion of Poem No. (5) '*Bright Star, Would I Were Steadfast as Thou Art*'
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMA)
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

We have designed this unit to introduce you to the selected poems of John Keats. Your understanding and experience of the poetry will educate you about the craftsmanship of the poet. His themes and techniques are derived from personal experience and his ability to adequately represent the events of the England of his time in poetry. Appreciating these elements will put you at a vantage position to evaluate Keats's position as an English poet and writer. Below are the objectives of this unit.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the themes in John Keats's sonnet, '*When I Have Fears That I May Cease To Be*';
- explain the poet's impression of the Urn in his '*Ode to a Grecian Urn*';
- summarise the poet's feeling in '*This Living Hand, Now Warm and Capable*';
- state the poet's poetic style in '*Ode to a Nightingale*'.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Sonnet: 'When I Have Fears That I May Cease To Be'

When I have fears that I may cease to be  
Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain,  
Before high-piled books, in charact'ry  
Hold like rich garnerers the full-ripened grain;  
When I behold, upon the night's starred face,  
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,  
And I think that I may never live to trace  
Their shadows with the magic hand of chance;  
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour  
That I shall never look upon thee more,  
Never have relish in the fairy power  
Of unreflecting love-then on the shore  
Of the wide world I stand alone, and I think  
Till love and fame to nothingness do sink

The poet examines the themes of death, fear of the unknown, the vanity of life, love and fame. The poet is preoccupied with the thought of his end, the death that will put an end to his wisdom and knowledge of creativity:

When I have fears that I may cease to be  
Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain  
Before high-piled books, in character'y  
Hold like rich garnerers' the full-ripened grain.

In his consciousness of the temporal nature of life, the poet believes that the time gets nearer that the inevitable end, "night will stare him in the face". He reflects on all that he will lose when he dies. Keats thinks of the hour that his life will stop suddenly, "Shall never look upon thee more" "Never have relish in the fairy power", a time when his love and fame will sink.

#### 3.2 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'

Keats's Urn symbolises the work of art, religion and the beauty of nature, especially its lasting value over the ages, a legend of god-like status. Art is also symbolised in the flower vase which reflects perpetual elegance and serenity. The beauty and legendary value of the flower vase are rare qualities that make the vase fascinating and elevate it to a god-like status, "temple or the dales of Arcady". The symbols of the arts are the 'pipes' and "Timbrels"; they are melodious and expressive as the vase as they all perform the function of giving happiness and beauty to the human soul, thus capable of prolonging life. Thus, Keats orders the pipe to release its fine tune - "therefore, ye soft pipes play on: not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared, pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone."

John Keats unfolds the role of traditional society, the altar which is a work of art, the garlands and priest who leads with an “helper” “flanks garlands dressed”, all symbolise the works of art. Though Keats has refused to give the name of the town located near the river or shore or mountain built with perfect citadel, we may not blame the poet for such restraint of art. Keats’s nameless town may be taken as his acceptance of the universality of art. The town’s streets are as quiet as the work of art, thus sharing a most admired the quality of the work of art, serenity and beauty, with very attractive shapes: “Attic shape”, “marble men”, “and maidens” consider the eternal beauty of the work of art. The poet’s tribute to the art, Keats concludes, involving the immanent destruction that awaits the world and her generation:

When old age shall this generation waste  
 Thou shall remain, in midst of other woe  
 Thou ours, a friend to man to whom thou say’st  
 Beauty is truth, truth beauty that is all

Readers cannot but be moved by the Keats idiom, “thus”, “thou”, “thy”, “ditties”, “loath” and so on are the poet’s generous use of symbolism to revive the work of art. Some of them are “vase” “pipe”, tambourine, “garland”, “green altar, “marble” vault “heifer”. The symbols used in the poem complements the metaphor, “thou still unrushed bride of quietness, thou foster-child of silence and slow time”, “flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme. “Heard melodies are sweet but those unheard are sweeter, therefore, ye soft pipes play on”. The symbols and metaphors overhaul the usefulness of the subject matter, but the use of rhetorical questions reenact the seriousness of the universal relevance and eternal quality of the work of Art, “What men or Gods are these? What maidens to?” We also noticed deliberate omission of words and the use of inverse in the sentence and word arrangement of the poem. Examples are:

“when old age shall this generation waste.”  
 “Beauty Is Truth, Truth Beauty- That Is All  
 “Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know

“Thou still unravished bride of quietness” personified the symbols of the works of art used in the poem, such has been used to further justify the humanity of the Art.

### **3.3 This Living Hand, Now Warm and Capable**

John Keats, in this poem, is preoccupied with the transient nature of life, especially the symbols of death in comparison with the living. He examines his appearance that comprises his “living hand” that is warm and “capable”, “functional”, and “grasping” According to the poet, it will be impossible for him to function adequately when he dies. He adds that a “cold” body only adds to the cool and icy silence of the tomb. Keats warns the living to “haunt the days and chill thy dreaming nights”. He adopts the technique of rhetorical questioning and speculation. He is sure of the imminence of death but not sure of what will become of a person after death. The reality of death and people’s activities in the world are familiar, but he wonders what will become of a

person after death. In his anticipation, he continues his speculative reflections, imagining his very end. He asks in confused tone and feeling:

Where shall we be?  
(She whispers) where shall we be,  
When death strikes home. O' where then shall we be  
Who were you and I?  
Counting the heats.  
Counting the slows heart beats  
The bleeding to death of the time in slow heart beats,  
Wakeful they lie.

The poem arouse our curiosity even more delicately as he moves between now and hereafter, probing people's speculations of death. Keats advises humanity to be conscious of the approaching death and time. The latter, he says, defines our existence and serves as ensign to our daily advancement to the grave.

### 3.4 Ode to a Nightingale

The ode has its origin from the Greeks as a poem in song form. However, ode is popular with many oral cultures. An ode with its lofty or elevated style has elaborate structure. A private ode celebrates; it is meditative, reflective and subjective. A public ode is often used for ceremonial occasions like house warming and funeral ceremonies as well as heroic return from war. The commonest ode in Western Literature is John Keats' '*Ode to Nightingale*', Sapho's '*Ode to Aphrodite*' and '*Ode to the Duke of Wellington*'.

The poet was inspired by Keats experience of the aesthetics in the songs of a nightingale in the spring of 1809. The first stanza of the poem expresses the poet's deep feeling that overwhelmed him while listening to the beautiful songs of the bird. Such feeling becomes apparent in the poet - "heart aches" "drowsy numbness of pains". This is further revealed as the poet compares this emotional transport to that of a "drunk" or "emptied some dull opiate to the brain". The poet explains that the experience triggered in him by the songs of the nightingale is not out of being envious of the song star-bird. But he views and creates a convergence between his rhythm and the songs of the nightingale - the songs unite him with the nightingale. Keats declares:

Tis not through envy of the thy happy lot  
But being two happy in the thine happiness  
That thou, light winged dryad of the trees  
In some melodious plot

Keats is further enthused by the bird's song that he embarks on a comprehensive, description of the bird's activities in the green foliage of the "green trees a draught of vintage" "deep-delved earth" "Tasting of flora and the country green", the songs of the bird in the green trees of the green country. The bird's beak provides warmth and comfort as thus, his songs of truth about life and humanity. The poet says the nightingale is quite familiar and comfortable with its green environment where it lives

and feeds on the leafy green trees. The bird and humanity are brought to the fore, as the green environment serves as shade for the nightingale and humanity.

The poet's descriptive and solemn time changes in verse four as the poet ordered the songster to go away "Away!" "Away for I will fly to thee", as he compares himself to Bacchus (the god of wine). Keats is actually deeply impressed by the songs of the nightingale. The poet is reconciled with the night, the "green moon in her throne." The beautiful songs of the nightingale in the poem is reconciled with nature - "the grass" "the thicket", "fruit three wild", "fast fading violet covered up in leaves". Indeed, the poet wishes the nightingale long life so that generations could benefit from the bird's wealth of songs. The magic in the songs of the nightingale makes it famous and inviting to the soul. He bids the nightingale farewell as he admires how it glides through the still stream and valley.

### 3.5 Sonnet: Bright Star, Would I Were Steadfast as Thou Art

Bright star! Would I were stead fast as thou art  
Bright star! Would I were steadfast as thou art  
Not in lone splendor hung aloft the night,  
And watching, with eternal lids apart,  
Like Nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,  
The moving waters at their priest-like task  
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores  
Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask  
Of show upon the mountains and the moors  
No-yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,  
Pillowed upon my fair love's ripening breast,  
To feel forever in a sweet unrest,  
Still, still to hear her tender taken breath  
And so live ever-or else swoon to death

In this sonnet, usually a fourteen-line long poem, Keats turns his search light on nature, praising the bright star that illuminates the night, fulfilling her eternal responsibility of "watching with eternal lids apart." He admires nature's patience and its enduring ability. The star awakes, keep vigil over the sea, moving round the earth, "human shores" "the mountains moon". The poet wishes he were as consistent as the star. The poem reads "Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art not in line splendor hinge aloft the night and watching with eternal held."

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Compare at least two of the poems discussed in this unit revealing their relevance to the human society.

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed John Keats' *'When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be'*, *'Ode on a Grecian Urn'*, *'This Living Hand, Now Warm and Capable'*, *'Ode To a Nightingale'*, and *'Bright Star, Would I Were Steadfast as Thou Art'*.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:

- the poet's impression in *'When I Have Fears that I May Cease to Be'*;
- themes in *'Ode on a Grecian Urn'*;
- the poet's perspective in *'Ode to a Nightingale'*;
- the poet's creative focus in *'This Living Hand, Now Warm and Capable'*;
- how the poet celebrates nature in *'Bright Star, Would I were Steadfast as Thou Art'*;

In the next unit, you will be introduced to the Poetry of William Wordsworth.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMA)

Read and answer the questions below:

1. Discuss the poet's impression of life and death in *'When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be'*
2. Explain the poet's speculations in *'This Living Hand, Now Warm, and Capable'*
3. Value the urn in John Keats's *'Ode on a Grecian Urn'*

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## **UNIT 3: POETRY AND NATURE: A DISCUSSION OF THE POETRY OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770 – 1850)**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
  - 3.1 A Discussion of Poem No. (1) *'The World is Too Much With Us'*
  - 3.2 A Discussion of Poem No. (2) *'A Night Piece'*
  - 3.3 A Discussion of Poem No. (3) *'I Wondered Lonely as a Cloud'*
  - 3.4 A Discussion of Poem No. (4) *'I Travelled among Unknown Men'*
  - 3.5 A Discussion of Poem No. (5) *'The London Beggar'*
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMA)
- 7.0 References/ Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

We have written and designed this unit to discuss the selected poetry of William Wordsworth. The thematic preoccupation of the poet has been clearly discussed to reveal the poet's concern for England and generally for humanity. His poems offer his opinions of the world around him. Below are the objectives of this unit.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the themes in William Wordsworth's *'The World is Too Much With Us'*;
- outline the themes in *'A Night Piece'*;
- discuss the poet's emotional state in *'I Wondered Lonely as a Cloud'*;
- discover the poet's view in *'I Traveled Among Unknown Men'*;
- reflects the poet's view of the London society of his time in *'The London Beggar'*.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 The World is Too Much with Us**

In *'The World is Too Much With Us'*, William Wordsworth takes you and I back to his natural environment to which he pays little or no attention. The poet reviews the prevailing social problems of the Romantic and Victorian periods. Humanity prefers to be occupied with the material or perishable things of life instead of the need to nurture the natural environment as emphasized in the lines of the poem. People have lost touch with the essence of nature, its revitalising strength, productive power and maternal beauty.



...we lay waste our powers,  
Little we see in nature what is ours  
The sea that bares her bosom to the moon  
The winds that will be howling at all hours...  
For this, for everything we are out at tune.

Other themes of the poem are neglect, misplaced priority, social recklessness and wastefulness, disappointment and beauty.

The poet uses natural allusion to further drive home nature-related issues raised in the poem. Some of them are “moon”, “winds”, “flowers”, and “sea”. Allusion is also made to “proteus”, sea goddess of the Greek and “Triton”, Greek goddess of nature and fertility. A combination of visual and auditory images such as “winds that will be howling at all hours”; “Sight of proteus rising from the sea”; “this pleasant lea” also adorn the poem. The poet’s choice of words is familiar since they are chosen from the natural environment.

### **3.2 A Night Piece**

The poem reveals the poet’s impression of the cloud. He experiments with natural imagery. He looks up at the cloud, “the sky is overspread” to connect the continuous cloud with a “veil”. The moon gives “whitened” light to brighten the extending cloud in strange grasp to provoke shadowy appearance on plants and trees. The cloud is helped by a multitude of stars to produce “instantaneous light” and this makes it possible for the “musing man” to share from the greatness of the cloud. Humanity is pleased by the “glory of the heavens”, thus he is able to engage in impressive sailing and other activities that are of advantage to him. The poet recalls the dignity of the stars and clouds from her great summit, the windy and spirited beauty of the combined marriage of convenience of the stars and cloud are generously expressed in the poem. The poet recalls:

The sky is overspread  
With a close veil of one continuous cloud  
All whitened by the moon that just appears  
A dim-seen orb, yet chequers not the ground  
With any shadow-plant, or tower, or tree  
At last, a pleasant gleam breaks forth at once  
An instantaneous light; the musing man  
Who walks along with his eyes bent to earth

### 3.3 I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

The poet recalls his experience of wandering over the hills, mountains and valleys. He ran into a cloud and then a golden “daffodils beneath the trees, fluttering and dancing in the breeze”. The poet explains:

...continuous as the stars that shines  
And twinkle on the miky way  
They stretched in never rending line  
Along the margin of a bay  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance  
Tossing their heads in rightly dance

Nature here complements the other for a healthy living; the shinning stars helped the lily to “toss their heads in rightly dance”. Wordsworth recalls the dancing and “sparkling waves in glee”. But the poet could not avoid imagining the gaze at the daffodils that gives the poet a wealth of creativity - “what wealth the show to me had brought”. The poet’s gaze at the flowers triggers Wordsworth’s creative imagination:

For oft, when on my couch llie  
In vacant or in pensive mood  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And when my heart with pleasure fills  
And dance with the daffodils.

Wordsworth is haunted by the creative will deposited in him by nature: “Mounting of the mind comes fast upon me.”

The power in creativity makes the poet bold, give him peace, and the miracle of life “promises of life” and “undisturbed delight”. The poet believes in the visionary ideal and prophetic ability of nature to support prospects, “point me on my course”, helps along the path of a “chosen tasks”, The maternal role of nature to the poet is emphasised, “dwell on shore”, “gather fruits fresh” from nature’s trees. All such gifts of nature, the poet says, consecrates his joy. The breeze, which he describes as the breath of heaven blowing on his “body felt within” all with “mild creative breeze”. The poet recognises the creative power in nature “vexing its own creation” that comes with recognisable identity, its “virtue”, “thoughts”, “dignity”, “prowess”, “pure passion”, “knowledge”, “delight”, “holy life of music” and of the verse”.

### 3.4 I Traveled among Unknown Men

Wordsworth’s journey here refers to mental travel and actual journey, the latter probably to Germany. He journeyed among “unknown men” in “lands beyond the sea”. The poem is also Wordsworth’s declarative statement and patriotism to his verse style.

The imaginative process is the journey, the outcome of the poet’s thought, its novelty. The poet confesses his love for the verse “the love I bore to thee”, “nor will I quit thy

shore”, “I seem to love thee more and more”. He admits, “Among thy mountains did I feel the joy of my desire”.

The poet openly declares his interest in poetry or the Art for which he vowed never to quit, a reflection of his commitment to rural verse creative experience.

### **3.5 The London Beggar**

The poet paints a gruesome picture of the city of London reports - the mystery, neglect and wretchedness that characterised the great city. “Oh friend, one felling was there which belonged to this great city by exclusive right”. Wordsworth calls our attention to the tickly populated city, “In the overflowing streets”. He tells us that one could know so much about the city of London, by merely taking a glance at the faces of passers-by in the streets of London. The poem reads:

Have I gone forward with the crowd, and said  
Unto myself, “The face of everyone  
That passes by me in a mystery

The poet vows to live above the suffering that characterised the city of London, like a plague, and for which he also suffers but “ceased to look oppressed”. The development inflicts frights in the populace “the present, past, hope, fear all stays”. Beggars litter the streets of London in search of survival. The poet doubts if social begging is not already endemic, or a plague that could afflict anyone. He paints the picture of a blind beggar who, “with upright face”, stood propped against a wall, up on his chest”. The beggar wears a written paper to explain his own “story...”, and “who he was”. The poet is familiar with the emblem of the blind beggar, a common experience with the poet’s universe.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Discuss the poet’s vision in ‘*The Word is Too Much with Us*’.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit, we have discussed William Wordsworth’s ‘*The Word is Too Much With Us*’, ‘*A Night Piece*’, ‘*I Wondered Lonely as a Cloud*’, ‘*I Travelled among Unknown Men*’ and ‘*The London Beggar*’.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:

- the poet's impression in *'The World is Too Much with Us'*;
- themes in *'A Night Piece'*;
- the focus of the poet in *'I Wondered Lonely as a Cloud'*;
- the poet's feeling for the London populace as seen in *'The London Beggar'*;
- nature of the poet's journey in *'I Travelled among Unknown Men'*;

In the next unit you will be introduced to the poetry of selected prominent English poets like William Blake, Alexander Pope and William Butler Yeats.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMA)

1. How did William Wordsworth experiment with the problems of the Romantic and Victorian periods in his poem *'The World is Too Much With Us'*?
2. Discuss the poet's impression of nature in *'A Night Piece'*

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**UNIT 4: OTHER PROMINENT ENGLISH POETS: WILLIAM BLAKE (1757 – 1827), ALEXANDER POPE (1688 – 1744) AND WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865 – 1939)**

**CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
  - 3.1 The Poetry of William Blake (1757 – 1827)
    - 3.1.1 A Discussion of Poem No. (1) *'Songs of Innocence'*
    - 3.1.2 A Discussion of Poem No. (3) *'The Little Black Boy'*
    - 3.1.3 A Discussion of Poem No. (4) *'The Young Black Slave'*
    - 3.1.4 A Discussion of Poem No. (5) *'To See a World in a Grain of Sand'*
    - 3.1.5 A Discussion of Poem No. (6) *'Holy Thursday'*
    - 3.1.6 A Discussion of Poem No. (7) *'The Garden of Love'*
    - 3.1.7 A Discussion of Poem No. (8) *'London'*
  - 3.2 The Poetry of Alexander Pope (1688 – 1744)
    - 3.2.1 A Discussion of Poem No. (1) *'The Rape of the Lock'*
    - 3.2.2 A Discussion of Poem No. (2) *'Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady'*
    - 3.2.3 A Discussion of Poem No. (3) *'Eloisa to Abelard'*
  - 3.3 The Poetry of William Butler Yeats (1865 – 1939)
    - 3.3.1 A Discussion of Poem No. (1) *'An Irish Airman Foresees His Death'*
    - 3.3.2 A Discussion of Poem No. (2) *'The Second Coming'*
    - 3.3.3 A Discussion of Poem No. (3) *'Sailing to Byzantium'*
  - 3.4 A Discussion of Poem No. (4) *'When You are Old'*
  - 3.5 A Discussion of Poem No. (5) *'In Memory of Major Robert Gregory'*
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments (TMA)
- 7.0 References/ Further Reading

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit completes our discussion of major English poets. In this unit, we have selected poetry variously from the works of William Blake, Alexander Pope and William Butler Yeats for our discussion. Their various themes and general perspectives to life as revealed in their poems are our focus. The poems are treated in a comprehensive and prose-like form in such a way that you will be equipped with English poetry generally.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss Blake's view in *Songs of Innocence*;
- explain the themes in Alexander Pope's 'The Rape of the Lock' and 'Elegy to the memory of an Unfortunate Lady';
- state the poet's view of love in 'Eloisa to Abelard';
- review the poet's main concern in William Butler Yeats 'An Irish Airman Foresees His Death';
- comment on William Butler Yeats' 'The Second Coming';
- assess the poet's view in William Blake's 'The Garden of Love';
- give your impression of Yeats' 'Sailing to Byzantium';
- explain the poet's phobia in 'When You are Old';
- outline the poet's reminiscence in 'In Memory of Major Robert Gregory' and 'Holy Thursday';
- defend the little black boy in Blake's poem of that title;
- argue in favour of the young black slave in William Blake's 'Songs of Innocence';
- assemble the themes in 'Night';
- write the poet's feelings in 'On Another's Sorrow';
- report the main and sub themes in Blake's in 'The Garden of Love';
- relate the position of William Blake in 'London and 'The Little Black Boy';
- underline the poet's creative design in 'To See a World in a Grain of Sand'.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### The Poetry of William Blake (1757-1827)

#### 3.1.1 Songs of Innocence

William Blake invokes the innocence of a child he ran into while "piping down the valley's wild" Apparently moved by the poet's tune, the child requests that the poet composes a rhyme about a lamb, to which Blake agreed cheerfully. The poet's song, it appears, moved the boy into tears. The poet's emphasis here is the achievement of the powerful "force of emotional feeling that is contained in poetry" "... he wept to hear" "wept with joy to hear" In selfless curiosity and desire to share with others the limitless aesthetics of the rhyme, he insists that the piper sits down and write his songs for other members of his generation to share from the wisdom that is contained in poetry. He adhered to the boy's suggestion that poetry be expanded from restricted or private theme to the universal. Our poet suggests a need to change from the complex, unmusical and esoteric verse style he inherited from the classical tradition of poetry to a more socially engaging, simple and familiar poetry with new themes. The poem states:

Piper, sit dee down and write  
In a book that all may read...

And I plucked a hollow reed  
And I made a rural pen,  
And I wrote my happy songs  
Every child may joy to hear

In continuation of the theme of innocence in Blake's *Songs of Innocence*, the poet takes a cursory look into the 'valley's wild,' and the quiet hills and valleys. A child approaches, instructs him to sing a song to him about a lamb, child falls deeper into a state of innocence by weeping. And in between his emotional expression, the child requests our poet never to stop his happiness giving songs, as it will enable the inhabitants of rural England enjoy the beauty of his craft. Blake obeys:

... And I made a rural pen.  
And I stained the mater clear,  
And I wrote my happy songs  
Every child may joy to hear  
The shepherd

Our poet suggests a need to change from the complex, unmusical, and esoteric verse inherited from the classical tradition of poetry to a more socially acceptable, familiar, simple poetry in new or current themes.

### **3.1.2 The Little Black Boy**

This poem of William Blake's commemorates the passing of a Bill proposed in the House of Commons on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1788 by Sir William Dolben which restricted the number of slaves who could be transported from Africa to British colonies in the West Indies.

The little black boy in the poem is a slave who tells his life history in simple and moving language after realising his shattered life in his new world. He explains that he was born in the Southern world "wild". He admits that he is black but his "soul is now white" by his allegiance and new cosmopolitan English cultural setting. He experiences colour differentiation between black and white. He reports the colour discrimination he encountered in the following lines:

My mother bore me in the Southern wild  
And I am black, but o! my soul is white  
White as an angel is the English child  
But I am black as if bereaved of light

### **3.1.3 The Young Black Slave**

The young black slave explains the psychological and emotional torture his severance from his native land has caused him. As a black boy, he feels constrained to learn



white culture, and he notices the honor bestowed upon the white child and how he is isolated, treated as underdog, “as if bereaved of light”. He recounts emotional and physical torture “wet with dew” and his night weeping. He cried every night until God appeared to him at night in “white” apparel, kissed and led him by the hand, just as his sorrowful mother appeared to console him. While his mother consoles him, she instructs him to direct his thoughts, ill-feelings, to God, who will bear his troubles, brighten his days and comfort him, “...gives his light and gives his heat away” the same way, “flowers”, ...trees, ...beasts,” receive comfort in the morning and joy in the noonday. She teaches her boy that the true love that eludes him can be given by the Almighty God who gives joy and care to all without discrimination. She comforts the boy further, explaining the rationale behind the colour bar. She advises that such discrimination should be seen as God’s natural way of shielding the black man’s soul, “a cloud like a shady grove”. She tells him that “the cloud will vanish” and the good God will receive the oppressed in his open arms warmly, with his superior love and care “like lambs rejoice “. After she had consoled him, his soul unites black and white who were thought to emanate from different worlds.

The overriding sense of joy, unity and oneness will then take over the racial prejudice that had once defined separately the black and white worlds:

To learn in joy upon our father’s knee;  
And then I’ll stand and stroke his silver hair,  
And be like him and he will then love me.

### **3.1.4 To See a World in a Grain of Sand**

To see a world in a grain of sand  
And a heaven in a wild flower,  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand  
And eternity in an hour

In this quatrain of Blake, we see the theme of the temporal nature of our world. This is compared with the beauty and eternal presence of heaven and heavenly bodies. Other themes are: theme of permanence, the transience nature of the human world with her vanishing possibilities, theme of heaven. Heaven, though seems far, yet the poet believes is so near to us. The first line of Blake’s quatrain is apocalyptic; it reminds one of the ruinous end of the world, as predicted in the Biblical book of Revelation.

Blake’s style in the short poem is loaded with metaphor which appears in every line. Our temporal world is compared to a grain of sand that could vanish in a moment when it encounters a passing wind. In the poem, the earth is placed in contrast with heaven and heavenly bodies of lasting qualities and affects.

### **3.1.5 Holy Thursday**

During a Thursday declared holy by St. Paul in England, children appeared in pairs, wearing colourful attire that symbolises holiness and purity. Some colours of their

dresses are: “red”, “blue”, and “green”, with “white” wands as “snow”. The free movement of the many children to the dome of St. Paul is compared to the free flow of the River Thames, just as the beauty formed by the colour combination of the innocent children, the radiance, and flowery appearances are also compared to the “multitudes of lambs”. The thunderous songs of the numerous boys and girls, the harmony of thought and voices are compared to those of heavenly Angels.

### **3.1.6 The Garden of Love**

The poet refers to a chapel that was built in South Lambeth Green in 1793. Every member was charged to pay for their places, thus revealing the irony of the poem. In place of the green where the poet used to play as a boy now stands a building for worship where man’s inhumanity and wickedness abound. The poet is disappointed that in the garden of love are many graves and tombstones; the priests in black gown walk tirelessly making proclamations in the garden. Blake sees this sad development as the implication of people’s sinful act. The poet observes:

And I saw it was filled with graves  
And tombstones where flowers should be  
The priests in black gowns were walking their rounds  
And binding with briars my joys and desires.

### **3.1.7 London**

In what looks like the poet’s actual experience, he wandered through the mapped street of London owned by corporations around the Thames. His face misty with unshed tears: agony, depression, as he ran on the streets of London:

I wonder through each chartered street  
Near where the chartered Thames does flow  
And mark in every face I meet  
Marks of weakness, marks of woe

In every cry of every man  
In every infant’s cry of fear  
In every voice, in every ban  
The mind forged manacles I hear.

In the poem, London’s hardships spread into the church and “the chimney sweeper’s cry”. The social and economic problems in London of the poet’s age had overpowering influence on young English women, many of whom were reduced to harlots in the midnight streets of London with their “howling babies”. The effect of the biting social economic problems in London affects a great number of the populace such that the poet described it as a plague:

But most through midnight streets  
I hear how the youthful harlots curse

Blasts the new born infant's lear  
And blasts with plagues the marriage hearse.

## **The Poetry of Alexander Pope (1688-1744)**

### **3.2 The Rape of the Lock**

*'The Rape of the Lock'* is a mock-heroic narrative poem written by Alexander Pope. It was published anonymously in Lintots's Miscellany in May 1712 in 334 lines {Two Cantos}. The poem was revised and expanded into 5 canto version, 794 lines in Pope's name in March 2, 1714.

The poem was written to commemorate a real life event – a quarrel that involved young Lord Petre and Isabella Fermor. The latter's hair was cut off by young Petre. All the feuding parties were Roman Catholic families. Alexander Pope wrote the poem to end the quarrel based on the advice of his friend, John Carl. The Catholic background of the feuding parties is the reason for the elaborate use of religious expressions or terminologies in Pope's poem.

Isabella Fermor and her suitor, Lord Petre, came from aristocratic Catholic families at a period in England when Catholicism was banned. Petre, who was lusting after Isabella, had cut off a part of her dreadlock uninformed. This led to a great quarrel between the two popular Catholic families. Alexander Pope thinks of the possibility of uniting the conflicting parties through the use of humour.

The two Catholic families were seen by Pope to be playing the gods in the quarrel; hence he compared the incident to the epic world of the gods. Pope created a character he named Belinda to represent the real Arabella and imaginatively journeyed into the world of 'Sylphs' or guardian spirits, imitating the gods and goddesses. And in a mockery of the traditional classical epics, the act is humorously considered to be synonymous to a rape.

We have to see beyond the art of Belinda's hair and the petty conflict that ensured to extract the important theme of the beauty and loss of beauty in the poem. In the Augustan tradition, women's hair was considered a very important part of their beauty, and women's beauty generally was very important to them and their society. It then means that the loss of one's beauty was an important matter, as the woman ought to be decorative apparel, for beauty in the age of Pope had the highest scoring degree than any other feminine virtue attainable. Her hair was more important. When the Baron took a secret look into the lock's hair, he cherished its shining and inviting mythical nature and nursed the secret desire to cut it, as he invokes the similar voyage of the gods. Pope remarks:

The peer now spreads the glittering furfex wide,  
T' inclose the lock, now joins it, to divide  
Ev'n then, before the fatal Engine clos'd  
A wretched sylph too fondly interpos'd,

Fate urged the sheers and cut the sylph in twain.

The poem discusses the themes of wealth, laziness of the society of the time as well as the making of complex conflicts out of the trivial issues of life. We were immediately introduced to the heroine, Belinda, and then immediately afterward connected to the supernatural, the sylph, an imitation of the gods of the Romans and Greek. Alexander Pope's verse reveals man as a predator, a natural predator whom every beautiful Belinda must beware of because of his egoistic and overpowering purpose which he often achieves through sexual ego. Pope equates the might in man's tendency when confronted with Belinda to the gods of the Greeks and Romans (epics); thus every woman should beware of man, according to Pope. Women too, as Belinda, are obsessed with their beauty, which they nurture desperately and determinably. In Canto I of the poem, Belinda is preoccupied with beautifying or adoring herself in front of the mirror. She glorifies herself, and this also suggests that Belinda already elevates herself to a goddess who must be worshipped. She worships her reflection in the mirror, the reflection of her own vanity, the vanity of every human being, her goddess-like beauty that every man desires to prey on.

Fully dressed, Belinda sets off to a social occasion in Canto II of the poem. On her journey, Pope reminds us of her two famous locks of hair as well as the ambition of the Baron to possess them as a token of her love. The Baron turns to the supernatural to assist him possess the totality of Belinda's love, but half his wish is granted, one lock, not both. But, as Belinda sails off beautifully, flowing temptingly in the air, Ariel, who is now disturbed, ordered the sylphs to be on her trail to be able to guard her against predators.

In Canto III of the poem, Belinda arrives in Hampton court palace, where she plays a game of cards described in epic term as the parody of the battle scenes. Pope invokes the theme of waste here in Belinda as the much treasured time and energy meant for serious purpose is channeled to gambling by her. Belinda and the Baron flirt over a pack of cards. The social engagement extends to the coffee time, perhaps to direct Belinda's attention from his genuine or real intention. Baron borrows a pair of scissors from Clarissa and snips off one of Belinda's locks. Belinda shrieks in dismay, the Baron triumphs as Belinda lost one of her locks, somewhat similar to a successful rape of Belinda. Pope equates the successful cut of Belinda's hair to the fall of an empire.

The fourth Canto explains Belinda's emotional feelings to the triumphant will of violent passion. The gnomes and Umbriel descends to the underworld care of epic heroes such as Aeneas Spleen and Odysseus and returns with a bag filled with violent passion and a bottle with little sorrows. With the mixture of passions and sorrows released into Belinda, she is further empowered. At last, Belinda comes off her ego as she pleads but her plea shows admixture of bitterness as she recalls her bitter experience. With all these, the curtain is drawn off to unveil Clarissa's speech to correct and unite the quarrelsome, justifying the intention of Pope's friend, John Carl, that Pope should write an epic poem to immortalise the conflict. But Clarissa's speech would have gotten the much praiseworthy effect, but for the fact that she played the

accomplished in the defeat, cutting off Belinda's hair, by giving the Baron the fatal engine with which Belinda's lock was cut. Thalestris and Belinda, elegant ladies, and other men in attendance descend to violence, fighting. At last, Pope achieved the erotic intention of his epic, the erotic quality realised in the physical contact, the snuff which Belinda throws in the Baron's face makes him to sneeze and then collapses, as Pope's way of reversing Belinda's defeat. The latter threatens him with a long hair pin, demands her lock back, but the irony is that the hair cannot be returned because it got lost, consumed in the confusion. With this, Pope achieved a mock-heroic end, a compliment to the lady. Other themes of the poem are secret desire, violence, vanity, praises, and deception.

Pope uses classical borrowings, referring to the gods of the Latin, Roman and Greek to situate the heroic status of Belinda in elevated language; the Syiphs, Homer's *The Illiad*, Aeneas, Tiber, Thames, Achilles, dressed up in the suitable language of lamentation and incantations, as well as parody, similes and exclamations seen in Homer's *The Illiad* and *The Odyssey*. The long epic is clothed in humour, for instance, when the Baron secretly saw the lock. He immediately developed an irresistible secret desire; first, he admires it and desires to possess or get it cut off. Thus Pope creates something out of a ridiculous and trivial situation.

The style of Pope's *Rape of the Lock* is a mock-heroic. The structure of the epic like others before it expands and makes sense out of trivial issue in a witty or humorous manner, yet, in grander language. Belinda's weakness and vanity are combined with her unrivalled beauty, a beauty that typifies the godliness of the Greek and Roman. Her beauty made her a heroic target of the Baron, of preying men; but Pope reorders life's possibilities in the poem. Belinda's weird beauty, which is her source of attraction, reduces her to a prey for the Baron, thus Belinda's private world of beauty, as created by Pope, soon became her major weakness as she combines godlike qualities with human to make her delicate and irresistible. This ensnares men and draws them to errors, to fall at her feet. Pope insists:

If to her share some female errors fall,  
Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all

In Pope's willful exaggeration combined with dark humour, even the sun notices Belinda's dazzling beauty and mocks her as pretentious and predatory. For instance, when she adorns herself ready for a visit to Hampton Court in Canto I, she stands or sits before a mirror to ascertain her irresistibility to men when she moves into the society. And she didn't set out for the journey until she was sure she had certified herself in re-creating or refashioning her beauty, like an army set for a battle. This could be the reason Pope alludes to epic scene like the arming of Achilles in Homer's *The Illiad*. He also states that her power or beauty could affect any judgment or change the natural order of things; the same way Belinda's very exaggerative beauty in the epic penetrated and gauged the conscience of the Baron, thwarted it and empowered it to nurse a secret and desperate evil against her.

### **3.2.1 Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady**

The first stanza of the poem published in 1717 begins with a meeting with the ghost of a young woman who has just stabbed herself to death. We do not know why she killed herself, but the suicide may have to do with love. The poet believes that she is such a good woman who should not have lived in this world because she is so pure and innocent, the reasons for her early death. We are left to further imagine and probably feel her brother may have tried to lure her into marrying a man she did not really love. Our poet sympathises with the unfortunate lady and regrets her early and unwarranted death in exile. This tragedy makes the poet to feel deeply for the innocent woman on whose grave he devoted some beautiful lines. It seems that the poet generalises the human habit of suicide, probably either for concealed reasons or reasons too trivial to warrant an act of suicide; hence Pope leaves our memory confused or wandering on the identity of the unfortunate woman he invites us to mourn. The poem reminds us of the violent habit of an average Augustan or of the Neo classical age and society.

### **3.2.3 Eloisa to Abelard (Translated Poetry, French to English Language)**

The poem, a heroic epistle that reminiscences John Hughes epistle of Eloisa and Abelard, was originally written in the French language. It imitates the Roman poet, Ovid. In what appears like a poetic craft of legendary people in dilemma (the legend of Dido's letter to Aeneas after they separated and then eventual suicide of Dido), the poet contrasts emotion with suicide. The poem probes man's psychological state of mind, the progression of thought (invented by the American psychologist, William James in the 20th century) running in him, and the inner will to arrive at a violent end. In the heroic epistle, the poet registers the vital emotional concerns of Abelard and Eloisa, a myth that was famous in the age. The duo were great in learning and history but famous for their unfortunate passion, experience of the chains of calamity after which they resigned to religion to overcome their tragedy for the rest of their lives. Several years after they separated, Abelard writes to a friend explaining his bitter experience but the letter got to Eloisa, provoked by a series of conflicting emotional responses leading to celebrated passion, the frightening mysteries of love, emotional relationships directly in conflict with Eloisa's love for her Abelard and Christian duty. We see in Eloisa, the conflict between stunning and burning erotic desire of Christianity as well as tradition. Pope's emphasis is more on man's carnality than spirituality.

The poem takes off with Eloisa's outburst and excitement over the letter from Abelard after which the poet recounts the history of their love relationships and their current state of affairs, especially why Eloisa decides she will not marry Abelard. The violent end of their love and how Eloisa becomes a Nun are expressed. The poet unites Eloisa's state of mind with her environment, her being a nun, and private secrets. At last, apparently unable to overcome her emotion, she thinks of the peace that is attainable in the grave as a way to escape the vanity of love and ephemeral or vanishing human affairs. The unanticipated trials that await future lovers are the concern of the poet. Pope may have re-created his love life as he was said to have been involved with two women, Lady Mary Wontley Montague and Martha Blunt. His conflictive and deep psychological experience may have informed this poem.

## **The Poetry of William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)**

### **3.3 An Irish Airman foresees His Death**

The Irish man in the poem is an imaginary soldier who fought in the First World War. The poem was dedicated to Robert Gregory who was an active, talented and brilliant soldier. The poet expresses his personal, emotional feeling about the futility of man's engagement in wars, the vanity of human life, as well as the inevitability of death.

The poet probes the troubled mind and dilemma in which an English soldier found himself while engaged in the First World War. He does not see himself surviving the war even as he flies the war plane high above enemies. He finds himself engaged in self re-examination, self-pity, self critique and concludes very early in the poem that he might not survive the war:

I know that I shall meet my fate  
Some where among the clouds above.

His location as a soldier, air regiment during the war was not a barrier to death nor was it a guarantee for victory in the war. He confesses that he had no particular reason for getting involved in the war as he insists "those that, I guard I do not love". Yeats sees it as mere stupidity for man to fight and kill his fellow human beings in war, as the art of warfare itself is not a sign of love for one's country or of hatred or patriotism. It is also not possible to predict the end of any war, and wars are never profitable, just that war is a burden "cross" that we must bear. The main theme of the poem is the futility of war. Its sub themes are death, vanity and futility of human existence.

#### **3.3.1 The Second Coming**

The poet discusses the impact of the world war, particularly the Irish rebellion and Russian revolution. The poem refers to every two thousand years period as a full circle of history. Yeats is of the opinion that every two thousand years is full of historical epoch. The end of a historical circle births the beginning of another new circle of history and experience. The poet is concerned with the diminishing value of the contemporary person. He recalls the imminent arrival of the antichrist who will arrive to make history as predicted in the holy Bible. He touches at the social, political and economic problems that humanity of the present century will experience. These will define the new government of the anti-Christ. The poet explains

A shape with Lion body and the head of a man  
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun  
Is among its slow thighs, while all about it...  
The darkness drops again, but now I know  
The twenty centuries of stony sleep.

#### **3.3.2 Sailing to Byzantium**

Byzantium was the political capital of Byzantine Empire, the city now referred to as Istanbul. But the poet does not merely mean the physical city but an attempt to escape from the natural political world, perhaps to paradise. It could be Yeats' conception of the necessity of birth and death in which humanity is entrapped.

He merges the political Byzantium with an imaginary or fictive space. Very imagistic, it chronicles the Cathedral at Byzantine, St. Sophia, where saints are laid to rest. The poet's interest is in the changeless immortal existence where songs of Angels thrive compared to the singing birds in trees in our physical landscapes. He insists:

Those dying generations –at their song  
The salmon-falls...whatever is begotten,,  
Born and dies caught in that sensual music all neglect  
Monuments of unaging intellect

The poem looks like an extended piece of metaphor wrapped around imagery to a puzzling house of thought to bridge the metaphysical with actual landscapes. The poet creates a relationship between the mortal body and the immortality of the soul. The latter sings to redefine and give life to the body, tattered material over the ages. As the material body gets old and diminishes, the soul gets ready to vacate its tattered house in readiness to sail to paradise, a Byzantium. In this state the human body, the poet seems to argue, loses its radiance, harmony and essential wholeness qualities Yeats states:

An aged man is but a paltry thing  
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless...  
For every tatter in its mortal dress  
Nor is there singing school but studying  
Monuments of its own magnificence  
And therefore I have sailed to the seas and come  
To the holy city of Byzantium  
O sages standing in God's holy fire  
As in gold mosaic of a wall.

Considering the last lines of the extract from Yeats poem, the poet is ready to leave this world to where he hopes to meet the saints who will admit him into his holy city, Byzantium. And, once admitted into immortality, the poet hopes to live in a state of absolute joy and undying "...the artifice of eternity". Afterwards, the poet's soul will join the trail of heavenly choristers "set upon a golden bough to sing" and praise the "Lords and ladies of Byzantium". The poet is unpretentious about the final inevitable state of every person and anticipation of the soul's divine responsibility when s/he quits the natural world.

### **3.3.3 When You Are Old**



Yeats suggests poetry as a necessary therapy for the aged who may be interested in recalling the true picture of a life time. Poetry to Yeats is a form of diary that may be revisited or consulted, perhaps for a re-evaluation of the individual's activities on earth; "when you are old and grey and full of sleep". For a necessary therapy that poetry offers, the poet assures "...take soft look your eyes had once, and of their shadow wry deep". Poetry provides the avenue for self-reassessment; one's imagination recounts one's earlier activities, failures, sorrow, joy and pilgrimage, the "moment of glad grace", "false" or "true", "sorrows of your changing face" of "the pilgrim soul in you". The poet believes that the material body is less significant; it's a mere material bearer of the soul. The soul is itself on a journey which ends in old age, a period that the pilgrimage of the soul ends and s/he quits the carriage body, leaving the material body to return to nature decomposed. As the weak changing material begins to decompose the moment it gets old and weak, face and love depreciates. The human body shows the features of ageing, indicating an end of the pilgrimage.

### **3.3.4 In Memory of Major Robert Gregory**

Major Robert Gregory to whom Yeats dedicates his poem was Yeats' patron and collaborator in the revival of the Irish letters. The poet comes to terms with the reality of life, reminiscences his youthful companions. But most of those he thought of were all dead, one of the deceased is the subject of this poem. "All are in my thoughts tonight being dead". The poet sees life as cyclical where friends are made and forgotten. "For all that come into my mind are dead". He recalls Lionel John, the first among his friends. The deceased was admirably schooled and lettered in Greek and Latin, graceful and courteous. He states:

Lionel John comes the first to mind  
That loved his learning better than mankind  
Though courteous to the worst much falling he  
Brooded upon sanctity  
Till all his Greek and Latin learning seemed  
A long blast upon the horn that brought  
A little nearer to his thought  
A measureless consummation that he dreamed.

The poet's thought made a shot at another deceased but important friend of his, John Synge "comes next", a passionate and well traveled man. The horseman who is well known at "race courses", George Pollexfen, "a muscular youth well known to mayo men", sluggish but "outrageous star". Going through the impressive photographs of his great companions their breathless faces stared at the poet, particularly Sidney's "my dear friend's son". Yeats relates the experiences of a horse and racer to that of man on the course of life. The jumping, dangling, falling, rising, winning and loses and the eventual death of the racer symbolises the end of the race of life. He compares departed souls to the image seen in his "picture book", "minds out ran the horses feet". The soldier, scholar and horseman, and "painter had been horn" but all were consumed by the combustible world. Yeats reconciles the image of fire to the world's inflammability.

## SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Compare the treatment of the theme of death in the poetry of William Blake, Alexander Pope and William Butler Yeats in this unit (one poem for a poet).

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed William Blake's '*Songs of Innocence*'; and '*To See a World in a Grain of Sand*'; Alexander Pope's '*The Rape of the Lock*'; '*Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady*'; and '*Eloisa and Abelard*'; as well as William Butler Yeats' '*An Irish Airman Foresees His Death*'; '*The Second Coming*'; '*Sailing to Byzantium*'; '*When You are Old*'; and '*In Memory of Major Robert Gregory*'.

### 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:

- the poet's themes in some selected poems from William Blake's *Songs of Innocence*;
- the focus of the poet in '*To See a World in a Grain of Sand*';
- the relevance of history in Alexander Pope's '*The Rape of the Lock*';
- the poet's treatment of the theme of love in '*Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady*';
- about love and courtship in '*Eloisa and Abelard*';
- William Butler Yeats' treatment of the temporal nature of life in '*An Irish Airman Foresees his Death*';
- the universal theme discussed in '*The Second Coming*';
- about spiritual travel in '*Sailing to Byzantium*';
- the value of life in '*When You are Old*';
- appraisal of '*In Memory of Major Robert Gregory*';

In the fifth unit of this Module, you will be introduced to how you will be a critical/successful reader of English poetry through the 'coded' language of English poetry.

### 6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMA)

Read and answer the following questions:

1. Reveal the theme of innocence in William Blake's '*Songs of innocence*'.
2. Discuss history in Alexander Pope's '*The Rape of the Lock*'.
3. What is the focus of William Butler Yeats in '*An Irish Airman Foresees His Death*'?
4. Compare William Butler Yeats' '*Sailing to Byzantium*' with the poet's '*In Memory of Major Robert Gregory*'.

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## **UNIT 5: POETRY IN DEPTH: ‘CODED’ LANGUAGE OF ENGLISH POETRY**

### **CONTENT**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
  - 3.1 Understanding poetry
  - 3.2 Meaning and Intention in poetry
  - 3.3 Style and Poetry
  - 3.4 Tones reveal the Matter
  - 3.5 Connotation as Suggestive
  - 3.6 Imagery
  - 3.7 Figures of Speech
  - 3.8 Sound as meaning in Poetry
  - 3.9 Rhythm
  - 3.10 Symbol
  - 3.11 Style
  - 3.12 Poetry and translation
  - 3.13 The Sonnet
    - 3.13.1 Petrarchan sonnet
    - 3.13.2 Shakespearean sonnet
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  - 3.15 Evaluating Poetry.
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMA)
- 7.0 References /further reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit completes the module, with an in-depth discussion of how best you can study and evaluate English poetry successfully using ‘coded’ language of English poetry. Therefore, in what looks like a critical ‘casebook’ method in this unit, we have treated: how you can understand poetry, meaning and intention in poetry, poetic translation, style, tones, imagery, figures of speech, poetry and forms, sounds, sonnet, rhythm, symbol, sayings as suggestive, sounds as meaning and evaluation. A study of this unit will help you do a critical evaluation of poetry or approach a new poem, particularly English poetry focused. Below are the objectives of this unit.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain to a friend of yours how he/she can conveniently read and understand a poem;
- discuss meaning and intention in poetry;

- explain the concept of style in poetry;
- Assess symbol in poetry;
- identify what the tone of a poem suggests;
- reveal the imaginary in poetry;
- discover the relevance of sound to poetry;
- evaluate any of the English poetry in this unit;
- identify the two types of sonnet;
- argue in favour of poetic translation;
- review the concept of saying and suggesting in poetry;
- differentiate between closed and open forms of poetry;
- state your view of symbol;
- identify the stylistic features or ‘coded’ language in any English poetry of your choice.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Understanding Poetry**

When you come in contact with a poem for the first time, you immediately form impressions which are built up gradually in your mind. And as you read, you come in contact with words that connect your mind with something and such connectives force your mind to build impressions about the phrase, word, a letter, line, colon or an alphabet. It could even be a dot or a mere space. Whatever it is must never be overlooked or read in isolation of other words or things that make up the poem if you must give the correct impression or adequate judgment of the poem. When your emotion is triggered into action, you must not let it get cold so as to read the poem again and do not go into hasty analysis, prejudiced impressions or judgment. As you read the poem the second time, you should take note of some strange or unfamiliar words so as to make them familiar. Poetry is unlike the novel genre; a poet may borrow concepts or words from other languages you are not familiar with and this could be Greek, Latin or French, as often seen in most English poems. When this occurs, simply leave your mind bare to be influenced by the poem so that you can understand it.

It is necessary that you understand the poem before you can think of any judgment. You cannot assess or evaluate what you do not know. And to know the poem, you should keep your mind open as you read the poem.

It is when this is achieved that you as the reader can function as the critic of a poem. And to function adequately you should make the concern of the poem clearer in your analysis. The poet’s attitude should be revealed in the opinion that you have formed so as to give value to the themes of the poem. You may then embark on a third reading of the poem in a slower and careful manner. You will then find out that you will be able to read and comprehend the poem compared to the initially slow and unmusical pace with which you approached the poem. With your experience of the poem, you will be

able to make general and believable statements about the poem or form a better, wiser and considered opinion of the poem.

### **3.2 Meaning and Intention in Poetry**

After understanding the theme of the poem, which are often in the categories of the main and sub themes, you may then undertake a more careful line-by-line examination of the themes of the poem. This connects the reader to the poet's mind. You can then measure your observation of the verse against the poem. With such development, you can take care of the poet's own judgment of every line and verse of the poem. You must be sure that no unnecessary detail is allowed in the poem. You must guide yourself against prejudiced and reckless judgment. A strict sense of proportion will give a balanced evaluation of the poem. To achieve this, each verse of the poem must be judged in relation to the whole poem while trying to discover the meaning of a poem. In trying to discover the meaning of a poem, you must not allow prejudice to interfere with the meaning of the poem. Also, you must bring your power of imagination to the business of discovering all about a poem. It is when the meaning of a poem has been discovered in full that you will then know that you are working in empathy with the poet. There can be no good criticism of a poem without the critic first understanding the themes/perception of the poet. There can be no further criticism until you sustain what the poet is saying and why s/he is saying it and tell us if s/he is successful in his/her effort or not. A critic should be able to tell us if a poem has a universal/general or restricted/private appeal. The theme of a poem may be said to have a universal appeal if it affects all people but restricted if its appeal is only private.

The example of poems with universal appeal and the restricted, which we have treated in this module, are William Butler Yeats' 'An Irish Airman Foresees his death' or 'Sailing to Byzantium'. These poems may at first look restricted but a deeper reading of the poems reveal their universal 'applicability' considering their treatment of the subject of death. Also, Alexander Pope's 'Rape of the Lock' that deals with the eighteenth century person's manner and customs, may initially sound restricted, but the poet deals with people's universal ideas of human motives, fooleries, action and characters, and this makes the poem appeals to humanity of all ages. Some poems may be both universal and restricted in appeal. Among the poems treated in this unit, we may say that William Wordsworth's 'I Traveled among Unknown Men' has a restricted appeal. Below are two groups of extracts from different poems; the first (A) has universal appeal while the second, (B), represents poetry with restricted appeal.

### Poem (A) Ted Hughe's (1930-1998) Hawk Roosting

I sat in the top of the wood, my eyes closed  
Inaction, no falsifying dream  
Between my hooked head and hooked feet  
Or in sleep rehearse perfect kills and eat  
The convenience of the high trees!  
The air's buoyancy and the sun's ray  
Are of advantage to me;  
And the earth's face upward for my inspection  
My feet are locked upon the rough bark  
It took the whole of creation  
To produce my foot, my each feather  
Now I hold creation in my foot  
Or fly up, and revolve it all slowly –  
I kill where I please because it is all mine  
There is no sophistry in my body:  
My manners are tearing off heads –  
The allotment of death  
For the one path of my flight is direct  
Though the bones of the living  
No arguments assert my right:  
The sun is behind me  
Nothing has changed since I began  
My eye has permitted no change  
I'm going to keep things like this

### Commentary on Poem (A)

The Hawk in the poem is a symbol of the 20th century political leader, a monarch or military leader. He says his cannibalistic and oppressive characteristics are no "falsifying dream". He is cruel, savagery and dictatorial. The Hawk, human specie with oppressive motive, is blood thirsty. He is a gladiator in the use of weapon and violence. Considering the thematic focus of the poem, it thus gives itself away as having universal applicability.

### Poem (B) Emily Dickinson's(1830-1886) I'm Nobody! Who are You?

I'm Nobody! Who are you?  
Are you \_\_\_\_\_ Nobody \_\_\_\_\_ Too?  
Then theirs is a pair if us  
Don't tell they 'd advertise \_\_\_\_\_ you now  
How dreary \_\_\_\_\_ to be somebody  
How public \_\_\_\_\_ like a Frog \_\_\_\_\_  
To tell ones name \_\_\_\_\_ the livelong June  
To an admiring Body!

## **Commentary on Poem (B)**

The poem expresses personal opinion about the essence of being; he prefers to be a nobody. He is not interested in being famous, as self-advertised fame may be worrisome. The general concern of the poem reveals a restricted appeal. But Ted Hughe's poem has universal appeal, considering its thematic preoccupation. Apart from the task of determining the universality and restricted nature of any poem, determining the artistic merit of a poem can be done by investigating the poet's use of irony, symbolism, descriptive narrative, etc., that combines to make up the nature of the themes that are relevant to the poems.

### **3.3 Style and Poetry**

This aspect is important to unraveling the meaning of poetry. To be able to appreciate style, one needs to take note of how the poet writes or its novel ideas while reading, just as Longinus rightly expressed: "threat judgment of style is the last and ripest fruit of experiences". Style in poetry should be seen as the practical and the functional aspect of poetry. A critic only needs to harmonise the task into the means by which s/he accomplishes it. You will be able to discuss the style of a poem if you are able to answer the following questions: Does the poet's expression conforms with the goal s/he has set for him(her)self?

The above question can be further expressed in simpler fashion as follows:

- a. What is the poem saying?
- b. What is the poet's reason for saying it?
- c. Does the way s/he says or expresses it help or hinder his/her aim of saying it?

When these questions are answered creatively, you will be able to discuss the poet's style and arrive at meaningful and convincing judgment of a poem.

### **3.4 Tones reveal the Matter.**

It is possible to infer the poet's attitude from his/her tone. As it is in the tone of the voice, style shows the tone of a poet which may be harsh or friendly, persuasive and may portray indifference, hostility, satisfaction, or disrespect. A poet's tone may reveal his/her feeling towards him(her)self about the subject or focus of the poem; its theme. It means the tone of a poet portrays his/her general attitude as may be revealed when we read the poem.

### **3.5 Connotation as Suggestive**

Additional meanings are often suggested when you read a poem in relation to its contextual appreciation. William Butler Yeats in his poem, 'Sailing to Byzantium', has used the word "Byzantium" not just to refer to the political or physical city of Byzantium, now named Istanbul. He has used the word, "Byzantium" to mean paradise. The use of word in poetry is often different from the denotative dictionary meaning and word order. Connotative words are meaningful but suggestive to give a poem a hidden but creative value.

### **3.6 Imagery**



Poetry speaks in imagery, as it conveys experience in vivid picture. Images/imagery uses words to create sensory experiences that may be produced. Examples of sensational experience are visual imaginary, sight/seeing, auditory imaginary that relate to touch and tactile imaginary indicates roughness or smoothness. Whatever may be the form of the imagery that a poet may adopt, s/he usually presents the real image that is conveyed or suggested. Poetic image may be based on any of the five senses.

### **3.7 Figures of Speech**

A poem often speaks in figurative language. This depends on the poet's choice of a particular figurative and the purpose for which the poet has chosen to use it as well as what s/he intends to achieve by using a particular figure of speech. Students of English literature should be familiar with numerous figures of speech and be well 'schooled' in the ability to detect such in poetry. Some common figures of speech that a poet may use to enrich his/her verse are simile, metaphor, litotes, antithesis, oxymoron, apostrophe, hyperbole, personification, synecdoche, metonymy and symbol. They are numerous and are like the oil in the wheel of progress of poetry.

### **3.8 Sound as meaning in Poetry**

In poetry, sound is not the same thing as noise. When poets combine the use of consonant, vowels and rhythms to produce sound the poet will be happy that by producing meaning from such combination and combination of words, communication is not just achieved, but the aesthetic essence of poetry is also realised. Sometimes, the sound that a particular poem gives may be mere onomatopoeic mimicry; such sounds may sometimes not give any immediate and clear meaning. Yet, the main rhythmical meaning it has gives some musical effects or qualities.

We may recall a practical example of how sound functions as meaning in poetry. In the year 2003, I was introduced to some Egyptian scholars as a writer and poet in Benghazi, a city in Libya. The Arab tribesmen, excited, recited a beautiful, rhythmical Ghazal Arab form of poetry and tasked me to recite a poem in my native Nigerian Yoruba language. I did render a short rhyme verse in my Ilaje – Yoruba variant dialect of coastal Ondo State, praising Igodo, an enchantingly beautiful female mermaid that myth says married Oranmaken, a coastal Ilaje ancestor who earlier held her hostage. In my chant, I had repeated “Igodo, Oranmaken”/ “Igodo Oranmaken”, forming a beautiful rhyme. The natives, though, had no idea of my coastal Niger Delta area verse, but were clapping, swinging and repeating the rhyme as each urged the other person to chant on. They ended the repetition of the key words with “Ghazal astma kois, ghazal astma kois” in appraisal of a wonderful rhyme from a friend. In this case, the native Arabs have been won over by the sense of rhymed sound in my native poem. Like music, it gives them pleasure much as they could get from the native Arab Ghazal poetry. On that basis, we may say as important as it may be, meaning is of no consequence in poetry as any nonsense but lyrical poem can be pleasurable.

The rhyme effect of sound in poetry has been expressed by the founder of the literary movement called *lettrisme*. The French poet, Isidore Isou, states that poetry can be written in words and letters /xy//xyl//prpalidryl//iznglotrpylopwi/. A combination of

denotation and connotation make letterist poem emotionally satisfying. The Arab natives must have been impressed by the smooth, easy flowing nature of my short verse that sounds to them like music. It then means that humanity derives pleasure from rhyme, especially when a verse comes up naturally to give pleasure. Poetry should be lyrical to give pleasure, as songs affect the soul.

### 3.9 Rhythm

In poetry, rhythm has a powerful effect. There is usually a series of reverence in poetry to achieve a rhythmical effect. A verse may be organised by a poet to achieve rhyme without necessarily repeating words or lines of the verse. Sometimes, the first word, line of a verse may be repeated by a poet to create rhythmical effect. We may consider the examples of the following English poetry:

Consider below the opening lines from Thomas Gray’s ‘Elegy’:

The cūr few tolls the knell of part ing day  
 The low ing herd wind slow ly o'er the lea  
 The plow man home ward plods his wear y way  
 And leaves the world to darkness and to me

Also consider the lines from Coleridge’s *Christabel*:

There is not wind enough to twirl  
 The one red leaf, the last of its clan  
 That dances as often as dance it can,  
 Hanging so light and hanging so high  
 On the top-most twig what looks up at the sky

We can see the poet’s repetitive use of words to achieve stresses and pauses (rhyme effects) in the lines of the poem. In poetry, stressed and unstressed syllables, apart from the song-like effects they give, re-enforce meaning.

A rhythm is often produced by a series of recurrences. In poetry, different recurrent sounds are possible, as in recurrence of stresses and pauses. The accent/stress with more breath and emphasis with a louder/higher in pitch or more prolonged in duration than other syllables is the stressed syllable. The unstressed syllable takes less breath, weak force and or less emphasis.

### 3.10 Symbol

Symbols are part of the language of poetry. Symbols are ensigns, representations, often a visible emblem, identity or mark. The flag of a nation, for instance is an emblematic representation of the nation; so also is the international passport of a nation that gives away its carrier or bearer's country of origin. But in poetry, symbols do not have a long established or conventional meaning. In poetry, symbols are often interpreted in association with the reader's own experience of reading and the poet's direction as a guide. The reader's ability to identify and interpret a poem provides a concrete and valuable entrance into the poet's world. Such entrance, if discovered, reduces the poem from its 'complex height' to an interesting prose.

### **3.11 Style**

Every poet has a specific way or pattern of writing. A reader should strive to be familiar with everything in a poem. The word or line that strikes your mind in a poem may be the poet's own pattern or style of expression. The 'carriage' and language of expression, whether simple or difficult, style of punctuations or emblematic as in the poetry of George Herbert or any other poet may help the poet to achieve a height, or emotional satisfaction. Also, the total absence of punctuation, ellipsis, even a mere space in poetry may be the poet's own choice of expression to attain poetic leisure and emotional obligation or style. A poet may chose a style to revolt against a preceding age, and this diction must be judged against the background or purpose. For instance, poetry after the Restoration was the Augustan, Gothic, Romantic, Age, the Victorian, twentieth century and the contemporary period up to the present. Every age is valued for its stylistic experimentation and poetic purpose.

### **3.12 Poetry and Translation**

Some poems are translated from their original country home into the English language. In such poems, readers are often confronted with investigating what gets lost, understated, and overstated and or exaggerated in the process of translating the poem from foreign language into the recipient's national language. This task follows after the reader identifies a poem as translated or the nativity/original language in which a poem has been crafted. The practice of translating a poem is as old as the art of poetry, so it's not a novel development. These could be the reason it is important for a reader or an analyst of a translated poem to believe that reading a poem that is translated is looking for what gets lost in translation. This is because most translators may save a part of their originals of the great poems in foreign languages to create a gap in the translation process. In most cases, where the translator of a poem could not find a suitable lexical item to replace a word, words, concepts or phrase, they may add or create a poem of their own to replace what is lost. In this case, the translator may decide to use the denotations s/he values and depart from the original. Therefore, the currency of the contemporary practice of practicing translation poetry in world literature may have its own difficulties, yet we do not have to overlook the aesthetics of imagining and reasoning and or philosophising by demystifying a foreign (translated) poetry as a recipient of foreign culture. The English writer, Ezra Pound, translates the song of a Chinese peasant in *The Classic Anthology Defined by Confucius*:

Yaller bird, let my corn alone,  
Yaller bird, let my crawps alone,  
These folks here won't let me eat,  
I wanna go back whaar I can meet  
the folks I used to know at home,  
I got a home an'I wanna gotgoin:

Also, the Chinese Classical poetry, Lipo's 'Drinking Alone' that was originally written in Chinese characters, enjoys phonetic transcription. Understanding the poetry of other translation into English language (translated poetry) will enhance our sense of language and cultures of other lands. To explore the poetry of other cultures will broaden our vision of humanity. Human achievement in poetic translation strengthens our sense of words. English may hold one of the great traditions of poetry in the world considering her culture of poetry and literature of over six centuries of literary culture evident in the efforts of some English literary exponents like Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, John Milton, Alexander Pope, William Keats, John Keats, and William Butler Yeats, among others. Still, to rely only on the poetry of English is to know only a fraction of world poetry. This is because English is the first language of about seven percent of world populace of over 400 million people. English is spoken from London to San Francisco, Vancouver to Nassau, and Cape Town to Sydney and so on.

We will appreciate the needful beauty of reading the perspectives of foreign poets/poems in translation if we look at for instance, Chinese literature that has the oldest and uninterrupted literary tradition in the world. Poetry, an important part of the Chinese literature, spans over 3400 years. And more than a billion people speak one of the Chinese dialects while they all read the same written language.

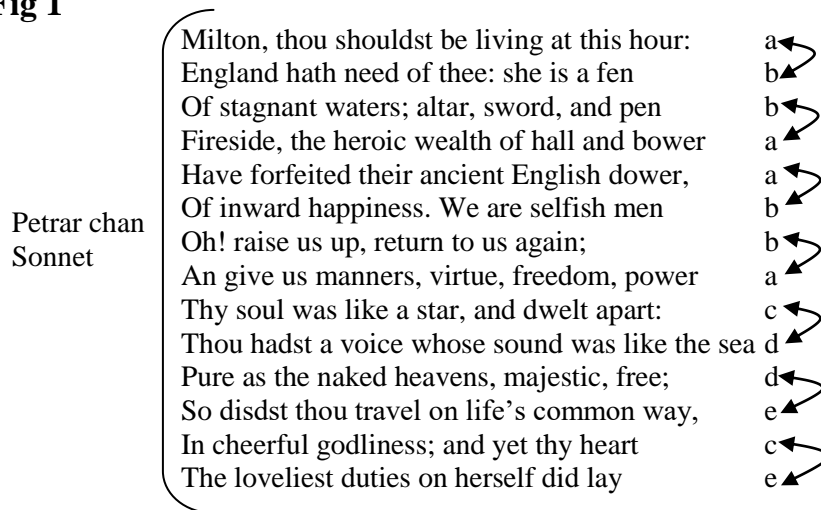
### **3.13 The Sonnet**

A Sonnet is a poem that is usually fourteen lines long. We wish to discuss some patterns of English poetry, paying specific attention to the Petrarchan and Shakespearean patterns of fourteen lines.

### 3.13.1 Petrarchan Sonnet

The Petrarchan sonnet has a different design compared to the Shakespearean sonnet. The former has a rhyme scheme that differentiates it from the Shakespearean sonnet, though noticeable areas of relativity are number of lines and metre. William Wordsworth's Sonnet, "Milton" is an example of the Petrarchan form.

**Fig 1**



Rhyme scheme/abbaabbacddece/

### 3.13.2 Shakespearean Sonnet

Unlike in the Shakespearean Sonnet in which the turning point of the poem is sustained in the *Octave* or *Octet* (The first Eight lines) and the next sixth (*Sestet*) lines. The pause has its position changed frequently between *Octave* and *Sestet*, sometimes appearing in the middle of the ninth line or beginning of the tenth. The Octave has a rhyme scheme of /abbaabba/ to give and strengthen unity of tone to it's first Eight lines to help develop the themes of the poem. Other variants of the Sestet rime-scheme commonly found are /cdcdcd/ or /cdecde/ or any variation of these. The Miltonic sonnet introduces a change in the rime scheme of the Sestet to achieve a new rime-scheme/melody in the second half of his sonnet as in the Petrarchan.

Below is an example of Shakespearean Sonnet – William Shakespeare

**Fig. 2**

Shakespearean Sonnet

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments	a
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme	b
But you shall shine more bright in these contents	a
Than unswept stone besmeared with sluttish time	b
When wasteful war shall status overturn	c
And broils root out the work of masonry	d
Nor mars his sword nor wars quick fire shall burn	c
The living record of your memory	d
Gainst death and all oblivious enmity	e
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room	f
Even in the eyes of all posterity	e
That wear this world out to the ending doom	f
So, still the judgment that yourself arise	g
You live in this, and dwell in lover's eyes	g

Rhyme scheme /ababdcdefefgg/

### 3.14 Forms of Poetry

Form is the general idea of a poem or its design or configuration of the parts of a poem. A poem, particularly English poem, should have a form; lines of a poem may be of a particular length, hexameter, and broom straws. The closed form of a poem follows a particular pattern, “pentameter” or hexameter. A poet seeks to discover a novel and individual arrangement of words in every poem and does not use rhyme scheme or any basic metre, but sustains the reader’s attention in another aesthetic form with keen awareness that agrees with the poet’s thematic concern (an open form).

### 3.15 Evaluating Poetry

After you have made an attempt to understand the poem, its meaning, theme literary quality of expression, you should read the poem again for evaluation. You can then make your final impression or outcome of your findings about the poem, clear to your reader in an objective manner and try to avoid any prejudice. Reveal the outcome of your survey of the poem clearly and in vigorous and individual form, based on the aesthetic reality of the poem you are considering. The following stages may be considered as you go through the critical process:

- What is the meaning of this poem?
- What is the poet’s intention?
- Does his/her style conform with his/her intention?
- What is the poet’s impression on me?

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- 1a. What is meant by meaning and intention in English poetry?
- b. Differentiate between Petrarchan and Shakespearean Sonnet
- c. What is your impression of poetry and translation?

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have discussed meaning and intention in poetry, how best to approach a new poem, poetic translation, style and tones in poetry, imagery, figures of speech, poetry and forms, sound in poetry, the sonnet, rhythm, symbol, saying and suggesting in poetry, diction, sound as meaning as well as general evaluation of poetry.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt:

- meaning and intention in poetry
- how best to approach a new poetry
- poetic translation
- style and tones in poetry
- imagery
- figures of speech
- poetry and its forms
- sound as meaning in poetry
- the sonnet
- rhythm
- symbol
- diction
- connotation as suggestive in poetry
- general evaluation of poetry

In the (first unit of Module Three), you will be introduced to the English Novel.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMA)**

Read and answer the following questions.

1. How will you react to a poem you come in contact with for the first time?
2. Choose and do a criticism of any English poetry of your choice, using the ‘coded’ language of English poetry provided in this unit.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READING

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## **MODULE 3**

### **NARRATIVE DESIGN AND THE ENGLISH SOCIETY**

Unit 1	The English Novel
Unit 2	Theme and Style in the English Novel (I)
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Unit 4	Theme and Style in the English Novel (III)
Unit 5	Theme and Style in the English Novel (IV)

## **UNIT 1 THE ENGLISH NOVEL**

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- 3.4.7 Time and Space in the Novel
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  - 3.4.11.2 Multiple points of view
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- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMA)
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

We have designed and written this unit to introduce you to the novel as a genre of English Literature, indicating the factors that gave rise to the growth and development of the novel. A knowledge of the types of the novel and its elements will aid your understanding of the nature of the narrative form and the experience of the various writers. Such will also help you in the discussion of the English novels as distinct from the novel genre of other different geographical areas. Below are the objectives of this unit.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define the novel;
- list and explain the factors that led to the rise of the English novel;
- reproduce the types of the novel with relevant examples;
- discuss the elements of the novel;
- differentiate between simple and complex plots;
- give your own interpretation of subject matter;
- choose a type of English novel from the given list in the unit and read;
- assess round and flat characters;
- relate setting to any English novel of your choice;
- classify language and point of view with any English novel;
- match any of the point of view with an English novel;
- write a novel using any experience you are familiar with;
- determine the level of character's involvement in any English novel you are familiar with.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 The English Novel

*The Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* (2007) defines the novel as “a long written story about imaginary or partly imaginary characters and events.” *Collins English Dictionary* (2006) defines the novel as “an extended fictional work in prose dealing with characters, action, thought, etc. in the form of a story. *The Oxford Dictionary* (2000) defines the novel as a fictive prose narrative of considerable length in which characters and acts representative of real life of past and present time are portrayed in a plot of more or less complexity. But the Sierra Leonian literary critic, Austace Palmer, says “the novel is a coherent, unified fictitious prose narrative with a beginning, a middle and an end” (*Studies in the English Novel*, 1986).

What differentiates the novel from any other work of prose fiction or narratives such as the short story or novelette is the extended form of the novel.

The novel as we know it today is the creative work of people’s imagination and it may be said to be the youngest of the genres of literature, that is, drama, prose and poetry, since it became popular in the eighteenth century period of English literary history. Although it grew from the early prose writing often described as romance, which was invented by the Greeks and French in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries A.D., tales of various types had existed in parts of Europe, Greece, Italy, Spain and France before the emergence of the modern novel. Indeed, before the appearance of the novel, the epic, romances, novelette, pastorals and travel literature dominated the English literary space. Prominent among such antecedent narrative forms are The Spanish Cervante’s *Don Quixote* (1605), Sir Phillip Sidney’s *The Arcadia* (1590), Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko* (1688), Thomas Nash’s *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594), as well as John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* (1678). However, with the arrival of writers using loose narrative form, allegory and journalistic portraiture, the English novel finally arrived with a promising future. Examples of such novels are Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), *Moll Flanders* (1722); Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726); Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded* (1740); and Henry Fielding’s *Joseph Andrew* (1742).

Literary critics, it appears, were not united early over who among the founding fathers of the English novel should be given the exalted or honoured crown of the first English novelist. Consequently, Richardson may have been accredited with the honour of being the first English novelist.

#### 3.2 Factors that gave Rise to the English Novel

The following are the factors that gave rise to the Novel in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

##### 3.2.1 Introduction of Printing in England

Printing technology began in England in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. As a result, it became easier for diaries, short essays, pamphlets, letters and books of various types to be printed and distributed to the English reading populace. With such great achievement, the prose narrative became very popular in England as people found it enterprising to document events and even write biographies, autobiographies, keep diaries and write journals.

### **3.2.2 Increased Interest in Reading**

The technological development and reformation of the 1500 flagged the interests of the public to the pleasure of reading. For instance, people read more of Christian hymnal books, the Holy Bible, and religious pamphlets. Thus, reading which was the exclusive preserve of the middle class and educated few, was extended to the other members of the populace, including women.

### **3.2.3 Journalism became a notable profession.**

With increased interests of the public in storytelling, reading and writing became an avenue through which the social concern of the English society could be expressed. Religious, economic as well as political and educational issues found acceptable outlet of expression. *The Guardian* and *English Man* are some of the magazines of the period. Thus, Addison and Steel's periodical, *Tattler* and *Spectator*, are well known. Among the people, Samuel Johnson and Daniel Defoe are notable writers who had worked as journalists in the period before going into the business of novel writing.

### **3.2.4 Book Publishing as a Social Business in England**

Book publishing became a social business in England as the combined interests of the English people in reading and writing flowered. The advent of printing and publishing houses emerged to cater for the needs of the evolving libraries and the reading populace. The book industry boomed based on the popularity of the novel genre.

### **3.2.5 Changes in the economy of the period**

The reading revolution can be explained based on the changes in the reading taste of the middle class merchants who clamoured for a new kind of literature that is different from the old classical adventure of literature fabled stories of kings and knights. Essentially, their preferred choice must tell contemporary stories. It must adequately represent the social, economic, religious and political life of the middle class merchants to cater for their time of leisure. Such literature that will reflect the social intellectual revolutions of the time, as well as the dominating philosophy of the 'moneyed' classes of the new economy order, quite different from the old agricultural economy of feudal aristocracy was important.

## **3.3 Types of the Novel**

The following are the types of the novel with relevant examples.

### **3.3.1 Historical Novel**

This type of novel uses events and characters from past experience to develop and make its narrative interesting. Its settings are usually taken from real life history.

Examples are Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819), Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), and Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (1869), and Olaudah Equiano's *Travels* (1789).

### **3.3.2 Picaresque**

This type of novel uses rogues, beggars, rascals as characters, usually with rascally heroic figure or personae. The name, Picaresque, is derived from the Spanish word, "Piccaro". This type of novel originated from Spain in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Examples are Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722), Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), and Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*, (1749).

### **3.3.3 Bildungsroman**

This type of novel takes its form from a German term which means, "a novel of education". It reveals every stage of growth of the protagonist or hero in the novel, usually from childhood through adolescence to maturity. Examples of such novels are George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), and Charles Dicken's *Great Expectation* (1861).

### **3.3.4 Epistolary**

This type of narrative is told in the form of a letter or letters. The "Epistle" "Epistola" is the Latin word for letter. Examples are Samuel Richardson's *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) and *Clarissa Harlowe* (1748), *Sir Charles Grandison* (1754). These novels marked the beginning of the epistolary form of novel writing.

### **3.3.5 Social/Sociological Novel**

This type of novel deals with the social economic conditions of a period, characters and events, the culture of the people and their general ways of life. Examples are George Eliot's *Adam Bede* (1859); Charles Dicken's *Oliver Twist* (1837), *Hard Times*, (1854); John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939); Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'urbervilles* (1891); George & Weedon Grossmith's *The Diary of a Nobody* (1894), and Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826).

### **3.3.6 Magic/Magical/Marvelous Realism**

This type of novel combines reality with fantasy, ordinary events and experiences, dreamlike state, myths, fairy tales and supernatural elements. This type of novel originated from the prose fiction of some Latin American writers. Examples are Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* (1991), Gabriel Garcia's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children* (1981) and *Satanic Verses*(1988).

### **3.3.7 Political Novel**

This type of novel deals with the science and art of government. It concerns itself with the strategies, systems of politics and politicking or governance, manoeuvres, and display of justice and injustice, as well as Machiavellian style of government and

power play. Examples are Joseph Conrad's *Nostramo* (1904), and George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945).

### **3.3.8 Psychological**

This type of novel probes the minds of the characters rather than the environment of such characters. It was made popular by Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Examples are Marcel Beyer's *The Karnau Tapes* (1997), and Lemon Lee's *Bells* (1978).

### **3.3.9 Autobiographical**

This is the type of novel on the life history of its writer from childhood through adulthood, relating the writers' social experience through maturity. Examples are Charles Dicken's *David Copperfield* (1999).

### **3.3.10 Gothic**

This became popular in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It concerns itself with sentimentality and crimes of the times such as murder, rape, piracy, kidnapping, sodomy and other corrupt abominable acts. The Gothics novel, usually with medieval setting of the Dark Age, is known for mysteries, secret undergrounds, unknown horrible chambers, terrible, fetish and ghost invested dark passages. It usually have plot that allows innocent heroine to suffer torture, etc. Its actions are often crafted to frighten and terrorise. Examples are Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* and James Joyce's *Dubliners* (1993).

### **3.3.11 Novel of Ideas**

This type of novel is based on the ideals of its contents. Its themes often focus on certain philosophies or ideologies. Examples of such novels are E. M. Foster's *A Passage to India* (1924), Albert Camu's *The Fall, the Plague* (1957), Marcel Beyer's *The Kanau Tapes* (1997), and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1787).

### **3.3.12 Science fiction**

This type of novel explores science and scientific investigations and determinism proof to unravel mystery about planets, nature etc. or to execute a desire backed up by experience. It relies on the possibility of scientific probing to justify action and inactions. Examples are Jules Verne's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1864) and *Short Man's The Glasses* (1942). The French Emily Zola (1840-1902) was one of the chief exponents of the naturalistic (that is, biological) fiction.

### **3.3.13 Detective Novels**

Such novels often deals with the use of characters to probe and unravel critical mysteries that surround people, a nation or continent. An example is Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes* (1992).

## **3.4 Elements of the Novel**

Novelists often use language to communicate intention or ideas to his readers through characters with a combination of some elements. Such elements include plot, setting, subject matter, theme, point of view and vision.

### **3.4.1 Plot**

This is the organised sequence of events in the novel. The plot of a novel is not its story, but the lined up, chronological, organised order of the entire events of the story that make up the novel. Plots are of various types; they could be simple or complex.

### **3.4.2 Simple Plot**

The events in simple plot novels are usually in chronological order following the adventure of the hero or major character to its end. An example is Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722).

### **3.4.3 Complex Plot**

In this types of plot, the author's order of arrangement do not often follow an easily traceable form, as the reader may have to adopt the use of careful logic to re-organise the story for easy follow up. This is because the incident that ends the novel may begin in the middle or may even end it. The reader is given the task of rearranging or reorganising the plot so as to piece together the different parts that may not be chronologically arranged. Examples are Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and Jane Austen's *Emma* (1816).

Plots of a story often develop in the following stages. They are:

- Expository – the writer introduces the characters and setting to begin the conflict;
- The conflict moves/develops through the *rising action*;
- The high point of the story is its *climax*;
- The author explains the results of the climax through the *falling action*
- The conflict is resolved in its *resolution/dénouement*.

#### **3.4.4 Subject Matter**

This is the immediate concern of the novelist in a novel. For example, William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* is concerned at the immediate level with how a group of school children scattered in the different parts of an island, tried to make a home and survive. But other deeper concerns are the humanities of man to man and the disorganised form of the modern person's form of government. There is just a slight difference between the subject matter and the themes in a novel. The subject is all what the story is about.

#### **3.4.5 Theme**

This is the sum total of the ideas in a novel. Theme is deeper than subject matter. For example, the theme of Ernest Hemingway's *Old man and the Sea* is life as a place of continuous struggle for survival. George Orwell's *Animal Farm* is about social economic and political oppression.

#### **3.4.6 Characterisation**

This is another important element of the novel. Characters are the fictive personae that carry and execute the events in a novel. They are often given the qualities of human beings and made to act like one in a given or created fictive environment such that their behaviours appear real like that of the real you and I. In a novel, characters can be flat or rounded.

##### **3.4.6.1 Flat or two Dimensional Characters**

They are often given a simple portrayal in novels and little is often known about them. There is limit to their growth; often a little static. Flat characters cannot be measured, the same way all human beings cannot be heroic or equal in behaviour - social, economic status, etc. For example, many of the characters in Louis Robinson Stevenson's *Treasure Island* are flat or not fully developed.

##### **3.4.6.2 Rounded or Three-dimensional Characters**

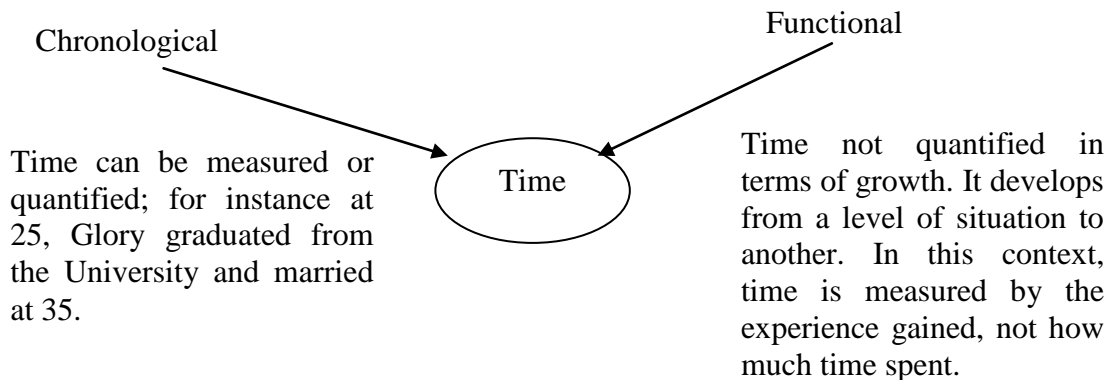
Such characters are complex and fully developed. They grow along through the circumstances created by the writer of the novel. S/he may even see them from childhood till old age, even till death. An example is Crusoe in Daniel Defoe's *Robison Crusoe*.

#### **3.4.6 Time and Space in the Novel**



The action in the novel passes through time periods. This is also a passage of time. It is through time and space that the events in the novel acquire its reality and correctness. Action in a novel is considered for human good when it transcends or passes through time and space. Time in fiction can be used in two categories: chronological and functional.

**Fig. 3 Action as time functional and chronological**



Adapted from Akachi Ezeigbo (1981)

### 3.4.7 Character's level of involvement in the Novel

Characters in the novel genre are not often of equal level of involvement in the conflicts they generate. Character's level of participation, performance, general involvement in the crises and the strength of endurance, climaxing of events in the novel, all go a long way to determine involvements. All characters, flat or rounded, are naturally involved in any novel, no matter how minimal or minute the character's role may be.

### 3.4.8 Setting

This is the physical environment, place or location in which the events in a novel take place. Traditional narratives have no physical setting but fictive setting like, "once upon a time, in the community of the fishes..." It is the ability of the novelist to describe the setting convincingly that makes the novel appear real. For example, William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* is set in an island, thus the island becomes a reflection of our bigger, but real world.

### **3.4.9 Language**

It is through language that literature is expressed. The novelist put words in the mouth of the characters he has created and makes them speak and perform some actions. But the use of language differentiates one character from another, father from a son, a king from his subjects and so on. A character may be non-human like wind, trees or animals. The novelist's ability to use language, manipulate tones, use figurative, idioms, irony, proverbs, humour, amongst others, contribute to the style of the writer.

### **3.4.10 Point of View**

This is the way in which the novelist gets his story told through which he wins the reader's sympathy. It is the position through which events are observed in the novel. It is the way a writer presents his characters through action and dialogue. The method of storytelling is an important element in the novel. Some important points of view are discussed below.

#### **3.4.10.1 Eye of God or Omniscient Point of View**

This is a way of telling stories in which the author presents the story as everything. S/He knows the actions, events, characters and other things in the story. The omniscient narrator moves into and out of events, as s/he knows everything, events, movements of the story, time and space. S/he knows the private life, innermost thoughts, feelings emotions of the characters. As a result of such attributes, the storyteller is often called the "Eye of God". This is different from the editorial omniscience or objective/intrusive narrator who simply reports and comments on and evaluates the actions and motives of the characters. This technique has been used in Matthew's *Truth's Half way to Hell* (1975) and Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrew*. (1742)

#### **3.4.10.2 Multiple Points Of View**

A number of characters tell the story, revealing their views and judgments on a story such that the reader is at a vantage position to understand the story. There may not be a central character but a number of narrators who move the story forward with each commenting on the story.

#### **3.4.10.3 Mixed Point of View**

This style of storytelling is not common; it happens when there is an alternative of the omniscience or other point of view.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Differentiate between the epistolary and the sociological novels.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit, we have defined the novel genre, the factors that gave rise to the novel, types of the novel, its elements, time and space in the novel. We also relate the novel to concepts like setting, language, and point of view as well as the meaning of character's scale of involvement in the crisis in a novel.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt:

- the definition of the novel;
- factors that gave rise to the novel;
- types of the novel;
- elements of the novel;
- the meaning of character's involvement in a novel;

In the next unit, you will be introduced to the themes and style in the English Novel (1).

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMA)**

1. Define the novel genre.
2. List five types of the novel with examples.
3. Differentiate between historical and detective novels.
4. Define Setting and relate to any English novel of your choice.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## UNIT 2: THEMES AND STYLE IN THE ENGLISH NOVEL (1)

### CONTENT

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Summary of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*
  - 3.2 Themes
    - 3.2.1 In search of economic empowerment
    - 3.2.2. Industrious
    - 3.2.3 Gains of prayer
    - 3.2.4 Consequences of disobedience
    - 3.2.5 Suffering and endurance
  - 3.3 Style
    - 3.3.1 Language
    - 3.3.2 Detailed description
    - 3.3.3 Allusion
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    - 3.3.5 Extended narrative
  - 3.4 Summary of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travel's*
  - 3.5 Themes
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    - 3.5.3 Human/English law as corruption and charade
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  - 3.6 Style
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    - 3.6.2 Allegory
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    - 3.6.4 Mockery of the English
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor –Marked Assignments (TMA)
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

We have written and designed this unit to introduce you to the selected works of two prominent English novelists - Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Both writers have used journalistic approach to probe contemporary English life. Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift may be said to have secured a recognisable prominence in the craft of the novel genre. The former is one of the four founding fathers of the English novel; others are Samuel Richardson (1689-1761), Henry Fielding (1707-1754); and Tobias Smollet (1721-1771). In this unit, we have introduced you to a novel of one of these founding fathers; the most

controversial one among them. Apart from Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, we have also discussed the summary, themes and style of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. The perspective of the novelists will familiarise you with the writer's experiences of the English society. Below are the objectives of this unit:

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- summarise Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*;
- compare the styles of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* with Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*;
- explain the themes in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*;
- comment on the themes in Jonathan Swift's in *Gulliver's Travels*;
- outline the writer's themes in *Gulliver's Travels*;
- respond to the use of language of the writer in *Robinson Crusoe*;
- assemble the themes in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* using appropriate extracts from the novel;
- match the themes in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe's* with suitable extracts drawn from the novel;
- review the themes in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*;
- quote and explain any interesting paragraph or lines from either of the English novels discussed in this unit;
- rate the literary qualities of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*;
- assess the language of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### Summary of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*

Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is the adventures of Crusoe, the hero who insists on going in search of greener pastures abroad despite his parents disapproval. The boy embarks on series of adventures. His secret travel to Hull was his first voyage. Crusoe again went on board in a ship bound for the Coast of Africa vulgarly called the "Voyage to Guinea". He took ill frequently from excessive heat of the climate and fell into terrible misfortune. On the way towards the Canary Islands, the Turkish Rovers of Sallee overtook their ship, seized goods, materials and men including Crusoe as slave into the Sallee of the Moors. At Brazil, he honoured the secret proposal of some of the Brazillian plantation merchants to buy Negro slaves for use and sale in their plantations. While on the voyage, their ship ran into raging storms that buried the ship and its crew. Crusoe is swept ashore an Island, lonely, depressed. He relied on nature to survive. He built himself a house, domesticated goats, and made himself a boat. He describes the perturbation of his mind caused by a visit of cannibals, his rescue from death of an indigenous inhabitant he later names Man Friday and finally the coming of an English ship whose crew are in a state of mutiny. He helped the ship's captain to subdue the mutineers and Crusoe is rescued.

## 3.2 Themes

Some of the themes in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* are explained below:

### **3.2.1 In search of Economic Empowerment**

Crusoe prefers the upper class position that was more valuable in the period. At the age of twelve the hero does not like to be identified with the lower or middle class positions, but the upper class of higher economy that is prestigious. Defoe's hero wishes to improve his economic life desperately. He resists any attempt to be identified with the middle class life. The hero desires to go to sea where he thinks he will be able to make quick wealth. He exhibits the characteristics of young Middle English men and women who prefer to leave for overseas in search of greener pastures to avoid the less economically challenging English life that offers the English citizens less fulfillment. The novel reads:

My father a wise and grave man gave me serious and excellent counsel against what he foresaw was my design. He called me one morning into his chamber, where he was confined by the gout, and expostulated very warmly with me upon this subject. He ask'd me what reasons more than a mere wandering inclination I had for leaving my father's house and my native country. He bids me observe it and that I should always find, that the calamities of life were shared among the upper and lower parts of mankind but that the middle station had the fewest disaster and was not exposed to so many vicissitudes (p. 3)

### **3.2.2 Industrious**

The novelist takes his deviant hero, Crusoe, through the misfortune of ship wreckage in an isolated island where situation demands that he must fashion a method to keep himself going in the isolated island. He planted maize, went on hunting expenditures and in the process, he caught his first non-human companion, a parrot bird he named Poll. He domesticates animals, baked bread within his first two years in the Island. He made a ladder, an axe from a hardwood, carved wood into shovel and shaped a gun suitable for hunting, built kitchen with rafters. He toiled nights and days. The hardworking hero explains:

I found a tree of hard wood, or like it which in the brazils they call the iron tree, for us exceeding hardness, of this with great labor and almost spooling my axe, cut a piece, and brought it home too with difficulty enough, for it was exceedingly heavy (p.73).

Defoe uses his hero to teach hard work which was a prevailing attitude of the English of the age of Augustans.

### **3.2.3 Gains of Prayer**

Defoe reminds us of the moral and spiritual philosophy of Catholicism in Neo-Classical England of his time (p.86).

In the Island, he took ill, frequently. He could not stand erect, very weak; he contemplates death, seeing his present predicament with no help in view in a lonely island. Crusoe had to pray to God repeatedly. The hero's prayer had positive effects on him. Crusoe survived his ordeal by praying repeatedly.

### **3.2.4 Consequences of Disobedience**

Crusoe's father warned him against overseas travels. Afterward, he sneaked away secretly to hull with a friend, Bob. Immediately the ship sailed, they were overtaken by a great storm. Crusoe regrets his first sea experience and vowed that if he survives the storm, he will go home to his father like a repentant prodigal and will never venture into the sea: "I would like a true repenting prodigal go home to my father" (p.8). Contrary to the vow he made, as soon as the weather cleared, the crews drank over it and he forgot the bad experience and vow he made to return home.

The sixth day, they arrived at Yarmouth roads where their ship anchored, briefly just as the ship from Newcastle also anchored at the common harbour to avoid the bad weather. He was enslaved during his voyage experience and later shipwrecked, swept ashores an Island. Perhaps, if he had obeyed his parents he may not have been involved in such penalty or suffer the degrees of deprivation and torture.

### **3.2.5 Suffering and Endurance**

Less than 150 miles South of Sallee beyond the Emperor of Morocco's Dominican, Crusoe endured the gale of wild apprehension with the Moors and wild creatures, monstrous beasts, fearful sight of boars, encounter with savages around the Island of the Canaries and Cape Verde Island.

## **3.3 Style**

Below is a discussion of the style of the novelist.

### **3.3.1 Language**

Daniel Defoe's language struggles to give the details of his story. This is evident from the first page of the novel to the end. He tries to expand every minute fact he creates. Rather than consider this style as a problem, it aids and strengthens the reader's knowledge of the novel. It also bridges the likely gap between the readers and the story, and makes the novel real than mere fiction that it is. Such makes readers to enter into Defoe's world at the various levels of life experiences.

### **3.3.2 Detailed description**

There are many instances of detailed descriptive use of language by Defoe in his novel. He also evokes details in a situation that his characters are closely identified with them and live through the experience in very realistic ways.

He uses long sentences in Anglo Saxon expression. This partly may be as a result of his experience as a journalist. Such sentences are often clumsy, and very long, it was by a whisker that Defoe's story escapes being boring, but for his ability or mastery at



weaving words together so beautifully and skillfully. Example of this begins the novel:

I was born in the year 1632, in the city of York, of a good family, thou' not of that Country, my father being a foreigner of Bremen, who settled first at Hull: He got a good Estate by merchandise, and leaving off his trade, lived afterward at York, from whence he had married my mother, whose relations were named Robinson, a very good family in that country and from whom I was called Robinson kreutznear; but by the usual corruption of words in England, we are now called, ney have call ourselves and Our name Crusoe, and so my companion always call'd me.( p.1)

### 3.3.3 Allusion

Daniel Defoe beautifies his story with the use of series of allusions; from classical to natural geographical and biblical allusions. Examples of the natural allusion used in the novel are "shore", "water", "and Hills", "sea" "island", "wood", "parrot" "tree" "corn", "tiger" "lyon", "wild pidgeon", "strom", "wild beasts" "weather", "day and night" coast"rocks", "grove". Some reference to the holy Bible book are "God", "dream","Angel "pray'd" Also examples of Classical allusion evident in the novel are as follows" emperor "Negroes" "Carpe de verde" morocco "canaries" pico of teneriffe" moors" Gambia, Senegal Greek, cape of Augustino, River Amazoms" Barbadoes"

Examples of Geographical allusion used are "10 or 12 degrees of Northern Latitude" "22 degrees of longitude difference," "11 degree North Latitude" The spread of the allusion suggests how comprehensive or detailed the novel is.

### 3.3.4 Symbolism

Daniel Defoe's use of symbols has helped to concretise his various themes and make his discourse cinematographic. His first human companion in the island, Man Friday, was so named by Crusoe in accordance to the English tradition of naming a baby according to the actual day of birth. To Crusoe, he named the Cannibal "Man Friday" "because he was saved on a Friday" to justify his rebirth from cannibal-happy-tribe to Catholicism or the rational English people whom Crusoe represents. Naturally, the savage "Man Friday" deserves to be renamed as a symbol of spiritual form of baptism, spiritual transformation from the human eater race of cannibals to Christian bible believing race that England stands for.

All of these symbolise Britain's racial superiority as a leading human race in the world with the best attitude to life, and with the English language that should be a world class language. As a result, Crusoe quickly begins to educate Man Friday, teaches him how to pronounce some English words using the English accent. And gradually, he is acculturated and thought to embrace the new religion, Christianity. This also gives Defoe's hero the role of a missionary who must take Christianity to the savage and

civilise them accordingly. Defoe's "Poll" in the novel symbolises freedom of expression that is guaranteed in England.

### **3.3.5 Stylistic Strength of Extended Narrative**

Defoe has the strength for extended story telling. This is seen in the vigorous and unwavering ways in which his story is woven together and connected without leaving the reader bored or wandering within it. The plausibility and racy nature of the story is the creative power of the story teller. He wastes no time before recalling and presenting the next event he feels he should tell his reader. For instance, as the reader is taken through the hero's (boy's) attempt to convince his parents to let him go abroad, hardly had one taken a breath when Crusoe meets his old friend, Bob, and embarks on a voyage, elopes to London. There and then, the story rolls on with suspense in a flash as one would watch movies. The next page of experience opens, then another, and another, rolling over the other. Even at that, the story offers the reader no chance to rest as the events in the Defoe's Island is creatively designed to get one glued to the pages of the novel till the hero is finally rescued from the desert.

### **3.4 Summary of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels***

Lemuel Gulliver, a surgeon on a merchant ship, relates his shipwreck on the Island of Lilliput, the inhabitants of which are six inches high. As a result of this diminutive scale, the pomp of the emperor, the civil feuds of the inhabitants and the war with their neighbour across the borders or channels are made to look ridiculous. The English political parties and religious denominations are satirised in the description of the wearers of low and high heels as well as the controversy of whether eggs should be broken at the small or big end. Also, Gulliver is accidentally left ashore on Brobdingnag, where the inhabitants are very tall. The third part of Gulliver's voyage is concerned with a visit to the flying Island of Laputa and its neighbouring continent and capital, Lagado. The novelist at this point ridicules and questions through satire, scientists, philosophers as well as historians. The deception of history and the weakness or limitations of science are emphasised here with reference to the Royal Society and South Sea Company. The Struldbrugs, a race endowed with immortality, turns out to be the most miserable of mankind. Gulliver describes the country of the Houyhnhnms in the fourth part of his travels. The Houyhnhnms are horses endowed with reason, their simple, clean, rational and cultured existence are compared or contrasted with the brutality and bestial nature of the sociable yahoos in human shape whose human vices Gulliver recognises reluctantly. Most remarkable about his contact with the horses are his introduction to the uncommon virtue of the Houghnhnm's as well as their politics, economy, culture, custom and their general happy life. He left for England, cultured, appreciates the realities of life, after the stages of experience with his hosts. The hero emerges more disciplined and more rational. He explains: "I have given thee a faithful history of my travels for sixteen years.... I could perhaps like others astonished thee with strange improbable tales: but I rather choose to relate plain matter of fact in the simplest manner and style, because my principal design was to inform and not to amuse thee" (p. 413).

### **3.5 Themes**

The thematic preoccupation of the English writer in *Gulliver's Travels* are explained below.

### **3.5.1 The Irony of Life**

Jonathan Swift in his *Gulliver's Travels* reveals the important theme of the irony of life. The central character in the novel travels away from home to gain more experience of and appreciate life and its realities. Rather than threaten the Lilliputians, Gulliver's might and heights was subdued by the Lilliputian who tied his legs, hands and hair and imprisoned him. His captives may not be more than six inches high but are industrious, "these people are most excellent mathematicians" (p.9) They also have "intelligent warriors and they have great number of artisans, carpenters, builders and engineers who are often put at work with immediacy and on the orders of the emperor, a respected patron of learning." (p. 9)

The irony of this is that, the short creatures even excelled than the English in a number of areas.

### **3.5.2 Knowledge is Infinite**

Apart from the treatments to which the Lilliputians subjected Gulliver, life circumstances pushed him further on voyage and he encountered the Houyhnhmns with different ideas of life, different beliefs and consciousness as well as sophistication. The hero learnt so much from the Houyhnhmns who taught him to imitate a more rational culture. The horses had to teach him their language and he marveled at their organisational ability.

### **3.5.3 Human/English Law as Corruption**

What Gulliver thought was a brilliant and convincing patriotism of his English nationality was replied by the judges and sages of the Houyhnhmns with sound and mind startling queries, doubts and objections. He was asked the type of business the English normally spend the first and teachable part of their lives, and what method was used to cultivate the mind and bodies of their young nobility, as well as the qualifications of those appointed Lords in England. The Houyhnhmns reduce the humanity of the English law of the Augustan age to non-existence, claiming that what really exists is walking corruption, needless conflicts and wars. Thus, England is not qualified nor has she any credential to present before other developing nations over which she assumes the role of an imperialist or missionary.

### **3.5.4 Rationality**

In the land of the Houyhnhmns, Swift proves there is a great deal of new knowledge that supersedes that of man. The chief Horse warns the lower Horses against the maltreatment of Horses, and this is contrary to what is in vogue in the human world, the England of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Horses are of the view that with patriotism and passion among Horses, the society will not need soldiers who will have to settle minor disputes in the field of battle.

### **3.5.5 Transformation**

The moral advantage of Gulliver's travel impacts favourably on his life such that he emerged a more rational man. For instance, when Gulliver arrived home and his wife embraced him, he was reluctant to her embrace. He prefers the more humane and disciplined world of the Houyhnhmns who transformed him to a better English man. Swift's hero recalls:

I freely confess that all the little knowledge, I have, of any value was acquired by the lecture I received from my master, and from hearing the discourses of him and his friends, to which should be prouder to listen, than to dictate to the greatest and wisest assembly in Europe. I admired the strength, comeliness and speed of the inhabitants, and such a constellation of virtues in such amiable persons, produced in me the highest veneration (p.243)

## **3.6 Style.**

Below is a discussion of the style of the novelist in *Gulliver's Travels*

### **3.6.1 Language**

The novel's language combines satire and humour to reveal human follies. Gulliver's subjectivity in the hand of the Lilliputians, though generates a fair amount of wisdom, is humorous. Likewise, the hero's experiences with the Horses in the country of the Houyhnhnms. We observed a combination of the language of politics, history, philosophy, geography, military and the law in the style of the novelist.

### **3.6.2 Allegorical Nature of the Novel**

Swift employs human characters in addition to non-human characters like the Horses, Lilliputians as well as Houyhnhnms to approach general human problems, particularly the English problems of his time from a practical point of view.

### **3.6.3 Travelogue**

Swift uses travelogue as a platform to review the state of England of the Augustan period. The hero's travel covers sixteen years: "I have given thee a faithful history of my travels for sixteen years" (p. 143). Within the period of his travels, he learnt the nobility of the Lilliputian. He was also introduced to the social, economic, education, history, politics, philosophy and general life style of the inhabitants of Laputa, Houyhnhnms, and many others.

### **3.6.4 Mockery of the English**

The entire novel is an open mockery of the English social institutions, the laws especially, religion as well as economy and politics, military defense and intelligence considered to be the best anywhere in the world. But the Horses and Houyhnhnms literally pulled down the English legal and political structure and everything that defines her status and prestige with a deep probe of the manner in which the English make their laws, execute justice and run the society generally. The creatures confronted Gulliver with a number of embarrassing questions like why a civilised English setting ignores the Court of Law to settle minor disputes in the field of battle as well as why England ignores religious and moral ethics to appoint Judges and give justice based on the educational qualifications or certificates of the man who gives justice. With these, the hero found himself and England naked and unprotected before his host.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Discuss the use of humour in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit, we have discussed the summary of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*; the themes and styles in both novels have also been explored.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt:

- the summary of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*;
- themes in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*
- styles in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*

In the next unit, you will be introduced to the themes and style in the English novel (II)

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMA)**

Read and answer the questions below:

1. Summarise Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.
2. Compare the use of language in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*.
3. Summarise Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*.

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## UNIT 3 THEMES AND STYLE IN THE ENGLISH NOVEL (II)

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

We have written and designed this unit to introduce you to Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and Jane Austen's *Emma*. We have also discussed the summary, themes and style in both novels. Below are the objectives of this unit.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- summarise Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*;
- compare the styles in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and Jane Austen's *Emma*;
- discuss a character in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*;
- explain the themes in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and Jane Austen's *Emma*;



- outline the themes in Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island*;
- react to the use of language of the writer in *Treasure Island*;
- assemble the themes in Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* with appropriate extracts from the novel;
- review Jane Austen’s *Emma*;
- describe Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island*;
- quote and explain any interesting paragraph or lines from either of the English novels discussed in this unit;
- memorise a line from Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* and state its relevance to a theme in this unit;
- reproduce a line from Jane Austen’s *Emma*;
- rate the literary qualities of Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island*;
- assess Jane Austen’s *Emma*.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Summary of Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island*

Jim Hawkin’s mother keeps the Admiral Benbow Inn somewhere on the coast in the West of England in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. An old Buccaneer takes up his quarters at the Inn, he has in his chest information in the shape of a manuscript map as to the whereabouts of Captain Flint’s treasures of which his former confederates are determined to obtain possession. A body of them, led by the sinister blind pirate, Pew, arrived the Inn but Jim outwits them, secures the map and delivers it to Square Trelawney. The Squire and his friend, Dr. Livesey, sets for the Treasure Island in the Hispaniola, taking Jim along with them. Some of the crew are Squire’s faithful dependants while the majority are old buccaneers recruited by Long John Silver. Their secret design to seize the ship and kill the Squire is discovered by Jim Hawkins. And after a series of exciting adventures and gunfights the purpose of the adventure is thwarted. But the Squire with the help of the marooned pirate, Ben Gunn, secures the treasure.

#### 3.2 Themes

Some of the themes of the novel are explained below.

##### 3.2.1 Life as Adventure

The novel portrays humans or the individual as an adventurous animal. The voyage and the treasure hunt expose the nature of life. The ship’s officer, Squire Trelawney presents a letter to Dr. David Livesey. The desire to go on voyage rules their hearts than the intention to amass wealth: “... having the treasures is the glory of the sea that is drawing me. So, now Dr Livesey, come quickly. Do not waste a moment” (p. 23).

##### 3.2.2 Greed

The novelist depicts the horrible activities of pirates in England through the centuries. Thus, our English novelist revisits this societal menace, with the intention to correct it. The voyagers had not arrived in the Island when greed and selfishness split them into camps. From the days of John Flint, man’s greed had hunted the treasure, and this reveals the age long human greed to amassing wealth. For instance, immediately the

Hispaniola left the anchor, the Pirates nursed secret plan to seize the ship and kill the Squire so as to gain possession of the treasure. The greed that ruled the treasure hunt led to the death of most of the pirates, while some marooned on the Treasure Island.

### **3.2.3 Nemesis (Retribution)**

The natural law of retributive justice played itself out in the novel. John Flint lost the map of the treasure to Billy Bone who also lost it to Black Dog, when other pirates led by Pew invaded Benbow Inn so that they could seize the sea chest in which Billy kept the stolen map of the Treasure Island. He was left unconscious, but died afterwards. Jim Hawkins secures the map of the Treasure Island from Billy's sea chest and gave it to Squire Trelawney who invited Dr. Livesey. Even when a voyage was planned, Jim overheard the plans of the pirates on board to eliminate other men. Ironically, almost all the pirates died, some marooned, and less than ten out of the twenty six men survived the voyage. Thus, the pirates became the victims of their own design.

### **3.2.4 Mockery of English Patriotism.**

The Hispaniola had the flag of England fully hoisted on its mast. This was the crew's way to indicate their patriotism to England. That the pirates had the English flag flown on their ship indicates how the English paid lip service to patriotism in an era dominated by murderers and greedy pirates in England.

## **3.3 Style**

Our assessment of the novelist's style in *Treasure Island* is given below.

### **3.3.1 Language**

The novelist narrates the story from the point of view of child's innocence, using the naive but the encyclopedic voice of Tim in simple and focused narrative style. Specificity of detail is lavished on the activities of the pirates through the telling ability of Jim. He assumes the century's representative quality, with a combination of the seriousness of the event, hidden in humour. The child-like perspective employed by the narrator makes the novel assessable, brings the reader closer to its detailed events. The child narrative perspective changed only when David Livesey took over the narration towards the end of the novel.

### **3.3.2 Symbolism**

The novelist uses symbolism, especially in character naming through the use of figures of speech like onomatopoeia and allusion. Hidden metaphors depict the types of characters. For instance "John Flint," "Black Dog", "Billy Bones, Benjamin Gunn (Ben Gunn), George Merry, Long John Silver. In the writer's character naming, he chooses a part of a character's name from the Bible and picks the others from nature. For instance, John Flint; John is picked from the Holy Bible; dog, barks and bites, and bone denote a very hard object; Gunnkills and Merry are taken from the word, 'merrying', a sign of being unserious. Many of such names created by the genius of the novelist quickly give away the nature of the characters and the class of the society they belong.

### **3.3.1 Narrative Technique**

The novelist employs the first person narrative technique, although Dr. Livesey came in briefly as a second narrator. The brief absence of Jim created suspense. The first person narrative is restrictive but the eye of God narrator sees into the world of all characters and the events. He is involved in the story as he narrates the account of events with precision.

### **3.4 Summary of Jane Austen's *Emma***

Emma is a clever, pretty young woman and mistress of the house of Mr. Woodhouse, an amiable old Valetudinarian. Her former companion and governess, Anne Taylor, has just left to marry Mr. Weston. Emma takes under her wing Harriet Smith, a pretty girl of seventeen, daughter of unknown parents, parlour-boarder at a neighbouring school in the neighbouring village of Highbury. Emma moves in favour of Harriet's advancement. At first, she prevents Harriet from accepting marriage proposal from Robert Martin, an eligible bachelor, a young farmer as being beneath her. This angered Mr. Knightley, the bachelor and owner of Donwell Abbey who is Emma's brother in-law. Emma intends to arrange a match between Harriet and Mr. Elton, the young Vicar, who unknown to her, aspires to Emma.

However, Frank Churchill, the son of Mr. Weston by a former marriage, visits Highbury. Emma supposes him in love with herself, but presently thinks Harriet might attract him and discourages her; an action that Harriet misunderstood to mean an attempt by Emma to discourage her from Mr. Knightley with whom Emma is half unwittingly in love. Emma then experienced the 'double shock' of discovering first that Mr. Frank Churchill is already engaged to Jane Fairfax, niece of the proud old maid, Miss Bates. Secondly, Harriet hopes to supplant her in Mr. Knightley's affections. At last, Mr. Knightley proposes to the humbled Emma and Harriet marries Robert Martin.

### **3.3 Themes**

Some of the themes in Jane Austen's *Emma* are discussed below.

#### **3.5.1 Chronological Nature of Life**

Jane Austen presents the human society as sequential in nature. Emma buys a commodious circular table to accommodate visitors at the different levels of their social engagements and interests. It is expected to take those who are for dinner, card and picnic parties. The table seats various social degrees of men/people in the society, from the most to the less important guests. This arrangement again invokes life as chronological.

The order of visits are friends, then the newly married women visit and lead in dinner and dance floor. This arrangement invokes the nature of life in the Romantic age, the orderly or sequential order of life.

#### **3.5.2 Woman as underdog in England**

The novelist legislates against women's early marriage and parental role so as to keep her virility, figure or posture, emotion and above all her beauty impressive. From the treatment of women in Jane Austen's *Emma*, women of her period were not in any way better than servants, they had their affairs dictated, few were ever educated, and the lesser form of employment were reserved for those of the lower class, such as nurses, dancers, actresses, or shop keepers.

Best employments are not for women. But how can they be found in such work environment when less women were educated than men? For instance, Mrs. Elton tells Fairfax her duties are to take care of the children when they leave the care of nurses; she teaches the children the necessary three R's, reading, writing and Arithmetic and the girls music, painting and sewing and the French or any other languages she knows. Younger women were treated like old women, sit at home syndrome

Emma prefers a single spinster who is healthy to a poor married woman who does not know luxury. She does not like the idea of putting a woman on her toes in the name of getting married to satisfy societal dictates. In the novel, Emma represents a very radical view of a few daring women of the age of Jane Austen who could come out boldly and tell the oppressive and demanding gender conscious society that an unconditional end must be put to women's misuse and abuses.

#### **3.5.3 Money and Material determine the social structure of the English society**

Social class is viewed and measured with money and material wealth in the novel. Emma and her father are not recognised as land owners in Highbury. Weston is moderately rich; he married a lady from a wealthy family Mr. and Mrs. Churchill do not have any title but very rich. Frank Churchill is living with them, takes their name, survives at their instance. Mr. Knightly is the eldest son of a rich land owner, thus he inherited the Estate of Don Well Abbey, House Farms Estate and money of the deceased. Mr. and Mrs. Bates are not wealthy, do not have rank and are socially inferior. Jane is the daughter of an army officer, Mr. Elton is the younger son of the

army officer but became a clergy man so as to upgrade or improve his economic status. Robert Martin is a farmer who rents house and land from Mr. Knightley's estate. Jane Austen tried to position every character to be fit into a particular recognisable social structure of the society.

### **3.5.4 Love and Marriage, a Choice and Conditional**

Emma in the novel also desires a husband but not the common types, without a recognisable social standing and wealth in the society. Emma and Mrs. Weston are in deep relationship for eight years; but Emma's relationship with Mr. Knightley is from childhood. Without ideal love, there can never be marriage, but a realisable marriage can exist where there is love between people of equal rank, education and sociability.

## **3.6 Style**

Below is a discussion of style in Jane Austen's *Emma*

### **3.6.1 Irony of Situation**

This happens when what is happening means one thing to the person concerned and something else to another who is watching. Emma is at the centre of event. Mr. Elton is interested in Emma but she thinks otherwise: "Mr. Elton and I are very good friends and nothing more." Mr. Knightley is jealous of Frank Churchill whereas Emma loves him. Emma is jealous of Harriet Smith without being aware that Mr. Knightley loves her.

### **3.6.2 Use of Misplaced/Retrospective Irony**

A cursory look at the events in the novel reveals that Emma feels Mr. Frank Churchill will declare his love for her, but we know that facts are misplaced. We know about this when we read the letter that he was ready to tell her about his engagement to Jane Fairfax. We soon know about the planned engagement and discussion of Jane Fairfax's strange acts. Another is the boat disaster and how Mr. Dixon regrets that he was not at the scene to make discoveries arising from the disaster.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Summarise either Jane Austen's *Emma* or Robert Louis Robinson's *Treasure Island*

## **CONCLUSION**

In this unit, we have discussed the summary of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and Jane Austen's *Emma*. We have also discussed the themes and styles in the two novels.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt:

- The summary of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and Jane Austen's *Emma*.
- Themes in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and Jane Austen's *Emma*.
- Style in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*.
- In the next unit, you will be introduced to the themes and style in the English Novel (iii)

### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMA)**

1. Summarise Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*.
2. Explain two of the themes in Jane Austen's *Emma*.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## UNIT 4 THEMES AND STYLE IN THE ENGLISH NOVEL (III)

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- 7.0 Reference/ Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

We have written and designed this unit to introduce you to the summary, themes and style in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. You will not doubt find the writer's creative response to the events of the English society useful as you move ahead in your studies. Below are the objectives of this unit.



## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- summarise Joseph Conard's *Heart of Darkness*;
- compare the themes in Joseph Conard's *Heart of Darkness* and Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*;
- name what constitute the style in Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*;
- design your own themes from Joseph Conard's *Heart of Darkness*;
- match a theme in this unit with an extract from Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*;
- review Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*;
- assemble the themes in the order of artistic merits either in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* or *Heart of Darkness*;
- outline the style of the novelist in Joseph Conard's *Heart of Darkness*;
- extend the style of the novelist in Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*;
- defend the title of the novel *Heart of Darkness*
- restate the themes in either of the novels discussed in this unit with at least a line extraction from the novel;
- appraise the artistic qualities of Joseph Conard's *Heart of Darkness*;
- judge the creative merits of Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*;
- justify the title of the novel, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Summary of Joseph Conard's *Heart of Darkness*

The novel begins with a description of nature, especially the Thames which connects Europe and Africa. The novelist states:

The Thames stretched before us like the beginning of an interminable waterway. In the offing, the sea and sky were welded together without a joint (p. 65)

Marlow tells the story, recalls how the Romans brought light to the 'dark' part of the world, not as colonists but conquerors. He explains how he had come in contact with colonisation, the picture of a long coiling river and how he intends to trade with the natives. He studied the map of the river, the mouth of which he arrived after a month, observes a group of black people walking up and down, "looks like they are dying". Marlow meets the Chief Accountant, who tells him he will meet Mr. Kurtz who is in charge of the trading posts in the Ivory country. Marlow embarks on a "200 mile trek into the interior", goes through the path, dwellings. His white companion is ill. Marlow is disgusted by his experience, the greed and brutal exploitation of the natives by the Ivory traders. At a Company Station, he hears about Mr. Kurtz who is at the station in the Ivory country. He takes a long trek into the interior to join the steam boat at the Central Station. He discovers that his boat is wrecked. Marlow completes the repair and sets off the dismissed Mr. Kurtz's assistant who is ill. Close to his

destination, the boat is attacked by tribesmen and the helmsman is killed. At the inner station, a young Russian sailor tells Marlow of Kurtz's excellence and how he dominates the natives. Kurtz and general barbarity of the natives is exposed with heads displayed on stakes. Marlow attempts to return Kurtz back to the river, but he has been into the very heart of things, consumed, while dying, he speaks of the horror of things, and sends two packages through Marlow to deliver to his.

## **3.2 Themes**

Some of the themes in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* are discussed below:

### **3.2.1 Imperialism**

The English novelist takes readers back to the days of imperialism in which the Thames, River Nile and other adjoining African waterways were used as escape routes to fulfill the English mission of exploration. The English is fully prepared for imperial mission in Africa, hence the Nellie is delicately anchored on the Nile with crew members of diverse professional callings: Accountant, manager and experienced administrators all for the purpose of Africa's exploration. The Nile is portrayed in the novel as aiding the crime of English imperialism:

The Thames stretched before us like the beginning of an interminable waterway. In the offing, the sea and the sky were welded together (p. 65)

The narrator reminds us that the primary duty of the Captain is beyond the river, but within the brooding gloom, in the heart of darkness, his real destination, burdened with the responsibility to personify the English and link the Thames with African rivers and then the "gloom to the West" through the waterways leading to the uttermost end of the earth (p. 66).

### **3.2.2 Deception**

Conrad reveals the crafty nature of imperial psychology of domination, which is visible in the category of men and the ship which bare impressive names. The names "like the jewels... flanks full of treasures and thus pass out of the gigantic tale of the Erebus and Terror bound on other conquests" (p. 67).

Such imperial expenditures have competent and experienced men in charge, Captains, admirals and commissioned generals of East India fleets. They are the "hunters of gold or pursuers of fame", they all had gone out on that stream "bearing the sword and often the touch" (p. 67). Imperial structure is very strongly expressed in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

### **3.2.3 Race and Racial Prejudice**

The theme is obvious in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Even from the title of the novel "darkness" connotes colour prejudice or hatred for the black race. The very Western objection to the black colour perhaps subjugates its owner and drives him to inhabit the remote end of the world, "peopled banks of the rivers" spread out in the

tranquil dignity of the waterway, leading to the uttermost end of the earth. Such houses the miserable black colour but recedes from Western civilization and all kinds of God driven Western advancement. Racial hypothesis, we may say, is the main focus of the novel, even considering the invective descriptions with which blacks and the environment is labeled or addressed in the novel. Examples of such references are in words and phrases “savagery”, “detestable”, “sulky”, “niggers”, “incomprehensible”, “mysterious”, “naked”, “a wilderness like a needle in a bundle of hay”, “cold in a cold fog;”, “tempests”, “disease”, “exile and death sulking in the air”, “in the water”, “in the bush”. “They must have been dying like flies here” (p. 68).

All the descriptions hidden in words and phrases denote hatred, unwanted people whose ways are strange to civilization and may never experience it except to be left and forgotten in their disease invested environment.

### **3.2.4 Exploitation**

The West embarked on imperial conquests and domination with the aim to amass wealth by exploiting foreign economy of nations subject to them. For instance, in Guinea Africa, they were attracted by the ivory in the “Wild Jungle” and the intention to trade with the blacks. For instance, the station manager and his uncle discuss how they could make use of the trading field to their advantage “since anything can be done in this country”. Thus, the novel reveals that to take advantage of Congo, Africa economically is a “continental concern”. Hence, the eagerness to develop the “company’s business” is a keen desire since its imperative “to tear treasure out of the bowels of the earth, with no more moral purpose” (p. 99). To hunt of the ivory continent for heaps of deposit of ivory all suggest Europe’s crazy exploitative tendency of the Congo.

### **3.2.5 Gender Discrimination**

The novelist gets the male gender deeply involved in his narrative from the beginning to end, be it Europe’s executors of God’s will for the “savage” or “black things” in the dark “God forsaken jungle” of the Congo. Men were freely mentioned and used in the various positions in the novel. They got their own share of Europe’s derogatory reference to the Black colour and the disease invested African environment in such remarks as “nigger”, “mysteries”, and savages. But women were rendered ‘invisible’ or almost excluded in the mentioning for any serious roles in the novel, except for the one or two occasions that they were mentioned in passing. Such few instances are “knitting old woman with the cat obtruded herself upon my memory” (p. 142). “Set the women at work” (P. 143) “in truth, women lived in world of their own” (P. 145)

## **3.3 Style**

Below is a discussion of the style of the novelist in *Heart of Darkness*.

### **3.3.1 Invective and Discriminatory Use of Language**

Conrad uses reductive discriminatory and invective languages consciously in *Heart of Darkness*. Such phrases and words are “black thing”, “nigger mysteries”, “this has been one of the dark places of the earth”, “midst of incomprehensible”, “a place of

darkness”, “old nigger”, “unknown”, “edge of a colossal jungle”, “so dark green”, “God-forsaken wilderness”, “horror-struck”, “bewitched”, “imperfect manners”, “impenetrable forest”, “heart of darkness”, “cannibals”, “white man’s grave”, “savages”, “satanic litany”, “barren darkness”. The novelist consciously used selected words that dehumanises and demean the black race and everything that the colour, “black” represents. The reason is to lend weight to the theme of race and racial prejudice which is central to the novel.

### **3.3.2 Symbols and Symbolism**

The idea of “darkness” in the novel symbolises the dreadful, evil colour of the black skin, the black race. The map is also an important symbol that guides Europeans into the jungle of Africa for exploration to unravel the mysteries, the geography of Africa.

### **3.3.3 Allusion**

We observed a generous use of allusions in the novel. Examples of natural, classical, and geographical allusions used makes the novel sound like a school of oceanography, with word like “current”, “tide”, “sea ‘waterways”, “seas”, “sun”, “sky”, “earth”, “river”, “congo basin”, “maps”, “latitude”, “lakes”, “Indian ocean”, “China”, “Eldorado”, “Empire”, “Mars”, “Jupiter”. These referents have been used to justify the thematic concern of the novel.

### **3.3.4 Language**

The writer’s choice of words is deliberately rendered in simple and familiar style, perhaps to justify the African setting of the novel. Hence the relativity of such words and expressions help reader’s easy comprehension of its ideas, especially as we realise that the novel’s main theme is about imperialism. Its language is enriched with use of figures of speech like metaphor and simile. Instances of indirect comparisons in the novel are, “Thames stretched before us like the beginning of the interminable waterway” (simile) (p.65) “... a military camp lost in a wilderness like a needle in a bundle of hay” (simile) (p. 69).

## **3.2 Summary of Thomas Hardy’s The Mayor of Casterbridge**

The novel discusses Michael Henchard, temperamental hay trusser and his wife, Susan, at Casterbridge. He takes too much of wine mixed with rum, sells his wife and daughter Elizabeth Jane for five guinea to a sailor Mr. Newson. When the effect of the alcohol leaves him, he became sober, regrets and vows to abstain from alcohol for twenty one years. Afterwards, he became the Mayor of Casterbridge. At last, Susan Henchard (Susan Newson) and Elizabeth Jane sought Michael Henchard. But Michael Henchard takes on Donald Fanfare who is desirous of helping him in his business. Mr. Newson is believed to have died in a shipwreck. Susan and Michael remarried and lived together as husband and wife. Susan died, left behind a wish for Elizabeth Jane. Lucetta, the former lover of Henchard, now in healthy inheritance, took advantage of their past relationship to blackmail him into a promise of marriage, but Madam Cuxsom wades into Lucetta’s dilemma by revealing Henchard’s sale of his wife and daughter at the fair with Donald Fanfare. Enthroned as the Mayor of Casterbridge,

Henchard became aggrieved with envy and planned to overturn Donald's material success. This led to his eventual fall and bankruptcy. Donald buys over his property and business and employed Michael Henchard, who engages Donald in a pre-planned duel which ends in his regret; pregnant Luccetta dies of the shock in the Skimmington ride. At last, the true paternity of Elizabeth Jane is revealed, Henchard dies miserably.

### **3.3 Themes**

Below are some of the themes discussed in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

#### **3.3.1 Sin and Repentance**

Michael Henchard auctioned his wife for five guineas at a fair after the excessive intake of Mother Cuxson's drink which had been mixed with rum. Later, he regrets his stupidity, goes into the church, repents and vowed never to drink alcohol for the next twenty one years of his life. He confesses, honoured his decision, gets more serious with his business, became successful and his life changed from a mere hay trusser to a wealthy merchant, and he rose to become a magistrate, church warden and the The Mayor of Casterbridge.

#### **3.3.2 Deception**

After Elizabeth Jane and Susan returned and are re-united with Michael Henchard, the latter's wife kept the true paternity of her daughter, Elizabeth Jane, a secret. When she died, she left a death bed wish for her daughter and warned that the letter should not be opened until Elizabeth Jane gets married.

#### **3.3.3 Crime and punishment**

Michael Henchard may have sold his wife, Susan and daughter, Elizabeth Jane after taking too much of rum and later repented at the church, but he reaped the consequences of his action in ways he never expected. Apart from losing the paternity of his daughter, Elizabeth Jane, he also missed marrying Lucetta and more ridiculously, he spent the later part of his life as a nobody, left Casterbridge much the same way he came. The novel reads:

Henchard formed at this moment much the same picture as he had presented when entering Casterbridge for the first time nearly a quarter of a century before, except to be sure that the serious addition to his years had considerably lessened the spring of his stride that his state of hopelessness had weakened him (p. 366)

Henchard's punishment was both physical and spiritual. His former lover, Lucetta, became the victim of Henchard's inflection. Her past came to full view through the skimmington ride that killed her in pregnancy. Some of the issues contained in the

letter are she should not be buried in consecrated ground, no sexton should be asked to toll the bell, nobody should see her corpse, no mourners are allowed behind the deceased at the funeral; flowers must not be planted on her grave and no one must remember her. The deceased had meant to keep these entire secrets, even long after her death, but for the curiosity of Michael Henchard who was too impatience to keep the sealed envelope containing the letter, hence he opened it and exposed the secret.

### **3.3.4 Vanity of Life**

Michael Henchard began as a nobody in Casterbridge. He was a hay trusser, and a reckless drunkard. He rose to become a successful corn merchant and then the Mayor of Casterbridge. He struggled to overturn Donald who became the new Mayor. He sold his wife and children but the five guineas did not have any significant improvement on his life. Instead, he became bankrupt. His wife, Susan died, and he lost the paternity of Elizabeth Jane. He left Casterbridge empty, the same way he began as a struggler.

## **3.6 Style**

The style of the novelist is discussed below

### **3.6.1 Language**

The novelist's language is detailed and descriptive. This gives the reader a comprehensive view of the entire story. With such use of language in the novel, characters appear realistic and consistent with the various conditions in which they are involved.

### **3.6.2 Allusion**

Hardy's descriptive power in the novel alludes to Biblical and classical allusions. References are made to the Roman architectural design. And when it became apparent to the hero that he had misbehaved, he turned to the Holy Bible and the church, and became a warden. The novelist attempts a detailed explanation of most events in a version that gradually leads the reader into the world of the characters.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

React to the literary success or otherwise of Joseph Conrad's representation of imperialism in *Heart of Darkness*.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit, we have summarised Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. We have also discussed the themes and styles in the two novels.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt:

1. The summary of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.

2. Themes in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.
3. Styles in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.

In the last unit, you will be introduced to the themes and style in the English Novel (iv).

#### **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMA)**

- Summarise Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.
- Mention and explain the themes in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.
- Summarise Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.

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## UNIT 5 THEMES AND STYLE IN THE ENGLISH NOVEL (IV)

### CONTENTS

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- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
  - 3.1 Summary of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*
  - 3.2 Themes
    - 3.2.1 Displacement effects of war
    - 3.2.2 In search of ideal democratic government
    - 3.2.3 Man's survival Instinct
    - 3.2.4 Man's return to savagery
    - 3.2.5 Ubiquitous nature of evil
  - 3.3 Style
    - 3.3.1 Language allegorical and conversational
    - 3.3.2 Narrative Technique
      - 3.3.2.1 Symbolism
      - 3.3.2.2 Imagery
  - 3.4 Summary of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*
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    - 3.5.3 Rebellion
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  - 3.6 Style
    - 3.6.1 Language
    - 3.6.2 Use of speech and songs
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMA)
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

We have also written and designed this unit to complete our discussion of the summary, themes and style in the English novel. In this case, we have selected William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and George Orwell's *Animal Farm* for discussion. Below are the objectives of this unit.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- summarise William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*;
- compare the styles in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and George Orwell's *Animal Farm*;
- outline the themes in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*;
- react to the writer's use of language in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*;
- assemble the themes in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*;
- match the themes in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* with suitable extracts from the primary text;
- review George Orwell's *Animal Farm*;
- quote and explain any interesting line or paragraph from either William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* or George Orwell's *Animal Farm*;
- memorise a line from George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and state its relevance to any of the themes in this unit;
- rate the literary qualities of either George Orwell's *Animal Farm* or William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*.

### 3.1 Summary of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*

The novel narrates the story of a group of English school boys who were evacuated to safety when their country was in war. Their aeroplane crashed into an Island. The boys set up a social institution and duties that are necessary for their survival, constructed shelter, gathered fruits, hunt and made fire that will send a pillar of smoke to alert people of their presence in the island. In the process of trying to formalise the institution they set up, using the shell or "couch thing" as their voice, or democratic institution, the boys fall into savagery, the "couch thing" is destroyed, lawlessness and murderous impulse set in among the boys who began to hunt the other. Jack Merridew and his gang hunt down Ralph, the symbol of rationality and morality. The boys lapsed deeper into bestiality as they are separated from adult and rational society. At last, the hunters led by Jack, not only hunt animals but hunt other boys after Jack violently took over the control of the island, and pursued Ralph all over the Island. The civilised boys ignore their civilised behaviours and give in to full violence. The novelist explains:

And there again, shrill and inevitable, was the violation sweeping across the island. At that sound he shields like a horse among the creepers and ran once more till he was painting. He flung himself down by some ferns. The trees or the charge? (P.241)

At last, a rescue force emerged on the Island; a British Naval officer who had come to rescue them scolded them for not putting up a good behaviour. The officer pointed his gun at the boys; he is also engaged in violence as he also has violent will as a hidden part.

### **3.2 Some of the Themes Identified in the novel are discussed below:**

#### **3.2.1 Effects of War**

A group of English school boys were evacuated from the different parts of England in the time of war but their plane crashed on a tropical island. The boys found themselves individually isolated on the Island. They later found out it was necessary for them to get united from the ashes of the displaced effects of the war of their country. Apart from the physical separation from England, their loved ones and parents, they have also been emotionally destabilised. All these separated parts of them must be brought together for them to return to ideal human society that will be free of war and conflicts. But the boys could not return or successfully create an ideal, democratically vibrant society as they had thought since they have been affected by their crises ridden English society. They exhibit the social vices, cruelty, pride, jealousy, insecurity and anarchy that threaten the unity of the English society. The boys in Coral Island found themselves receding more into the vices they inherited from their English country of origin with impunity. Even the rational behaviour of Ralph in the novel could not overcome the beast in him. The novel reads:

He jumped down from the terrace. The island was thick over his black shoes and the heat hurt him. He became conscious of the weight of clothes, kicked his shoes off fiercely and ripped off each stocking with its elastic garter in a single movement...

Then he leapt back on the terrace, pulled off his shirt, and stood there among the skull-like cocoa-nuts with green shadows from the palms and the forests sliding over his skin (P.15)

Also, all through the boy's stay on the island, Ralph, Piggy, Samnerick, the Littlums, and Jack all played the devil, especially from the moment they failed to set up a meaningful democratic political setting. And they slipped into more chaotic condition after they destroyed the Conch thing or shell, a symbol of unity and authority that would have united them all and return their disintegrated existence to a united one.

#### **3.2.2 In Search of Ideal Democratic Government**

Golding may have ridiculed the English democratic/political institution for which she is held in high esteem all over the world. With the return of the boys into savagery as well as the Garden of Eden or Coral Island, the boys thought of a need to recognise their existence by forming laws to govern their Coral Island "country" under an ideal democratic setting.

But, beautiful as it sounds, the ideal was destroyed by selfish ambitions and individualistic attitudes of the boys. Their main immediate challenge was leadership tussle. Ralph interrupts:

“Shut up” said Ralph absently. He lifted the conch. “It seems to me we ought to have a chief to decide things”

“A chief /A chief/”

“I ought to be chief” said Jack with simple arrogance “because I’m chief chorister and head boy. I can sing sharp”

Another buzz

Well then, said Jack “I \_\_\_\_\_

He hesitated. The dark boy, Roger, stirred at last and spoke up

“Lets have a vote”

“Yes”!

“Vote for chief”!

“Let’s vote \_\_\_” (P.29)

Ironically, the vote was marred by disagreements but they were still able to choose hunters, choir and so on among themselves into the various Departments of state. Even with the effort, the new political setting could not live above grudge, suspicion, conflicts, power play and intrigues till the democratic institution was set on fire. Peace was never restored in the nation called coral island till a naval officer came to rescue the situation.

### **3.2.3 People’s Survival Instinct**

The boys tried to adapt to their harsh Coral Island environment: the weather condition, the night, morning, afternoon, and the hunting to establish human presence on the island by the fire made.

They also tried to overcome the fear of beasts in their new ‘country’. Ralph and Roger also brought back the outcome of their investigations on the island and dispelled the image of the beast and dead pilot. They were also ready to overpower and kill any weaker creature. Gradually, the group recognises that all should be brave to conquer the fear of the unknown to survive in Coral island.

### **3.2.4 People’s Return to Savagery**

Golding seems to predict what will soon befall humanity should it continue in conflicts and wars. He has used his popular English novel to remind us of the implications of the first and second world wars and wars generally to the human race. He warns that people must look back to correct the errors of the past, miscarriage of justice, prejudices, chaos and violence, otherwise the modern person might lapse into savagery. If this happens, it will lead to death and destruction of the world and institutions s/he claims to govern. In Coral Island, the English boys from rational or civilized setting fall apart from orderliness, as the beast in them takes over their affair.

### **3.2.5 The Ubiquitous Nature of Evil**

Golding seems to tell his readers that’s since human society is prone to evil, it could be possible to experience none or less evil in non-human settlement like the Coral Island. But Golding’s suggestion/hypothesis that the modern person may be less prone

to chaos and violence when s/he is evacuated from his/her 'civilised' society that is characterised by weapons of war, technology and violence. The moment a person arrived in the Coral Island or Garden of Eden, evil manifested, as s/he is a replica of the devil and has the capacity to breed evil. Thus, it is not surprising that the innocent school boys in the island conceived evil and actualised it to its maximum. The evil that took over England where they were air lifted into the Island overtook and destroyed them in a non-human settlement.

### 3.3 Style

Style in Golding's *Lord of the Flies* is discussed below.

#### 3.3.1 Language allegorical and conversational

The allegorical fable may be read as the story of children in an isolated Island but who were constrained to fashion out a living so as to survive. It can also be read as the novelist's attempt to mirror the human world, and not just the English society of the age of Golding. The language of the novel is simple, written in short simple sentences with metaphors and simile. The use of language may be deliberate so that the novelist can actualise the children's characters explored. The child-like language used is mostly conversational. Examples from the novel are given below:

"Ralph turned to him  
"You're no good on a job like this"  
"All the same \_\_\_"  
"We don't want you, "said Jack, flatly" (P.32)

Also is the extract below:

Ralph and Piggy lay in the sand, gazing at the fire and why flicking pebbles into it's smokeless heart

"that branch is gone"

"Where's Samnerick?"

"We ought to get more wood. We're out of green branches (p. 191)

Another example is given below

Ralph moved suddenly in the dark, but then he heard Eric working at his mouth.

"What's the matter?"

"Just a tooth loose"

Piggy drew up his legs

"You all right, Piggy?" (P.207)

Golding must have done this to get properly fixed into his world of children and also get his readers wooed into the precise and clear use of language in the allegorical fable.

#### 3.3.2 Narrative Technique

The novel's third-person narrative technique exposes the private life of each character. The technique gives us a clear and remarkable insight into the novel and its events.

### 3.3.3.1 Symbolism

Golding makes use of symbols, with universal applicability. For instance, the head of the pig refers to the “lord of the flies”, and may be said to symbolise the Biblical Beelzebub, the devil. This symbol was given a detailed attention in the novel.

### 3.3.3.2 Imagery

The imagery of heat is widely portrayed in the various parts of the novel, as it affects the boys and the entire environment. For instance, the heat from the atomic bomb and fire power of the various weapons used in the war produce the heat. Added to these is the imagery of the fire on the mountain and the eventual setting of the Island on fire by the boys. Man made fire and explosives symbolise man’s deviant depletion of the ozone layer to generate severe heats on man’s only home, the Earth. The dancing butterfly in the novel ridicules the suffering of the boys, and by extension the failure of human institutions and all other desires of the homo-sapiens, including the peace and freedom that s/he is incapable of attaining in a world of perpetual sorrow, conflicts and death.

## 3.5 Summary of George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*

Old Major (Wellington Beauty) had sent words round all the animals in the farm that he had a strange dream which he will narrate in the big barn immediately Mr. Jones retires to bed at night. Mr. Jones was too drunk to secure the pop-poles. All the animals including Bluebell, Jessie, Pincher, Cat, the Pigs, Clover, Boxer, Horses, Muriel, White Goat and Benjamin were in the meeting. Birds too perched in the pen eagerly waiting to hear directly from the speaker dreamer.

The host dreamer was satisfied with the attendance, cleared his throat. He began a long and persuasive speech that appears like the speaker’s attempt to give a vivid picture of the cruel nature of man. In the colourful speech of Old Major, the animal’s attention was drawn to the depravity they suffered under; man animals were ill fed, overworked and ill-housed. The novel declares:

Man is the only creature that consumes without producing. He does not give milk. He does not lay eggs, he is too weak to pull the plough, he cannot run fast enough to catch rabbits. Yet, he is lord of all animals. (P. 4)

Old Major ends his long, insightful and frightening speech by encouraging the animals to nurse and carry out a rebellion against Mr. Jones and his men, a necessary revolt that will give all animals the freedom they deserve and place them at equal or above the human race. According to the animals, man does not have any virtue worth emulating by the animals; therefore, Animal Republic was important after a defeat of the tyrannical man. The rendition of the song, ‘Beasts of England’, and the wild excitement that followed woke up Mr. Jones, but the shot from his gun put an end to the meeting of the animals. Three nights after the meeting, Old Major died and other animals continued the spirit of the revolution. The shot from Mr. Jones further

confirmed man's recklessness, inhumanity and the urgent need for the true spirit of animalism. They looked up to the hope of a revolution that will 'humanise' them and put an end to man's 'politicking' and his tyrannical government over the animals, "liberty is worth more than ribbons". But after the animals attained a measure of freedom, gradually, they lapsed into suspicion, jealousy, distrust, hatred and abuse of power. Most of the questionable cultures they had accused Mr. Jones and his men of became a common recurrence among the animals. This began from the moment Mr. Jones deteriorated and could no longer control the animals who had acquired freedom.

Therefore, animals made draconian laws to sustain the newly acquired freedom and animal culture and a Republic that earned them a new anthem different from 'Beasts of England'. Manor Farm was renamed 'Animal Farm' and seven commandments named. However, open propaganda, wars, violent conflicts, accusations and counter-accusations ruined the new Animal Republic, throwing the citizens into a dilemma of whether to continue with their new found freedom or return to man. As a result, developments in the new society progressed in snail-speed pace. Indeed, the satire in fable form is about all revolutions, especially the Russian Lenin revolution and the conscious reaction of the masses everywhere to the abuses of political power, and revolts against Machiavellian will that is immanent in contemporary political leadership.

### **3.5 Themes**

Some of the themes identified in Orwell's *Animal Farm* are discussed below.

#### **3.5.1 Abuse of Power**

Old Major believes that they were being maltreated, overworked and underfed. He initiated a revolt against man so as to free the animals. But the abuse of power the animals loathed continued even after they broke away from man. The independent animal republic under Snowball and Napoleon was worst as animals starved. Napoleon drove away Snowball from the kingdom, announced that the project of the Windmill he had opposed when Snowball was around be resuscitated. Apart from this, without any previous discussion with the other animals, Napoleon began a bilateral trade relations with man, in this case, Mr. Pilkington Frederick, his business partner. At last, Napoleon harassed and forced Snowball out of the farm, used propaganda to intimidate and secure the animals' respect, even long after Snowball had been forced on exile.

#### **3.5.2 Doubts over the true spirit of animalism**

The teachings of Old Major provoked but encouraged the animals to think of a need to be united against man's vices. Thus, animals held secret meetings for weeks in the barn after Mr. Jones was asleep and "expounded the principles of animalism". They were still preoccupied with the dilemma and thought of what will likely befall the animals should they rebel and break away. The doubts made them asked questions referring to Mr. Jones as "master", indicating a divided loyalty as the future of the animals became doubtful. The fear or uncertainties raised are, "Mr. Jones feeds us, if he were gone, we should starve to death"; why should we care what happens after we

are dead? If this rebellion is to happen anyway, what differences does it make whether we work for it or not?" The pigs were quick to tell the animals that the suspicion, fear, and dilemma were against the true spirit of animalism and conviction that will free the animals from human slavery and oppression forever.

### **3.5.3 Rebellion**

From the moment Old Major invited all the animals and birds in Manor Farm and fed them with the evils of man in a dream he never had the chance to narrate till he died, he had clearly initiated and encouraged the animals into a rebellion. He ensured that he emphasised the need for the freedom of the animals. He also stressed the evils of humanity, especially against the animals such that afterwards, the animals were conscious of a rebellion. It was in that spirit that they took over the farm, initiated the changes they considered necessary to earn them full independence. Old Major ended his thought-provoking speech with a song, 'Beasts of England'.

The fierce-looking Napoleon led the animals after the death of Old Major. He headed and deputed in the farm. When the animals sent away man from the farm, Napoleon decorated himself with the medal of order of the green banner after the Battle of the Windmill. He also received other awards he never merited.

### **3.5.4 Anger and Effects of a Change**

The animals could no longer endure the situation they found themselves, especially after they became aware that it was possible for them to be free from the firm grip and control of man. Mr. Jones became disheartened after losing money in a law suit; he drank more than was good for him, abandoned his duties, and his men were dishonest. The field had overgrown, he fed moses with bread crumbs soaked in beer, could not remember to roof the building, left his primary duties which comprises a regular feeding of the animals and the security of the farm. He was apparently downcast and only read newspapers. Thus the animals could no longer endure hunger; the evening of the following day, one of the cows broke the door of the store-shed with its horns, and the animals began to help themselves with food from the bins. This angered Mr. Jones's men who whipped the animals, but the latter butted and kicked. The men, including Mr. Jones's, fled the farm which was taken over by the animals.

### **3.5.5 Patriotism and Hardwork**

After the animals took over the farm, it became continually difficult for them to maintain discipline and patriotism. Various abuses now set in the new society of the animals: though, "Manor farm" had been renamed 'Animal Farm' and a new anthem put in place; but the animals soon realised that ability to manage fellow animals under existing rules required patience, discipline and true patriotism for which humanity was earlier criticized. When Snowball commanded the animals "comrades, let us make it a point of honour to get in the harvest more quickly than Mr. Jones and his men could do", three cows who had been uneasy set up a loud lowing as they had not been milked for twenty four hours. The milk that all the animals had harvested "had" disappeared. The animal also discovered that most of the designs in the farm could be better handled by man, thus making the animals to have difficult time working



successfully. The more food the animals had to eat, the more work they do, the more pleasure they had, the more difficulties they experienced.

### **3.6 Style**

Below is the style of the novelist in *Animal Farm*

#### **3.6.1 Language**

The language of the novel has been clearly chosen to give detailed attention without any complex rendering of the themes. Almost every page releases dark humor such that hardly can a reader notice the seriousness of the writer's engagement. Yet, the language of description has not reduced simplicity to the bare bone.

#### **3.6.2 Use of Speech and Songs**

Orwell's use of the long speech of Old Major marked by allusions, simile, metaphor, anecdotes and repetitive use of "comrades" appears special and deliberate.

The character's long speech is marked by precision, though no dream was really narrated. Yet the dream was implied by the speaker's eloquence, communicative; instructive and commanding subtlety, yet militant. The writer deliberately ends the speech with a song *Beasts of England* to make every content, or themes of Old Major's cajoling speech permanent in the mind of the animals such that the more they recall the song, the more they remember the task of rebellion ahead of them since songs are often permanent in the memory and easy to recall. Hence, the writer passes the message of possible revolt through the song. The aesthetic effect of the use of song and anthem to initiate a revolt adds beauty to the language of the novelist.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

What is your impression of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*?

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit, we have summarised William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, and discussed the themes in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. We have also identified and discussed the different styles in the two novels.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt:

- The Summary of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.
- Themes in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.
- Style in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.

## **6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMA)**

1. Summarize William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*.
2. List and explain the themes in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.
3. Explain George Orwell's style in *Animal Farm*.
4. What is your impression of the writer's style in *Lord of the Flies*?

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**UNIT 15 – MARKING GUIDE**  
**ENG 216 – SURVEY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE II**  
**(Restoration to the Present)**

**TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMA)**

**Module 1, Unit 1 – History of English Literature (I) (1649-1789)**

- 1) (a) Answer should include why the age was named Restoration, and a cursory mention of a few writers of the period like John Dryden, William Congreve, and Wycherley.  
  
(b) Answer should include other names given to the age, and specific writers like Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope, Addison Steele. The philosophies of the Restoration and Neo-classical should be discussed.
- 2) Major differences between the age of Restoration and Neo-classical (Augustan) are required. Such should include date variations (i.e. Restoration (1649 – 1713), and Augustan, (1713 – 1739), Major Revolution, Conflicts, Internal and External in the age should be discussed. Also the socio-economic, political and literary developments should be mentioned.
- 3) (a) The list may include, Thomas Hobbes *Leviathan*, Andrew Marvell's 'An Horation Ode', 'Upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland', John Milton's 'Paradise Lost, John Buyan's 'The Pilgrim's Progress'. John Dryden's *Mack Flecknoe* (Restoration). Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Jonathan Swifts *Gulliver's Travels*, Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*, Alexander Pope's 'The Rape of the Lock', Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (Neo-classical or Augustan).  
  
(b) For instance, some themes in Thomas Hobbe's *Leviathan* include strength, power defines any government's success, particularly the English government, attempt to prevent the outbreak of Revolution, control of the English citizenry (The Restoration). Themes in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* include suffering and endurance, gains of prayers and consequences of disobedience.

## Module 1, Unit 2 – History of English Literature (II) (1789-1900)

- 1) Important facts that differentiate the Romantic Age from the Victorian should include the various Revolutions of the Ages as well as their forms of literatures.
- 2) Answer may include Samuel Taylor Coleridge's 'Lyrical Ballads, William Blake's 'Songs of Innocence and Experience', William Wordsworth's 'The Prelude', John Keat's 'Ode On a Grecian Urn', and Percy Bysshe Shelley's 'Adonais' (The Romantic), as well as Charles Dicken's *Great Expectations*, Thomas Calyle's *On Heroes*, Elizabeth Gaskell's *Northand South*, Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, George Eliot's (Mary Evans) *Silas Marner*, Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.
- 3) The Examinee is required to outline some of the themes in a particular work of the Romantic and Victorian. In John Keat's 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'. For instance, we have themes of beauty, eternal nature of the works of Art, innocence, historical artifacts (Romantic age). Some themes in Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* are Sin and Repentance, crime and punishment, vanity of life, to mention a few (Victorian age).

### Module 1, Unit 3 – Themes and Style in English Drama (I)

- 1) (a) The definition of drama is required in the Examinee's own word.  
(b) A precise definition of plot is required here with the aid of a text.
- 2) The summary of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* that is required may include the discrimination between the middle and class members of the society, characteristics of the age as represented in the text such as Industrial Revolution, scientific and technological development, improved literature and social culture of the period.
- 3) The theme of class status in George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man* should include as evidenced in the Victorian society, and as it affects major characters like Raina Petkoff, Catherine Petkoff, Sergeant Sergius Saranoff, Captain Bluntschli and Louka.

## Module 1, Unit 4 – Themes and Style in English Drama (II)

- 1) The Examinee is required to state the themes in the play and then explain. Some of the themes are economic hardship, social unrest, hatred for foreigners, survival instinct, unemployment, complacency, police corruption and brutality.
- 2) A discussion of the style in Richard Sheridan's *The Rivals* should include nature of the play as a comedy of manners, use of surprise and suspense, paired characters to achieve comedy and humour.
- 3) The language and style in Howard Brenton should include mixed nature of the language, as evidenced in the play i.e. (Mixture of London's Street language and the Standard British English).

## **Module 2, Unit 1 – Nostalgia and the Poetry of John Milton (1608-1674)**

- 1) The themes in John Milton's 'Paradise Lost' should begin with the expression of the universal nature of its subject. Other themes may include suffering, fate, deception, pain, the mythical conflict between God and Satan.
- 2) A discussion of the themes of John Milton's 'When I consider how my light is spent' is required. Answer may include, the transient nature of life, death is a blessing to humanity, the theme of eternity, and the fact that humanity is accountable to the creator.
- 3) The two poems should be compared by the Examinee who should be specific on the different titles, thematic concerns, as well as styles.



## **Module 2, Unit 2 – Reminiscences: The Poetry of John Keats (1795-1821)**

- 1) A detailed discussion of the temporal nature of life with its busy activities, and man in comparison with the tomb and dead state should be emphasised.
- 2) This requires the poet's speculation in the poem with the characteristics of the human living body and how the body assumes a 'new life' when a person dies.
- 3) All the qualities of the Urn revealed in the Keat's poem such as indestructibility and lasting beauty should reflect in the answer of the Examinee.

**Module 2, Unit 3 – Poetry and Nature: A Discussion of the Poetry of William Wordsworth (1770-1850)**

- 1) The treatment of the poem should include: the social problems of the Romantic and Victorian ages. Some of them are materialism, people's distance from nature and natural environment, the essence of nature, a person's wealth as perishables.
- 2) The Examinee should include in his/her answer such facts from the poem: images of the sky, cloud, its magnificence, and so on.

**Module 2, Unit 4 – Other Prominent English Poets: William Blake, (1757-1827)  
Alexander Pope (1688-1744) and William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)**

- 1) The Examinee's emphasis on the theme of innocence in the poems should be discussed while not ignoring other themes in the poem.
- 2) Answer should include its original purpose which was to commemorate a real life event in Neo-classical Catholic families, and why Pope reduced the quarrels between the families to a work of poetry.
- 3) The themes of the poem are required. Some of them are death, pain, futility of war.
- 4) The sharp distinctions between the poems should be expressed, even as they discuss death as their main subject.

## **Module 2, Unit 5 – Poetry in Depth: The ‘coded’ language of English Poetry**

- 1) Answer should include reader’s ability to connect or associate one’s mind to the new poem, readiness to interpret everything, including rhyme and symbols because they are all part of the meaning of the poem.
- 2) The Examinee is required to chose any English poem and use the ‘coded’ language provided in this unit to discuss and criticise such a poem, some of the ‘coded’ language are meaning and intention in poetry, style, imagery, rhythm, symbol, to mention a few.

### **Module 3, Unit 1 – The English Novel**

- 1) A definition of the novel genre is required from the Examinee.
- 2) The Examiner to state the *five* types of the novel with examples.
- 3) The Examinee is asked to differentiate between the historical and detective types of the novel. Attention should be given to specific areas of divergence of types of novel required.
- 4) The setting of the novel should be discussed with specific reference to any English novel of the Examinee's choice.

### **Module 3, Unit 2 – Themes and Style in the English Novel (I)**

- 1) The Examinee's summary of the novel should include Crusoe's parent's efforts to prevent him from going abroad, as well as the stages of his travels. Voyage to London, the Coast of Africa, Guinea, his enslavement, shipwreck and lonely experience in a barren Island as well as his eventual rescue.
- 2) Answer should include the writer's language, detailed descriptions, allusions, use of symbols, extended narrative, use of humour and exaggeration.
- 3) The summary that is required here will include his encounter with the Lilliputian, after he was thrown overboard, in his subsequent voyage to Brobdingnag, Laputa, Barlynibarbi, Luggnagg, Glubbdubdubdib up to his eventual return to England, when he became more experienced, knowledgeable and cultured.

### **Module 3, Unit 3 – Themes and Style in the English Novel (II)**

- 1) Summary of the novel must be precise. It should include how Jim secures the map of the *Treasure Island*, as well as how he overheard the secret plan of the Pirates to kill the men on board the Hispaniola.
- 2) Themes to be discussed from Jane Austen's *Emma* may include the chronological nature of life, woman, marriage and wealth in England, money and material as well as love and marriage: a choice and conditional.

### **Module 3, Unit 4 – Themes and Style in the English Novel (III)**

- 1) The summary of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* should reveal the imperialists' relationship with the Africans and their environment.
- 2) Themes in the novel should be listed and a brief explanation given. The themes include imperialism, race and racial prejudice, exploitation, gender discrimination and the discriminatory use of language.
- 3) The summary of Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* should be precise but revealing about the novel.



### Module 3, Unit 5 – Themes and Style in the English Novel (IV)

- 1) The summary of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* that is required should be comprehensive on the bestial manifestations of the boys in Coral Island to truly represent the perspective of the novelist.
- 2) A list and explanation of the themes in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* may include abuse of power, rebellion, anger, patriotism and hard work.
- 3) The question requires the writer's style in *Animal Farm*; this may include the writer's use of dark humour, songs and speeches and effects on the animals.
- 4) The question asks for William Golding's stylistic experiment in *Lord of the Flies*. Answer should include the writer's nature of language, symbolism and imagery.