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Modern Literature – IV

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UNIT-1 (POETRY)

THE SCHOLAR GYPSY

-Mathew Arnold

POEM

Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill;

Go, shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes!
No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,
Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,
Nor the cropp'd herbage shoot another head.
But when the fields are still,
And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,
And only the white sheep are sometimes seen
Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanch'd green.
Come, shepherd, and again begin the quest!

Here, where the reaper was at work of late—

In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves
His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruse,
And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,
Then here, at noon, comes back his stores to use—
Here will I sit and wait,
While to my ear from uplands far away
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,
With distant cries of reapers in the corn—
All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screen'd is this nook o'er the high, half-reap'd field,

And here till sun-down, shepherd! will I be.
Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,
And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see
Pale pink convolvulus in tendrils creep;
And air-swept lindens yield
Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,
And bower me from the August sun with shade;
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers.

AUTHOR INTRODUCTION

Matthew Arnold (24 December 1822 – 15 April 1888) was an English poet and **cultural critic** who worked as an inspector of schools. He was the son of **Thomas Arnold**, the famed headmaster of **Rugby School**, and brother to both **Tom Arnold**, literary professor, and **William Delafield Arnold**, novelist and colonial administrator. Matthew Arnold has been characterised as a **sage writer**, a type of writer who chastises and instructs the reader on contemporary social issues.

In 1852, Arnold published his second volume of poems, *Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems*. In 1853, he published *Poems: A New Edition*, a selection from the two earlier volumes famously excluding *Empedocles on Etna*, but adding new poems, *Sohrab and Rustum* and *The Scholar Gipsy*. In 1854, *Poems: Second Series* appeared; also a selection, it included the new poem, *Balder Dead*.

Arnold died suddenly in 1888 of **heart failure** whilst running to meet a train that would have taken him to the Liverpool Landing Stage to see his daughter, who was visiting from the United States where she had moved after marrying an American. He was survived by his wife, who died in June 1901.

Summary of the poem :

The speaker of "**The Scholar-Gipsy**" describes a beautiful rural setting in the pastures, with the town of Oxford lying in the distance. He watches the shepherd and reapers working amongst the field, and then tells the shepherd that he will remain out there until sundown, enjoying the scenery and studying the towers of Oxford. All the while, he will keep his book beside him.

His book tells the famous story by **Joseph Glanvill**, about an impoverished Oxford student who leaves his studies to join a band of gypsies. Once he was immersed within their community, he learned the secrets of their trade.

After a while, two of [the Scholar-Gipsy's](#) Oxford associates found him, and he told them about the traditional gypsy style of learning, which emphasizes powerful imagination. His plan was to remain with the gypsies until he learned everything he could, and then to tell their secrets to the world.

Regularly interjecting his own wonder into the telling, the speaker continues the scholar-gipsy's story. Every once in a while, people would claim to have seen him in the Berkshire moors. The speaker imagines him as a shadowy figure who is waiting for the "spark from heaven," just like everyone else on Earth is. The speaker even claims to have seen the scholar-gipsy himself once, even though it has been over two hundred years since his story first resonated through the halls of Oxford.

Despite that length of time, the speaker does not believe the scholar-gipsy could have died, since he had renounced the life of mortal man, including those things that wear men out to death: "repeated shocks, again, again/exhaust the energy of strongest souls." Having chosen to repudiate this style of life, the scholar-gipsy does not suffer from such "shocks," but instead is "free from the sick fatigue, the

languid doubt." He has escaped the perils of modern life, which are slowly creeping up and destroying men like a "strange disease."

The speaker finishes by imploring that the scholar-gipsy avoid everyone who suffers from this "disease," lest he become infected as well.

Analysis

Though this poem explores one of Arnold's signature themes - the depressing monotony and toil of modern life - it is unique in that it works through a narrative. There are in fact two levels of storytelling at work in the poem: that of the scholar-gipsy, and that of the speaker who is grappling with the ideas poised by that singular figure.

Both levels of story relay the same message: the scholar-gipsy has transcended life by escaping modern life. As he usually does, Arnold here criticizes modern life as wearing down even the strongest of men. His choice of the word "disease" is telling, since it implies that this lifestyle is contagious. Even those who try to avoid modern life will eventually become infected.

In this way, the poem makes a comment on the perils of conformity, as other poems in this collection do. What make the scholar-gipsy so powerful is not only that he wishes to avoid modern life - many wish to do that. More importantly, he is willing to entirely repudiate normal society for the sake of his transcendence. There is a slightly pessimistic worldview implicit in that idea, since it is clearly not possible to revel in true individuality and still be a part of society.

The scholar-gipsy has had to turn his back entirely on Oxford, which represents learning and modernity here, in order to become this great figure. And yet the poem overall is much more optimistic than many of Arnold's works, precisely because it suggests that we *can* transcend if we are willing to pay that cost. This makes it different from a poem like "A Summer Night," which explores the same theme but laments the cost of separation that individuality requires.

For all his admiration, the speaker clearly has not yet mustered the strength to repudiate the world. The setting helps establish his contradictory feelings. The poem begins with images of peaceful, serene rural life, a place where men act as they always have. They have been untouched by the perils of modernity. Pastoral imagery has always been associated in poetry with a type of innocence and purity, unfiltered humanity in touch with nature. The speaker is out in the field contemplating this type of life, the possibility of acting as the scholar-gipsy did.

And yet he is also studying the towers of Oxford, which (as mentioned above) represents the rapidly changing, strictly structured world that the scholar-gipsy

renounced. Arnold deftly expresses the speaker's split priorities through this juxtaposition. At the same time that he admires the scholar-gipsy, he cannot fully turn his back on the modern world. It is the same contradiction that plagues the speaker of "A Summer Night."

Thus, the poem overall represents Arnold's inner conflict, his desire to live a transcendent life but inability to totally eschew society. At this point in his life, Arnold felt pulled in different directions by the world's demands. He was trying to resist the infection of modernization, but it was creeping up on him nevertheless, and the pressure to conform was negatively affecting his poetry. Undoubtedly, Arnold wished he could escape in the way the scholar-gipsy did; however, he was too tied down by responsibilities to ever dream of doing so.

- **QUOTES**

- "Arts To Rule As They Desired"
- "Close-lipped Patience"
- "Still Clutching The Inviolable Shade"
- "This Strange Disease Of Modern Life"

THEME OF THE POEM

One of the themes of "The Scholar-Gipsy" by Matthew Arnold is the ennui and boredom bred by modern life. The narrator of the poem clearly finds everyday modern life lacking in excitement and inspiration. ...

Instead, the scholar-gipsy escapes into nature with a band of "gipsies," or Romani people.

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FRA LIPPO LIPPI

-ROBERT BROWNING

AUTHOR INTRODUCTION :

Robert Browning (7 May 1812 – 12 December 1889) was an English poet and playwright whose mastery of the dramatic monologue made him one of the foremost Victorian poets. His poems are known for their irony, characterization, dark humour, social commentary, historical settings, and challenging vocabulary and syntax. Browning's early career began promisingly, but collapsed.

The long poems *Pauline* and *Paracelsus* received some acclaim, but in 1840 the difficult *Sordello*, which was seen as wilfully obscure, brought his poetry into disrepute. His reputation took more than a decade to recover, during which time he moved away from the Shelleyan forms of his early period and developed a more personal style.

In 1846, Browning married the older poet **Elizabeth Barrett**, and went to live in Italy. By the time of her death in 1861, he had published the crucial collection *Men and Women*. The collection *Dramatis Personae* and the book-length epic poem *The Ring and the Book* followed, and made him a leading British poet. He continued to write prolifically, but his reputation today rests largely on the poetry he wrote in this middle period.

When Browning died in 1889, he was regarded as a sage and philosopher-poet who through his writing had made contributions to Victorian social and political discourse. Unusually for a poet, societies for the study of his work were founded while he was still alive. Such **Browning Societies** remained common in Britain and the United States until the early 20th century

In the remaining years of his life Browning travelled extensively. After a series of long poems published in the early 1870s, of which *Balaustion's Adventure* and *Red Cotton Night-Cap Country* were the best-received, the volume *Pacchiarotto, and How He Worked in Distemper* included an attack against Browning's critics, especially **Alfred Austin**, who was later to become **Poet Laureate**. According to some reports Browning became romantically involved with **Louisa Caroline Stewart-Mackenzie**, Lady Ashburton, but he refused her proposal of marriage, and did not remarry. In 1878, he revisited Italy for the first time in the seventeen years since Elizabeth's death, and returned there on several further occasions. In 1887, Browning produced the major work of his later years, *Parleyings with Certain People of Importance in Their Day*. It finally presented the poet speaking in his own voice, engaging in a series of dialogues with long-forgotten figures of literary, artistic, and philosophic history. The Victorian public was baffled by this, and Browning returned to the brief, concise lyric for his last volume, *Asolando* (1889), published on the day of his death.

Browning died at his son's home **Ca' Rezzonico** in Venice on 12 December 1889.¹ He was buried in **Poets' Corner** in **Westminster Abbey**; his grave now lies immediately adjacent to that of **Alfred Tennyson**.

During his life Browning was awarded many distinctions. He was made **LL.D.** of Edinburgh, a life Governor of London University, and had the offer of the **Lord Rectorship of Glasgow**. But he turned down anything that involved public speaking.

SUMMARY OF THE POEM

The poem begins as the painter and monk Lippo Lippi, also the poem's narrator, is caught by some authority figures while roving his town's red light district. As he begins, he is being physically accosted by one of the police. He accuses them of being overzealous and that he need not be punished. It is not until he name-drops "**Cosimo of the Medici**" (from the ruling family of Florence) as a nearby friend that he is released.

He then addresses himself specifically to the band's leader, identifying himself as the famous painter and then suggesting that they are all, himself included, too quick to bow down to what authority figures suggest. Now free, he suggests that the listener allow his subordinates to wander off to their own devices. Then he tells how he had been busy the past three weeks shut up in his room, until he heard a band of merry revelers passing by and used a ladder to climb down to the streets to pursue his own fun. It was while engaged in that fun that he was caught, and he defends himself to the judgmental listener, asking "what am I a beast for?" if not to pursue his beastly appetites.

It is then that Lippo begins to tell his life story. He was orphaned while still a baby and starved until his aunt gave him over to a convent. When the monks there asked if he was willing to renounce the world in service of monk-hood, Lippo was quick to agree since renouncing the world meant a steady supply of food in the convent. He quickly took to the "idleness" of a monk's life, even at eight years old, but was undistinguished in any of the studies they had him attempt.

His one talent was the ability to recreate the faces of individuals through drawings, partially because as a starving child he was given great insight into the details that distinguished one face from another and the way those faces illustrated different characteristics. Instead of studying in the convent, he devoted himself to doodles and drawings, until the Prior noticed his talent and assigned him to be the convent's artist.

As the convent's artist, Lippo proceeded to paint a myriad of situations, all drawn from the real world. The common monks loved his work since in his artistry they could recognize images from their everyday lives. However, "the Prior and the learned" do not admire Lippo's focus on realistic subjects, instead insisting that the artist's job is not to pay "homage to the perishable clay" of flesh and body, but to transcend the body and attempt to reveal the soul. They insist that he paint more saintly images, focusing on representations of praise and saintliness instead of everyday reality.

Lippo protests to his listener that a painter can reveal the soul through representations of the body, since "simple beauty" is "about the best thing God invents."

Lippo identifies this as the main conflict of his otherwise-privileged life: where he wants to paint things as they are, his masters insist he paint life from a moral perspective. As much as he hates it, he must acquiesce to their wishes in order to stay successful, and hence he must go after prostitutes and other unsavory activity, like the one he was caught involved in at poem's beginning. As a boy brought up poor and in love with life, he cannot so easily forget his artistic impulse to represent life as he sees it to be.

He then speaks to the listener about what generations of artists owe one another and how an artist who breaks new ground must always flaunt the conventions. He mentions a painter named Hulking Tom who studies under him, who Lippo believes will further reinvent artistic practice in the way he himself has done through pursuing realism.

He poses to his listener the basic question whether it is better to "paint [things] just as they are," or to try to improve upon God's creations. He suggests that even in reproducing nature, the artist has the power to help people to see objects that they have taken for granted in a new light. He grows angry thinking of how his masters ruin the purpose of art, but quickly apologizes before he might anger the policeman.

He then tells his listener about his plan to please both his masters and himself. He is planning to paint a great piece of religious art that will show God, the Madonna, and "of course a saint or two." However, in the corner of the painting, he will include a picture of himself watching the scene. He then fantasizes aloud how a "sweet angelic slip of a thing" will address him in the painting, praising his talent and authorship, until the "hothead husband" comes and forces Lippi to hide away in the painting. Lippo bids goodbye to his listener and heads back home.

ANALYSIS

"[Fra Lippo Lippi](#)" stands as one of Browning's most sophisticated dramatic monologues because it works on so many different levels. It is a discourse on the purpose of art, on the responsibility of the artist, the limits of subjectivity, the inadequacy of moral shapes and strictures, and lastly a triumph of dramatic voice.

Browning was inspired to write this poem after reading about Filippo Lippi in Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*, a compendium of Renaissance painters. Vasari identifies Lippi as the first realist painter, and Browning was attracted to the idea of Lippi being a ground breaker in terms of artistic style.

At the time Lippi was painting, art was expected to conform to certain religious principles and to pursue shadowy, moral forms rather than delve into the intricacies of life as it is. Browning would have been attracted to this idea as a writer of complicated psychology in the midst of the Victorian era, which again pushed the idea that art should have a moral purpose.

Probably the most resonant theme in the poem is Lippo's dialectic on the purpose of art. Basically, his dilemma comes down to two competing philosophies: where he wants to paint life as it is, thereby revealing its wondrous complexity, his superiors want him to paint life through a moral lens, to use his painting as an inspirational tool. Lippo proposes in several places the importance of "realism" as a painting style.

The best argument for it can be found in the speaker himself, who frequently reveals his love of life. Notice the many times he breaks into song in the poem, which suggests his whimsical nature. His ability to use details in characterizing people (like when he talks of begging from a variety of different individuals) shows that he has an eye for the myriad distinctions in the world. As a realist, Lippo believes art should aspire to capture the beauty God has made in hopes of evoking responses from its audience. Further, he suggests that humans have a tendency to overlook the details of their lives, to ignore "things we have passed perhaps a hundred times." When a painter presents the same objects through art, a person is able to suddenly appreciate them in a new light, therefore appreciating God's beauty as it was meant to be appreciated. As evidence of the effectiveness of his philosophy, Lippo cites the common monks who loved his paintings and enjoyed recognizing their world in his depictions.

As a counter to this philosophy, Lippo's superiors believe art should "instigate to prayer." They eschew anything that reminds the viewer of the body, instead insisting that art should represent the soul and thereby inspire man to be better than he is. The Prior needs art to remind man of his religious instincts, suggesting that anything that focuses on the body must be impure. Lippo wants to reveal the irony of this philosophy – he suggests that trying to improve on God's beauty (which he captures through realism) is antithetical to the purpose of trying to bring an audience closer to God. He suggests time and time again that because life is full of complexity, contradiction, and wonder, representing it as it is will only stress those qualities, whereas the attempt to "transcend" through art will ironically simplify art into a pure, moral purpose that encourages people to "fast next Friday." Lippo asks, "What need of art at all?" if its purpose is merely to encourage piety.

When Lippo paints a saint, he paints a saint, not what the saint represents, since in attempting to do the latter, he would no longer capture the contradictions and intricacies of the saint.

The poem also considers an artist's responsibility, especially when he is doing something new (as Browning certainly thought he was doing with his own work). When Lippo lists as some of his sample subjects "the breathless fellow at the altar-foot/Fresh from his murder," the irony of a murderer in church calls to mind some of Browning's dramatic monologues like "[Porphyria's Lover](#)."

The poem ultimately suggests that an artist must be responsible to only one thing: himself. Lippo paints as his masters demand because he must survive, and he learned early on in life that by pretending to be something, he could stay fed instead of remaining hungry.

In the same way that he pretended to renounce the world to get bread, so does he continue to paint in a way he does not admire, all the while growing bitter that he is not adequately expressing his view that good painting should evoke questions and wonder. When he sketches his plan for a final painting at the end of the poem, he is expressing an idea of how to feed both desires: he will paint what the Church wants but also include himself, thereby making a subversive comment and negating the moral purpose for which the painting ostensibly is meant.

It is in terms of this idea that the poem has a bigger purpose than just being about art. Instead, it contemplates the limits of subjectivity. Basically, what Lippo's masters want is for him to attempt a holy subjectivity, to capture the essence of his subjects rather than their objective facts (which are defined by their specific physical characteristics, for instance).

This would conform to the Romantic tradition of poetry in which Browning writes; by focusing on the subjective experience of nature, a Romantic poet aims to transcend its physical limitations and reveal something greater. Browning, who was often criticized for his objective focus on trying to represent characters outside his own mind rather than "putting himself" into a poem, is making a challenge to this criticism. Lippo wants us to see that his impulse to paint 'objectively' – to paint the world as it appears – does not necessarily mean he eschews this subjective transcendence. One can capture the subjective wonder of life by painting the objective, because it is only through the body that we can even attempt to glimpse the soul. He suggests that attempting to paint the 'subjective' is to guess at God's meaning, when God has only given us the objective. In essence, what Lippo (and Browning) are saying is that to reproduce the world as he sees it is always to be both objective and subjective.

By extension, Browning suggests that, for example, the duke in "My Last Duchess" indeed represents Browning himself, as well as humankind in general. However, Browning can go no further than representing psychological realism as he observes it, because to pretend to have a facility for that is to be dishonest – all we have are our eyes and senses, and an artist should revel in the freedom and wonder of that. The mention of Hulking Tom only suggests that artists should be ground breakers – in the same way Lippo has moved art to a new place, so will Hulking Tom, for the world changes and artists need to continually mark those changes without having to conform to illogical demands.

However, what really pushes an artist away from this recognition are moral expectations and strictures, which this poem criticizes in Browning's usual ironic

fashion. The scene in which Lippo is first brought to the convent is hilarious. As he stuffs his mouth full of bread, the "good fat father" asks the 8-year-old boy if he will "quit this very miserable world?" Having known the pains of near-starvation, the boy knows better than the "fat father" the pains of the world, but is taking great joy in the simplicity of bread. He ironically promises to renounce the world so that he can easily taste the world's riches through a life of monastic "idleness," and this irony is reflected in the demands the Prior will later make of Lippo's paintings. The Prior wants Lippo to continually renounce the world in his art, to ignore the body in favor of the soul, but all the while we are to remember that this is a silly irony. When the Prior suggests that art should inspire people to pray, to fast, and to fulfill their religious duties, there is an implication of a hierarchy that must be maintained by stressing those duties, all of which has to do with the material and physical world. These moral expectations are encouraged because they maintain the material world's chain of command, and for an artist like Lippo, such a philosophy is necessarily a limitation on art.

It is for these reasons that Lippo encourages the police prelate to let him go. He stresses that they, as subordinates to superiors, should not simply enforce laws because those laws exist, but instead should recognize that man is a "beast" with beastly (sexual) desires. It is easy to see in Lippo's defense an amusing attempt to rationalize his release, but it also ties into the poem's main themes.

Ultimately, the poem is most effective in its masterful use of voice. Written in blank verse, it attempts to capture the rhythms of human speech rather than conforming to any strict poetic meter. Lippo's objective in the early part of the poem is simply to be released, and he accomplishes this through his humorous name-dropping and defenses of his behavior.

However, he quickly falls into his life story, which suggests the extent of his psychological repression. There is obviously nothing this simple policeman can do to help Lippo's situation, but his insistence on speaking at such length to the man only stresses how terribly he has been caught in a system unable to reveal his unique gifts. In a sense, Browning's use of voice makes Lippo's point: by objectively capturing a character outside of himself, Browning is able to engage in his own subjective hang-ups and fascinations about art, life, and humanity. To paint a man as he might be (as Browning has done with Lippo), with his imperfections intact, is to suggest wonderful possibilities.

Finally, the poem's final image offers a great allegory worthy of dissection. As mentioned above, Lippo's inclusion of his own image in an otherwise pious painting merely stresses the unavoidable collision between subjectivity and objectivity. He will give them what they want but surreptitiously put himself in it anyway. The woman who praises him is often linked to the muse, she who revels in

his ability to push boundaries and capture inspiration. From this perspective, the "hothead of a husband" must be the world and its moral strictures, coming in to force the muse to stay within the lines. Interestingly enough, when this conflict happens, Lippo hides himself behind a bench to watch it play out, suggesting that it is this very conflict – between unfettered artistry and the demands of the world – that fuel an artist's creativity. Once the fight between husband and angel is complete, Lippo will have seen enough turmoil to have inspired his next painting.

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TITHONUS

- *Alfred Tennyson*

Author Introduction :

Born on **August 6, 1809**, in Somersby, Lincolnshire, England, Alfred Lord Tennyson is one of the most well-loved Victorian poets. Tennyson, the fourth of twelve children, showed an early talent for writing. At the age of twelve he wrote a **6,000-line epic poem**. His father, the **Reverend George Tennyson**, tutored his sons in classical and modern languages. In the 1820s, however, Tennyson's father began to suffer frequent mental breakdowns that were exacerbated by alcoholism. One of Tennyson's brothers had violent quarrels with his father, a second was later confined to an insane asylum, and another became an opium addict.

Tennyson escaped home in **1827** to attend **Trinity College**, Cambridge. In

that same year, he and his brother Charles published ***Poems by Two Brothers***. Although the poems in the book were mostly juvenilia, they attracted the attention of the "Apostles," an undergraduate literary club led by Arthur Hallam. The "Apostles" provided Tennyson, who was tremendously shy, with much needed friendship and confidence as a poet. Hallam and Tennyson became the best of friends; they toured Europe together in 1830 and again in 1832. Hallam's sudden death in 1833 greatly affected the young poet. The long elegy *In Memoriam* and many of Tennyson's other poems are tributes to Hallam.

In 1830, Tennyson published *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* and in 1832 he published a second volume entitled simply *Poems*. Some reviewers condemned these books as "affected" and "obscure." Tennyson, stung by the reviews, would not publish another book for nine years. In 1836, he became engaged to Emily Sellwood. When he lost his inheritance on a bad investment in 1840, Sellwood's family called off the engagement. In 1842, however, Tennyson's *Poems* in two volumes was a tremendous critical and popular success. In 1850, with the publication of *In Memoriam*, Tennyson became one of Britain's most popular poets. He was selected Poet Laureate in succession to [Wordsworth](#). In that same year, he married Emily Sellwood. They had two sons, **Hallam and Lionel**.

At the age of 41, Tennyson had established himself as the most popular poet of the Victorian era. The money from his poetry (at times exceeding **10,000** pounds per year) allowed him to purchase a house in the country and to write in relative seclusion.

In 1859, Tennyson published the first poems of ***Idylls of the Kings***, which sold more than **10,000 copies** in one month. In 1884, he accepted a peerage, becoming Alfred Lord Tennyson. Tennyson **died on October 6, 1892**, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

SUMMARY OF TITHONUS :

‘*Tithonus*’ by Lord Alfred Tennyson is written in the form of a dramatic monologue in which only one speaker is used to tell an entire story. There is no consistent rhyme scheme or pattern of meter in the piece, meaning that it is written in blank or [free verse](#).

“*Tithonus*” was first written under the title “Tithon” in 1833. It did not appear to a wide readership until 1859 when it was published under its full name. While not one of Tennyson’s most popular or well known pieces, “*Tithonus*” is characteristic of the poet’s style and a wonderful example of his ability to expand on already existing myths and legends. “*Tithonus*” by Lord Alfred Tennyson describes the plight of *Tithonus* who is cursed to an immortal life in which he continues to age.

The poem begins with the speaker, *Tithonus*, desiring how sorrowful the naturally aging woods make him. Unlike all the other elements of the world, he is unable to die. He

cannot, as they do, return to the earth and become something new. He is slowly being consumed by the hours of his life that will never end. He is stuck in the “East” with his once beloved Eos who is the cause of his wretched state, (see About the Myth for more details).

The speaker describes himself as no longer being a man, but a mere shadow who is forced to see the never aging face of his beloved ever morning. In the next few line he quickly outlines how he came to be this way. He describes asking Eos for immortality and her granting it to him without considering his youth. He will never pass beyond the “goal of ordinance” or reach death, as other men do. It is obvious to him now the mistake he has made.

Every morning of *Tithonus*' life he is forced to see the sun rise and observe Eos' chariot take her into the sky where he once adored her. Everyday he asks her to take back what she has given, but receives no answer. He fears that she is unable to retract something she has given out.

In the next section of the poem the speaker is remembering an old lover he used to have and the simple times they were together. It is this life that he should have had. They lay together, touching mouths and eyelids without pretense or the pull of immortality.

The poem concludes with the speaker asking that Eos free him from the East where he has been trapped and allow him to die. If he was to do so, he could join the other men in the earth and she could always look down on his grave.

About the Myth

[*Tithonus*](#) is a character that features in Greek mythology and is the son of a King of Troy, Laomedon. His mother was born of the river Scamander. In the story, Eos, or Aurora, the embodiment of dawn, fell in love with *Tithonus*. Together they had two children.

After this, in an effort to stay with her beloved forever, Eos asks the god Zeus to grant *Tithonus* eternal life. Zeus agreed to this proposition but Eos had not be specific enough. *Tithonus* was to live forever, but also continue aging. He would not retain his youth as Eos would. Throughout his long life *Tithonus* continued to age, never reaching the threshold of death. In Tennyson's version of this myth it is not Zeus that grants immortality but Eos herself.

ANALYSIS :

The poem begins with the poet's speaker, *Tithonus*, son of Laomedon, a King of Troy, bemoaning his immortality as he looks around the woods. Around him he can see the “woods decay.” He repeats phrase twice for emphasis as this simple act of life moving on to death is beyond the realm of his understanding. After decaying the woods, “fall,” and a “vapour” or mist covers the ground. This vapor is part of the process of reincarnation through which every living thing participates. “The vapors weep their burthen to the ground,” and the men come along and till the field and all that lies within it. The earth is reused and reborn, every living thing goes through this except for *Tithonus*.

Tithonus is alone in the world. He is isolated by immortality and he despises it. Many member of mankind has desired for the ability to live

forever. *Tithonus* was no exception and his story, and how he came to hate his own eternal life will be described by the speaker throughout the poem.

He is being “consumed” by his own immortality and is “slowly” withering within his own arms. There is no one there to soothe him who can understand what he is going through, so he must take comfort in his own presence. In the next lines he describes himself as a “white-hair’d shadow” that is traveling the world in a dream. He has seen and done everything, he is at the “limit of the world” trapped in the East with Eos. The speaker has seen all the beauty the planet has to offer and is now completely alone and miserable.

In the **second stanza** of this piece the speaker explains how he came to be in this sorry state. He is now a “gray shadow,” but was once, “So glorious in his beauty” that he was chosen by “thy” to be granted immortality. It is understood from the original myth, as summarized above, that the “thy” that is reference in this poem is Eos or Aurora, the [personification](#) of the dawn. After she fell in love with Tithonus he begged her, as many a mortal would, to “Give me immortality.”

In this version of the story, Eos granted *Tithonus*’ wish like a “wealthy [man]” who can give away things at will without being concerned about their own wellbeing. The immortality was not what *Tithonus* was expecting though. Eos granted him eternal life but not eternal youth. Since he was made immortal *Tithonus* has been aging as would any normal man. At this point in the story the “Hours have worked “their wills,” they have “beat [him] down” and “wasted” him until he was a shell of his former self.

Although time was unable to force him towards a final death it did continue the aging process. Now, Tithonus is forced to “dwell in the presence of immortal youth,” referring to Eos, while he is “in ashes.” His never ending age is made worse by the fact that Eos is completely untouched by time. In the next lines of the poem the speaker is pleading with Eos to please, “take back thy gift.” He hopes to convince her that he is, at this point, better off dead. She has tears in her “tremulous eyes” as she listens to his plea. He tells her that no man would “desire” to diverge so far from normal mankind and that no one, if they knew what misery this was, would wish to hide from death. As was demonstrated in the first stanza, he now understands the importance of the cycle of life, he would never make this mistake again.

In the **third stanza** the speaker is watching the sky right before the dawning of the sun and the coming of Eos. The sky is like that “dark world” that all of humankind came from before they were born. It holds a mystery to Tithonus that he believes he will never now know the answer to.

In the following lines he describes what Eos looks like as she is cresting the horizon. He can see her “pure brows and...shoulders.” Her cheeks light up red and her eyes find his. Her team of horses, “the wild team / Which love thee” then shake off the “darkness from their...manes.” The horses plow forward and hoist Eos into

the sky.

The speaker concludes this section of the poem by saying that whenever he makes his new request of her, that she take back his immortality, she “Departest.” He is wretched and unable to even receive a yes or no answer from the god that used to be his beloved

In the **fourth stanza** he asks Eos if she will ever give him an answer, even if it is one shown in tears. He knows if he were to see her crying he would know that “The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts.” The speaker is afraid that there is no way for Eos to take back what she has given.

In the next lines of the poem the speaker is reminiscing on the better days of his life when “with...another heart” he laid down beside another lover. He is remembering happier times in his life before he even became involved with Eos. Perhaps, he is thinking, if this had been his chosen path he would have lived a better, fuller life. He remembers the curls of this lover’s hair in the light and her “outline” pressed against the light of the sun. He was the most alive then. Tithonus could feel his “blood / Glow with glow” as he lay with her. Together they pressed their “Mouth[s], forehead[s], and eyelids and kissed balmy kisses.

Tithonus is dreaming of this better time in which this unknown lover whispered “that strange song I heard Apollo sing” while the city of Troy, or Ilion, was being built. While this is a past life that he thinking of it is wrapped up in his thoughts of Eos. He cannot even see this past lover without her being present as the light behind the lover’s body.

In the **final stanza** of the poem Tithonus is asking Eos to no longer hold him “in thine East” where the sun always rises. His “nature” is unable to mix with her own. Even though they may both be immortal, his visage and constitution are no longer what they were. Tithonus does not feel for Eos the same way as he used to. Her light feels to him like a cold bath that “wrinkle[s]” his feet. This he experiences every morning when the sun is rising and setting “steam” floating up off the the fields around him.

He pleads with her to “Release” him and let him return to the “ground.” If she was to release him as he so deeply desires, she will still be able to “renew” her beauty every morning and see his grave within the earth. He will die and “earth in earth forget these empty courts,” or the empty days in which he has been living.

About Alfred Lord Tennyson About Alfred Lord Tennyson

[Alfred Lord Tennyson](#) was born in 1809 in Somersby, Lincolnshire, England. He was one of twelve children and had, by the age of twelve, written his first epic poem that consisted of 6,000 lines. In 1827 Tennyson left his home to attend Trinity College, Cambridge. It was there the he and his brother, Charles, co published a book of poems titled, *Poems by Two Brothers*. This book put Tennyson on the radar of other prolific college writers and he made friends with another student, Arthur Hallam. After a brief but intense friendship

Hallam died, leaving a bereft Tennyson to devoted a number of poems to his memory.

From 1830 to 1832, Tennyson published two more books of poetry. These were not met with outstanding reviews and the poet was greatly disappointment. His naturally shy disposition would keep him from publishing again for another nine years. Tennyson finally met with some success in 1842 after the publication of this book, *Poems* in two volumes.

When Tennyson published *In Memoriam*, one of the pieces dedicated to his college friend, Hallam, his reputation was solidified throughout Britain. That same year he married Emily Sellwood, with whom he would have two sons. Tennyson's popularity and success allowed him to continue writing full time and purchase a home for his family in the country. Tennyson died in 1892 and remains one of the most popular Victorian poets.

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THE SECOND COMING

-W.B.Yeats

Author Introduction :

William Butler Yeats (13 June 1865 – 28 January 1939) was an [Irish poet](#) and one of the foremost figures of [20th-century literature](#). A pillar of the Irish literary establishment, he helped to found the [Abbey Theatre](#), and in his later years served two terms as a [Senator](#) of the [Irish Free State](#). He was a driving force behind the [Irish Literary Revival](#) along with [Lady Gregory](#), [Edward Martyn](#) and others.

Yeats was born in [Sandymount](#), Ireland, and educated there and in London. He spent childhood holidays in [County Sligo](#) and studied poetry from an early age, when he became fascinated by [Irish legends](#) and the [occult](#).

These topics feature in the first phase of his work, which lasted roughly until the turn of the 20th century. His earliest volume of verse was published in 1889, and its slow-paced and lyrical poems display debts to [Edmund Spenser](#), [Percy Bysshe Shelley](#), and the poets of the [Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood](#). From 1900, his poetry grew more physical and [realistic](#).

He largely renounced the transcendental beliefs of his youth, though he remained preoccupied with physical and spiritual masks, as well as with cyclical theories of life. In 1923, he was awarded the [Nobel Prize in Literature](#).

That September, Yeats proposed to 25-year-old [Georgie Hyde-Lees](#) (1892–1968), known as George, whom he had met through Olivia Shakespear. Despite warnings from her friends—"George ... you can't. He must be dead"—Hyde-Lees accepted, and the two were married on 20 October. Their marriage was a success, in spite of the age difference, and in spite of Yeats's feelings of remorse and regret during their honeymoon. The couple went on to have two children, [Anne](#) and [Michael](#).

During 1929, he stayed at [Thoor Ballylee](#) near [Gort](#) in [County Galway](#) (where Yeats had his summer home since 1919) for the last time. Much of the remainder of his life was lived outside Ireland, although he did lease [Riversdale](#) house in the Dublin suburb of [Rathfarnham](#) in 1932. He wrote prolifically through his final years, and published poetry, plays, and prose. In 1938, he attended the Abbey for the final time to see the premiere of his play [Purgatory](#).

Yeats continued to write until his death. Some of his important later works include *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1917), *A Vision* (1925), *The Tower* (1928) and *Words for Music Perhaps and Other Poems* (1932). Yeats passed away on January 28, 1939, in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, France. The publication of *Last Poems and Two Plays* shortly after his death further cemented his legacy as a leading poet and playwright.

SUMMARY

"The Second Coming" is one of W.B. Yeats's most famous poems. Written in **1919** soon after the end of **World War I**, it describes a deeply mysterious and powerful alternative to the Christian idea of the Second Coming—Jesus's prophesied return to the Earth as a savior announcing the Kingdom of Heaven. The poem's first stanza describes a **world of chaos, confusion, and pain**. The second, longer stanza imagines the speaker receiving a vision of the future, but this vision replaces Jesus's heroic return with what seems to be the arrival of a grotesque beast. With its distinct imagery and vivid description of society's collapse, "The Second Coming" is also one of Yeats's most quoted poems. Flying around and around in a widening spiral, a falcon can no longer hear the call of its owner. Things are breaking down, and their foundation is giving way. Pure destruction and lawlessness have spread across the world, and so has a tidal wave darkened by blood. All the rituals of innocence have been swallowed by this tide. The best people aren't motivated to act, but the worst people are impassioned and eager.

Some kind of revelation has to happen soon, and the Second Coming itself must be close. Excitedly, the speaker exclaims: "The Second Coming!" But just as the speaker says this, a vision comes to the speaker from the world's collective unconscious. The speaker sees a barren desert land, where a creature with a man's head and a lion's body is coming to life. Its expression is, like the sun, empty and without pity. Its legs are moving slowly, and all around it fly the shadows of disturbed desert birds. Everything becomes dark again, but the speaker knows something new: two thousand years of calm have been irreversibly disrupted by the shaking of a cradle. The speaker asks: what beast, whose time has finally come, is dragging itself towards Bethlehem, where it will be born.

"The Second Coming" presents a nightmarish **apocalyptic scenario**, as the speaker describes human beings' increasing loss of control and tendency towards violence and anarchy. Surreal images fly at the reader thick and fast, creating an unsettling atmosphere that suggests a world on the **brink of destruction**.

THE PIED BEAUTY

- G.M.Hopkins

AUTHOR INTRODUCTION

Gerard Manley Hopkins is considered to be one of the greatest poets of the Victorian era. However, because his style was so radically different from that of his contemporaries, his best poems were not accepted for publication during his lifetime, and his achievement was not fully recognized until after World War I. Hopkins's family encouraged his artistic talents when he was a youth in Essex, England. However, Hopkins became estranged from his Protestant family when he converted to Roman Catholicism. Upon deciding to become a priest, he burned all of his poems and did not write again for many years. His work was not published until 30 years after his death when his friend Robert Bridges edited the volume *Poems*.

Hopkins's idiosyncratic creativity was the result of interactions with others, beginning with the members of his extended family. Born into a devout High Church Anglican family, Hopkins read from the New Testament daily at school. His mother, Kate Smith Hopkins (1821-1900), was the daughter of a London physician. Better educated than most Victorian women, she was particularly fond of music and of reading, especially German philosophy and literature and the novels of Dickens. Her sister Maria Smith Giberne taught Hopkins to sketch. The drawings originally executed as headings on letters from her home, Blunt House, Croydon, to Hopkins's mother and father reveal the kind of precise, detailed drawing that Hopkins was taught. Hopkins's interest in the visual arts was also sustained by his maternal uncle, Edward Smith, who began as a lawyer but soon made painting his profession; by Richard James Lane, his maternal great-uncle, an engraver and lithographer who frequently exhibited at the Royal Academy; and by Lane's daughters, Clara and Eliza (or Emily), who exhibited at the Society of Female Artists and elsewhere. Another maternal uncle, John Simm Smith, Jr., reinforced the religious tradition which Hopkins's mother passed on to him; Smith was churchwarden at St. Peter's, Croydon.

In 1889 Hopkins died in Dublin of typhoid fever, apparently caused by the polluted urban water supply, and was buried in Glasnevin cemetery.

SUMMARY

The poem opens with an offering: “**Glory be to God for dappled things.**” In the next five lines, Hopkins elaborates with examples of what things he means to include under this rubric of “**dappled.**” He includes the mottled white and blue colors of the sky, the “**brinded**” (brindled or streaked) hide of a cow, and the patches of contrasting color on a trout. The chestnuts offer a slightly more complex image: When they fall they open to reveal the meaty interior normally concealed by the hard shell; they are compared to the coals in a fire, black on the outside and glowing within. The wings of finches are multicolored, as is a patchwork of farmland in which sections look different according to whether they are planted and green, fallow, or freshly plowed. The final example is of the “trades” and activities of man, with their rich diversity of materials and equipment.

In the final five lines, Hopkins goes on to consider more closely the characteristics of these examples he has given, attaching moral qualities now to the concept of variety and diversity that he has elaborated thus far mostly in terms of physical characteristics. The poem becomes an apology for these unconventional or “strange” things, things that might not normally be valued or thought beautiful. They are all, he avers, creations of God, which, in their multiplicity, point always to the unity and permanence of His power and inspire us to “Praise Him.”

FORM

This is one of Hopkins’s “curtal” (or curtailed) sonnets, in which he miniaturizes the traditional sonnet form by reducing the eight lines of the octave to six (here two tercets rhyming **ABC ABC**) and shortening the six lines of the sestet to four and a half. This alteration of the sonnet form is quite fitting for a poem advocating originality and contrariness. The strikingly musical repetition of sounds throughout the poem (“dappled,” “stipple,” “tackle,” “fickle,” “freckled,” “adazzle,” for example) enacts the creative act the poem glorifies: the weaving together of diverse things into a pleasing and coherent whole.

'WHAT THE THUNDER SAID?' From the waste land

-T.S.ELIOT

AUTHOR INTRODUCTION

T.S. Eliot, in full **Thomas Stearns Eliot**, (born September 26, 1888, St. Louis, [Missouri](#), U.S.—died January 4, 1965, [London](#), England), American-English poet, playwright, literary critic, and editor, a leader of the [Modernist](#) movement in [poetry](#) in such works as [The Waste Land](#) (1922) and [Four Quartets](#) (1943).

Eliot exercised a strong influence on Anglo-American [culture](#) from the 1920s until late in the century. His experiments in [diction](#), style, and versification revitalized English poetry, and in a series of critical essays he shattered old orthodoxies and erected new ones.

The publication of *Four Quartets* led to his recognition as the greatest living English poet and man of letters, and in 1948 he was awarded both the [Order of Merit](#) and the [Nobel Prize](#) for Literature. Eliot was to pursue four careers: editor, dramatist, literary critic, and philosophical poet. He was probably the most [erudite](#) poet of his time in the [English language](#). His undergraduate poems were “literary” and conventional. His first important publication, and the first masterpiece of Modernism in English, was [“The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”](#) (1915)

With the publication in 1922 of his poem [The Waste Land](#), Eliot won an international reputation. *The Waste Land* expresses with great power the disenchantment, disillusionment, and disgust of the period after World War I. In a series of [vignettes](#), loosely linked by the [legend](#) of the search for the [Grail](#), it portrays a sterile world of panicky fears and barren lusts, and of human beings waiting for some sign or promise of redemption. Nevertheless, Eliot was unequaled by any other 20th-century poet in the ways in which he commanded the attention of his audience. He was died 4 January 1965, [Kensington](#).

Summary

The final section of *The Waste Land* is dramatic in both its imagery and its events. The first half of the section builds to an apocalyptic climax, as suffering people become “hooded hordes swarming” and the “unreal” cities of Jerusalem, Athens, Alexandria, Vienna, and London are destroyed, rebuilt, and destroyed again. A decaying chapel is described, which suggests the chapel in the legend of the Holy Grail. Atop the chapel, a cock crows, and the rains come, relieving the drought and bringing life back to the land. Curiously, no heroic figure has appeared to claim the Grail; the renewal has come seemingly at random, gratuitously.

The scene then shifts to the Ganges, half a world away from Europe, where thunder rumbles. Eliot draws on the traditional interpretation of “what the thunder says,” as taken from the Upanishads (Hindu fables). According to these fables, the thunder “gives,” “sympathizes,” and “controls” through its “speech”; Eliot launches into a meditation on each of these aspects of the thunder’s power. The meditations seem to bring about some sort of reconciliation, as a Fisher King-type figure is shown sitting on the shore preparing to put his lands in order, a sign of his imminent death or at least abdication. The poem ends with a series of disparate fragments from a children’s song, from Dante, and from Elizabethan drama, leading up to a final chant of “Shantih shantih shantih”—the traditional ending to an Upanishad. Eliot, in his notes to the poem, translates this chant as “the peace which passeth understanding,” the expression of ultimate resignation.

Form

Just as the third section of the poem explores popular forms, such as music, the final section of *The Waste Land* moves away from more typical poetic forms to experiment with structures normally associated with religion and philosophy. The proposition and meditation structure of the last part of this section looks forward to the more philosophically oriented *Four Quartets*, Eliot’s last major work. Its patterning reflects the speaker’s offer at the end to “fit you,” to transform experience into poetry (“fit” is an archaic term for sections of a poem or play; here, “fit” is used as a verb, meaning “to render into a fit,” to make into poetry).

THE SHIELD OF ACHILES

-W.H.Auden

AUTHOR INTRODUCTION :

W.H. Auden, also known as Wystan Hugh Auden, was a poet, author and playwright born in York, England, on **February 21, 1907**. Auden was a leading literary influencer in the 20th century. Known for his chameleon-like ability to write poems in almost every verse form, Auden's travels in countries torn by political strife influenced his early works. He won the Pulitzer Prize in 1948.

W.H. Auden was born Wystan Hugh Auden in York, England, on **February 21, 1907**. Raised by a physician father and a strict, Anglican mother, Auden pursued science and engineering at Oxford University before finding his calling to write and switching his major to English.

Auden pursued his love of poetry, influenced by Old English verse and the poems of Thomas Hardy, Robert Frost, William Blake and Emily Dickinson. He graduated from Oxford in 1928, and that same year, his collection *Poems* was privately printed.

In 1930, with the help of T.S. Eliot, Auden published another collection of the same name (*Poems*) that featured different content. The success of this collection positioned him as one of the leading influencers in literature in the 20th century.

Auden's poems in the latter half of the **1930s** reflected his journeys to politically torn countries. He wrote his acclaimed anthology, *Spain*, based on his first-hand accounts of the country's civil war from 1936 to 1939.

More so, Auden was lauded for his chameleon-like ability to write poems in almost every verse form. His work influenced aspiring poets, popular culture and vernacular speech. He stated in *Squares and Oblongs: Essays Based on the Modern Poetry Collection at the Lockwood Memorial Library* (1948), "A poet is, before anything else, a person who is passionately in love with language."

Auden wed Erika Mann, daughter of German novelist Thomas Mann, in 1935. The nuptial did not last, as it was a marriage of convenience for her to gain British citizenship. Auden, ever the avid traveler, visited Germany, Iceland and China, and then, in 1939, moved to the United States. On this side of the pond, he met his other true calling—his lifelong partner, fellow poet Chester Kallman. Auden eventually became an American citizen.

With his health waning, Auden left America in 1972 and moved back to Oxford. He spent his last days in Austria, where he owned a house. **Auden died in Vienna, Austria, on September 29, 1973.**

SUMMARY

The Shield of Achilles is composed by W.H. Auden in **1955** where he represents the Homeric theme in a mock-heroic way making necessary changes. Thetis, the mother of Achilles, in Greek mythology, looks at the shield hung over the shoulder of her son.

The shield was made by **Hephaestus**, the Greek **blacksmith** of gods, for Achilles during the Trojan War. She had expected to see olive trees and vines and marble cities and ships on windy seas carved on the shields but Hephaestus has made it quite different.

He forged “**an artificial wilderness**” under a leaden sky. The plain is shown bare and brown, but a big mass of boots stand ready for war. There are depiction of the artificial and deserted life of the contemporary wasteland without anything to eat or a shelter. This is the modern wasteland, full of puppets like people who are unable to think for themselves, and unconsciously follow their leaders' and rulers.

They are all hollow within. The speaker over the radio speaks in an impersonal voice proving statistics that their cause is just for the war, and so persuade them to go to the war.

Thetis wanted to see the scenes of religious piety carved on her son's shield, but there is barbed wire encloses a military camp in “**an arbitrary spot,**” and civilians watch from a distance some pale faced prisoners are being punished.

The prisoners died before their bodies died. The crucifixion of the Christ was necessary for the regeneration and redemption of mankind. But the massacre of the innocent people in the name of war or any form of violence does not bear any significance. These acts of haphazard killings are signs of spiritual degeneration of the modern people.

In the third stanza, Thetis looks for the people enjoying dance and music but she finds carvings of growing weeds where a poor child is alone throwing stones at birds, a girl being raped, boys killing each other.

The children have never heard of love and harmony not even human sympathy. Modern life is shown so brutal and beastly that Thetis cries in horror at the end of the poem.

THE STRANGE MEETING

-Wilfred owen

Author Introduction :

Owen was an **English poet** whose work was characterised by his anger at the cruelty and waste of war, which he experienced during service on the Western Front.

Wilfred Edward Salter Owen was born **18 March 1893** in **Oswestry, Shropshire**. After school he became a teaching assistant and in 1913 went to France for two years to work as a language tutor. He began writing poetry as a teenager.

In **1915** he returned to England to enlist in the army and was commissioned into the Manchester Regiment. After spending the remainder of the year training in England, he left for the western front early in **January 1917**. After experiencing heavy fighting, he was diagnosed with shellshock. He was evacuated to England and arrived at Craiglockhart War Hospital near Edinburgh in June. There he met the poet Siegfried Sassoon, who already had a reputation as a poet and shared Owen's views. Sassoon agreed to look over Owen's poems, gave him encouragement and introduced him to literary figures such as Robert Graves.

Reading Sassoon's poems and discussing his work with Sassoon revolutionised Owen's style and his conception of poetry. He returned to France in August 1918 and in October was awarded the Military Cross for bravery.

On **4 November 1918** he was killed while attempting to lead his men across the Sambre canal at Ors. The news of his death reached his parents on 11 November, Armistice Day.

Edited by Sassoon and published in 1920, Owen's single volume of poems contain some of the most poignant English poetry of World War One, including 'Dulce et Decorum Est' and 'Anthem for Doomed Youth'. Owens's **poetry** was promoted and published by Sassoon after his death, and backed by Edith Sitwell, a proponent of innovative trends in English poetry. In 1931 Edmund Blunden's anthology of Owens's work sent his reputation soaring to new heights, and today Owen is regarded as one of the most talented poets of the period. He is buried at Ors communal cemetery in France.

SUMMARY :

"Strange Meeting" was written by the British poet **Wilfred Owen**. A soldier in the First World War, Owen wrote **"Strange Meeting"** sometime during **1918** while serving on the Western Front (though the poem was not published until 1919, after Owen had been killed in battle). The poem's speaker, who is also a soldier, has descended to **"Hell."**

There, he meets a soldier from the opposing army—who reveals at the end of the poem that the speaker was the one who killed him.

The poem is deeply pessimistic as it reflects on the shared humanity of these two men and the broader horrors of war. Though the poem suggests that human beings aren't going to stop fighting anytime soon, it also calls for such violence to be replaced by **reconciliation and solidarity**.

It seemed like I escaped from battle down into a very deep, dark tunnel—a tunnel that had been carved out of the granite bedrock by some enormous wars in the past.

Even in the tunnel, I found people moaning and suffering. They were either too deeply asleep to be stirred, or they were already dead.

Then, as I poked and prodded them, one of the sleepers jumped up and stared at me. He seemed to recognize me—and he pitied me. He lifted his hands sadly, as if he were going to bless me. And I could tell from his lifeless smile that the dark hall in which we stood was Hell itself.

You could see all the fear etched into his face—even though none of the blood or violence from the battle up above reached the hall where we stood.

You couldn't hear the artillery firing down there; the guns didn't make the chimneys in the hall groan.

I said to him, **"Unfamiliar friend, there's no reason to be sad down here."** He replied: "No reason except for all the years I'm missing out on, and the loss of hope. You and I had the same hopes. I threw myself into seeking the most beautiful thing in the world, and I'm not talking about physical beauty.

This beauty makes fun of time as it steadily passes by. If this beauty is sad, its sadness is so much richer than the sadness you find down here.

If I hadn't died, my happiness might have made a lot of other people happy too; and even in my sadness, I would have left something important behind, something that can't survive down here.

I'm talking about truth itself, the truth that no one talks about: the horror of war, war boiled down to its horrifying essence. Since I didn't get to tell people how horrible war is, people will be happy with the destructive things our armies have done. Or they'll be unhappy, and they'll get so angry that they'll keep fighting and killing each other.

They will be as fast as tigers. No one will speak out or disagree with their governments, even though those governments are moving society away from progress rather than towards it. I was full of courage and mystery.

I was full of wisdom and expertise. I won't have to watch the world as it moves backwards, marching into cities that, foolishly, don't have fortifications. If the wheels of their armored vehicles were to get clogged with blood, I would go wash them with water from pure wells.

I would wash them with truths too profoundly true to be corrupted. I would do everything I possibly could to help—except for fighting, except for taking part in more horrible war.

In war, even those who aren't physically hurt suffer from mental trauma.

“I am the enemy soldier you killed, my friend. I recognized you in the dark: you frowned when you saw me in just the same way as you frowned yesterday, when you killed with me with your bayonet. I tried to fend you off, but my hands were slow and clumsy. Let's rest now...”

UNIT –III (PROSE)

HERO AS A MAN OF LETTERS

-Thomas Carlyle

AUTHOR INTRODUCTION :

Thomas Carlyle, (born December 4, 1795, Ecclefechan, [Dumfriesshire](#), Scotland—died February 5, 1881, [London](#), England), Scottish historian and essayist, whose major works include *The French Revolution*, 3 vol. (1837), *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1841), and *The History of Friedrich II of Prussia, Called Frederick the Great*, 6 vol. (1858–65).

Carlyle was the second son of **James Carlyle**, the eldest child of his second marriage. James Carlyle was a mason by trade and, later, a small farmer, a man of profound [Calvinist convictions](#) whose character and way of life had a profound and lasting influence on his son. Carlyle was equally devoted to his mother as well as to his eight brothers and sisters, and his strong affection for his family never diminished.

On October 17, 1826, Carlyle married Jane Welsh, an intelligent, attractive, and somewhat temperamental daughter of a well-to-do doctor in Haddington. Welsh had been one of Irving's pupils, and she and Carlyle had known one another for five years. The hesitations and financial worries that beset them are recorded in their letters. It is interesting that Carlyle, usually so imperious, often adopted a weak, pleading tone to his future wife during the time of courtship, though this did not prevent him from being a masterful, difficult, and irritable husband, and, in spite of their strong mutual affection, their marriage was full of quarrels and misunderstandings. Those who knew him best believed Carlyle to be impotent.

True to his idea of history as a "**Divine Scripture**," Carlyle saw the French Revolution as an inevitable judgment upon the folly and selfishness of the monarchy and nobility. This simple idea was backed with an immense mass of well-documented detail and, at times, a memorable skill in **sketching character**.

The Early Kings of Norway: Also an Essay on the Portraits of John Knox came out in **1875**, and *Reminiscences* was published in 1881. Later he edited his wife's letters, which appeared in 1883 under the title *Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle, Prepared for Publication by Thomas Carlyle*. Although [Westminster Abbey](#) was offered for his burial, he was buried, according to his wish, beside his parents at Ecclefechan.

Jane Carlyle **died** suddenly in [London](#). She was buried in Haddington, and an epitaph by her husband was placed in the church.

SUMMARY:

In Thomas Carlyle's "**The Hero as Man of Letters**," he eulogizes the writer, specifically Johnson, Rousseau, and Burns, to a nearly divine status. Originally given as a lecture, "The Hero as Man of Letters" clearly follows the **four-part pattern** of sagewriting.

Carlyle recognizes the phenomenon of mass printing, and interprets it as instigating the apotheosis of the written word in society, declaring that "books are our Church . . . literature is our parliament." Carlyle portrays writers as underappreciated harbingers of the word of God and books as unadulterated streams of human nature and thought. In a continuing criticism for the mechanical world of the **utilitarians**, Carlyle recognizes the departure from the way of God and Nature and laments that there is no place for the greater truth literature has to offer. Carlyle's prediction of disaster, "When millions of men can no longer by their utmost exertion gain food for themselves," is succeeded by his prophesy of a return to the heroic world, "a believing world; with many Heroes in it . . . a victorious world." After a round of societal prognosis, Carlyle returns to his first subject, the Man of Letters and grieves over their unappreciated brilliance.

Now it was under such conditions, in those times of Johnson, that our Men of Letter had to live. Times in which there was properly no truth in life. Old truths had fallen nigh dumb; the new lay yet hidden, not trying to speak. That Man's Life here below was a Sincerity and Fact, and would forever continue such, no new intimation, in that dusk of the world, had yet dawned . . . How different was the Luther's pilgrimage, with its assured goal, from the Johnson's, girt with mere traditions, suppositions, grown now incredible, unintelligible! Mahoment's Formulas were of wood waxed and oiled, and could be burnt out of one's way: poor Johnson's were far more difficult to burn . . . We need not wonder that none of those Three men rose to victory. That they fought truly is the highest praise. With a mournful sympathy we will contemplate, if not three living victorious Heroes, as I said, the Tombs of three fallen Heroes!

Questions

1. What is the effect of returning at such a time in the writing to the original subject of the piece?
2. What is the effect of comparing these three men to Luther and Mahoment, men of religious significance?
3. Why does he particularly choose these three men, Carlyle, Burns, and Rousseau as examples of his Man of Letters?

OF QUEENS GARDEN

-John Ruskin

AUTHOR INTRO :

John Ruskin, (born **February 8, 1819**, [London](#), England—died January 20, 1900, Coniston, Lancashire), English [critic](#) of art, architecture, and society who was a gifted painter, a distinctive [prose](#) stylist, and an important example of the Victorian Sage, or Prophet: a writer of polemical prose who seeks to cause widespread cultural and [social change](#).

Ruskin was born into the commercial classes of the prosperous and powerful Britain of the years immediately following the [Napoleonic Wars](#). His father, **John James Ruskin**, was a Scots wine merchant who had moved to London and made a fortune in the sherry trade. John Ruskin, an only child, was largely educated at home, where he was given a taste for art by his father's collecting of contemporary watercolours and a minute and [comprehensive](#) knowledge of the [Bible](#) by his piously Protestant mother.

Ruskin discovered the work of Turner through the illustrations to an edition of [Samuel Rogers's](#) poem *Italy* given him by a business partner of his father in 1833. By the mid-1830s he was publishing short pieces in both prose and verse in magazines, and in 1836 he was provoked into drafting a reply (unpublished) to an attack on Turner's painting by the art critic of *Blackwood's Magazine*. After five years at the [University of Oxford](#), during which he won the [Newdigate Prize](#) for poetry but was prevented by ill health from sitting for an honours degree, Ruskin returned, in 1842, to his abandoned project of defending and explaining the late work of Turner.

His father's death in **1864** had left Ruskin a wealthy man. He used his wealth, in part, to promote idealistic social causes, notably the Guild of [St. George](#), a pastoral [community](#) first planned in 1871 and formally [constituted](#) seven years later. From 1866 to 1875 he was unhappily in love with a woman 30 years his junior, Rose La Touche, whose physical and mental deterioration caused him [acute](#) distress. During these years he began, himself, to show signs of serious psychological illness. In 1871 he bought Brantwood, a house in the English [Lake District](#) (now a museum of his work) and lived there for the rest of his life.

SUMMARY:

According to **John Ruskin (1819 - 1900)**, the place of women in society is much more dignified than even that of men. Ruskin hates the idea of treating women as mere shadow and attendant image of their lord.i.e. men. Really there is no difference between man and women. According to him, a woman is a dignified creature.

He corroborates his opinion with the testimony of the great authors regarding the true dignity of women. In his lecture **Of Queens' Gardens** he first takes **Shakespeare**, "Shakespeare has no heroes; he has only heroine". Ruskin says, there is no one entirely heroic figure in all his plays, except the slight sketch of Henry the 5th.

In his laboured and perfect plays, there is virtually no hero. All the heroes of these plays are glomourless before the shining characters of the heroines. But Othello is the only example approximation to the heroic type. On the other hand, there is hardly a play that has not a perfect woman in it. Farther Ruskin argues that the catastrophe of every play is caused always by the folly or fault of a man.

The redemption, if there be any, is by the wisdom and virtue of a woman, and failing that, there is none. In **Shakespeare's play** women like Desdemona, Isabella, Hermione, queen Catharine, Sylvia, Viola, **Rosalind** , Helena and last, perhaps the loveliest, Virgilia are faultless, effortless and conceived in the highest heroic type of humanity.

However, it may be noticed that in **Shakespeare's plays** there is only one weak woman: Ophelia; and it is because she fails hamlet to study at a critical moment. Finally though there are three wicked women among the principal figures: Lady Macbeth, Regan and Goneril. They are felt at once to be frightful exceptions to the ordinary laws of life; fatal in their influence also, in proportion to the power for good which they have abandoned.

Hence, Ruskin testifies the superiority of women over men. So far their virtues are concerned, represents them as infallibly faithful and wise counselor, incorruptibly just and pure examples. Ruskin also draws from other poets to justify his views. **Chaucer** has depicted the marvelous character of a good woman in the poem, **The Legend of Good Woman**. Similarly, **Spenser** draws the character of his women figures in noble and dignified terms. Even in ancient literature, the best virtues are seen to have personified as women. In Egypt, people gave to wisdom the form of a woman.

NOTES ON THE ENGLISH CHARACTER

-E.M.FORSTER

AUTHOR INTRO :

E.M. Forster, in full **Edward Morgan Forster**, (born January 1, 1879, [London](#), England—died June 7, 1970, [Coventry](#), Warwickshire), British novelist, essayist, and social and literary critic. His fame rests largely on his novels *Howards End* (1910) and *A Passage to India* (1924) and on a large body of criticism.

Forster's father, an architect, died when the son was a baby, and he was brought up by his mother and paternal aunts. The difference between the two families, his father's being strongly evangelical with a high sense of **moral responsibility**, his mother's more feckless and generous-minded, gave him an enduring insight into the nature of domestic tensions, while his education as a dayboy (day student) at Tonbridge School, Kent, was responsible for many of his later criticisms of the English public school (private) system.

At King's College, Cambridge, he enjoyed a sense of liberation. For the first time he was free to follow his own **intellectual** inclinations; and he gained a sense of the uniqueness of the individual, of the healthiness of moderate skepticism, and of the importance of Mediterranean civilization as a counterbalance to the more straitlaced attitudes of northern European countries.

The same theme runs through [Howards End](#), a more ambitious novel that brought Forster his first major success. The novel is conceived in terms of an alliance between the Schlegel sisters, Margaret and Helen, who embody the liberal imagination at its best, and Ruth Wilcox, the owner of the house Howards End, which has remained close to the earth for generations; spiritually they recognize a kinship against the values of Henry Wilcox and his children, who conceive life mainly in terms of commerce. In a symbolic ending, Margaret Schlegel marries Henry Wilcox and brings him back, a broken man, to Howards End, reestablishing there a link (however heavily threatened by the forces of progress around it) between the imagination and the earth.

The resolution is a precarious one, and [World War I](#) was to undermine it still further. Forster spent three wartime years in [Alexandria](#), doing civilian war work, and visited India twice, in 1912–13 and 1921. When he returned to former themes in his postwar novel [A Passage to India](#), they presented themselves in a negative form: against the vaster scale of India, in which the earth itself seems alien, a resolution between it and the imagination could appear as almost impossible to achieve. Only [Adela Quested](#), the young girl who is most open to experience, can glimpse their possible concord, and then only momentarily, in the courtroom during the trial at which she is the central witness. Much of the novel is devoted to less spectacular values: those of seriousness and truthfulness (represented here by the administrator Fielding) and of an outgoing and benevolent sensibility (embodied in the English visitor Mrs. Moore). Neither Fielding nor Mrs. Moore is totally successful; neither totally fails. The novel ends in an uneasy equilibrium.

SUMMARY:

Notes on the English Character is a **speech essay** written by E.M. Forster. We can find five general notes made by Foster on the English Character which is followed by the conclusion in the last two paragraphs.

First note:

The character of the English class is essentially middle class owing to commercial and political reasons. The Industrial Revolution and Reform Bill of 1832 have been the key driving forces behind this respectively. The middle classes have been in power for one hundred and fifty years.

Therefore the characteristics of the middle class such as solidity, integrity, efficiency hypocrisy, and lack of imagination, represent the national characteristics as well.

John Bull with his top hat, comfortable clothes and substantial stomach as well as substantial bank balance is the national figure of England. Even though **St. George** is the Patron Saint of England, it is John Bull representing the middle classes who runs the country in every sense of the word. (It is not religion but everyday labor which create a living.)

Just as every nation is symbolized by one class or the other, England has been represented by the middle class while for instance, Russia has been symbolized by the peasant or the factory worker and Japan by the samurai.

Second note:

The author points out that the heart of the middle classes is **the public school system**, and the public school system has a great influence on the young people either when they are in school or out of school. Thus those from the public schools form well-developed bodies, fairly developed mind, and undeveloped hearts.

Explanation:

The heart of the middle classes lie in the public school system and it is local. It flourishes only where the Anglo-Saxon middle classes are as they created it even though this system has inspired other institutions in other parts of the world, for instance, their model was adopted in Aligarh and also in some schools in the United States.

The characteristics of English public school system are boarding houses, compulsory games, and a system of prefects and fagging which cannot be found elsewhere in the British Isles. It insists on good conduct and form as well as a spirit of mutual loyalty and pride for their schools (esprit de corps). This system thereby moulds them for their future in whichever career they embark on, for instance, army or business right after leaving the school or barrister, doctor, civil servant, schoolmaster or journalist after their university education.

Their love for the public schools goes as far as that they believe that their school is the miniature version of the world and that they should love their schools like they love their country.

They join groups such as **Old Boys' Society** just to prolong their time with the golden days of their lives. An instance of their worship for their schools is found in the quote "**The Battle of Waterloo** was won on the playing fields of Eton." This remark is attributed to the Duke of Wellington, an Anglo-Irish man who was the Commander in the Battle of Waterloo. He won the legendary battle with Napoleon. The English because of their love for Eton College has made such a comment on his behalf. They even feel that the Duke should have made such a remark as he was educated in Eton College.

The author points out that their public schooling system make them blind to the fact that the world is composed of other culture and dimensions. He says that the Englishmen go into the world with well-developed bodies, fairly-developed minds and undeveloped hearts.

Third note:

In the third note E. M. Forster elaborates on the **undeveloped heart** of the Englishmen. He stresses the fact that their hearts are not cold but undeveloped due to the influence of the public school. Public school has taught them that feeling is bad form and that they must bottle up their emotions unless the occasion demands for it.

Forster illustrates the difficulty of the Englishmen to express their emotions using an anecdote in which Forster and an Indian friend have gone for a week's holiday. After a week of enjoyment, when the time for parting came they reacted in different ways. The friend was filled with despair while our author being an Englishman did not find the temporary parting to be an instance to be emotional. Since they could meet again in a month or two and write a letter in between, he asked his friend to 'buck up'. But his friend refused to do so.

However, in the next month they met again and the author scolded his friend for displaying so much of emotion in an insignificant circumstance. When he called it as "inappropriate", the Indian friend was furious and he retorted by saying that one cannot measure ones emotions like potatoes. Forster hated the simile of potatoes. He replied by saying that emotions should be expressed according to the situation and that it should be appropriate. It is better to measuring them like potatoes instead of splashing them like water from a pail. The friend instigated by the simile of the pail decided to part forever. He added by saying that "emotion has nothing to do with appropriateness. It only matters that it shall be sincere."

The author was impressed by these words but he could not agree with it for he felt that one would end up "bankrupt" if one pours out emotions even in the smallest of occasions. He was reserving the emotions for greater crises of life. He then draws out a difference between the Oriental and the Occidental (East vs. West).

The Oriental has a legacy of kingly munificence but the Englishmen under the tradition of middleclass prudence feels that his resources are limited. The author

says that the approach of the Orientals regarding material resources is unwise as money and other materials are not endless. Once spent they cannot be replenished. But emotions or “the resources of the spirit” on the other hand are endless. He agrees reluctantly with his Indian friend in this matter. He also quotes Shelley, a Romantic poet in this regard:

**“True love in this differs from gold and clay,
That to divide is not to take away.”**

Love like other emotions (“wealth of the spirit”) can multiply itself unlike material resources such as gold and clay which when divided diminishes in course of time. He concludes the third note by saying that Shelley has spoken like a true Englishman.

Fourth note:

The author makes a note on the **slowness** of the English character. Forster claims that the slowness of the English character is the real reason for the coldness and unemotionality of the English character. He narrates another anecdote to illustrate the fourth note.

When a coach carrying some Englishmen and Frenchmen was driving over the Alps, the horses ran away, the coach tottered and nearly fell off the bridge to the ravine below. The Frenchmen were frantic and they screamed and gesticulated and flung themselves about. But the Englishmen were calm. After an hour when the coach was drawn to an inn to change horses the Frenchmen had forgotten all about the danger while the Englishmen had a nervous breakdown and had to go to bed.

Here Forster says that the Englishmen were practical even though they were slow in their response. It was their instinct which had stopped them from throwing themselves about in the coach as otherwise the coach would have tipped over. So the Englishmen were postponing their feeling for later in the face of the disaster. The author appreciates this aspect of the English character by saying that they are brave in the face of emergencies because the English nervous system acts promptly and feels slowly, i.e., only when the action is over can they feel.

He further moves on to consider the **great literature especially great poetry** created by the Englishmen to prove that the Englishmen have an undeveloped heart not a cold one. He asks a pertinent question as to how the English character could produce such great poems with a cold heart. He states that if the nation could produce such exemplary works such as that of the Elizabethan Drama (*works of Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, etc.*) and Lake Poets (*Romantic Poets from the Lake District*) which speaks the language of the heart then the English cannot be cold and unpoetical.

He compares poems to fire and states that fire cannot come out of ice, i.e., a cold heart cannot produce such great poetry. He says that there are hidden springs of fire in the English nature and that it is a national character.

He goes on to claim that the air of simplicity exhibited by the English character is misleading. Forster draws a comparison between the East and the West and states that the West is also **mysterious** like the East.

He uses the **metaphor of sea** to convey the depths of English character. The sea which looks of one colour from a distance, when looked at a closer distance from a boat will reveal a dozen colours and fish swimming in its depths. The sea represents the English character, calm and not easy to understand at first sight. The depths and colours of the sea represent the English romanticism and their sensitiveness.

The fish represents the English emotions which does not know how to come to the surface of the sea. When they do succeed, the onlookers exclaim in disbelief that the English do have emotions. Forster then compares English literature with the flying fish which occasionally rises out of the water into the air and the sunlight. The comparison of **flying fish** with the English emotion reinforces the notion that there is life, beauty and emotion beneath the surface of the inhospitable sea.

Forster next moves onto the attitude of Englishmen towards **criticism** to further his claim on the undeveloped heart of Englishmen. They are not annoyed by criticism. They reject it with a smile and blame it on the jealousy of the other person. They compare the situation to the witty works of Bernard Shaw and refers to criticism as monkey tricks. This attitude blinds them to the constructive aspect of criticism. His self-satisfaction is so deep that he does not see criticism as a step of improvement. Forster again draws a comparison of the English with the Oriental and the Europeans. He states that they resent criticism as it hurts them which is proved by their snappy answers which actually masks their determination to improve themselves.

Forster draws in the example of the British magazine, **Punch** which catered to the everyday and mundane information of the English life. There is no wit, laughter or satire in the magazine but such events which resemble the life a typical Englishman. He sniggers at how a man falls off his horse or on how a colonel misses a golf ball while reading Punch. If in those pages he finds a drawing by Max Beerbohm (*a caricaturist who was a contemporary of Forster, he was well known for his witty depiction of the English character*), he was thrown off guard and his smug smile would disappear. In such instances he would reject the fellow as an eccentric or a crank.

This insensitive attitude of the Englishmen makes Forster reflect at whether the Englishmen are completely indifferent to the things of the spirit. His attitude towards **religion** is practical. He uses religion as a means to achieve right conduct: to make him a better man in daily life, to be kind and merciful, and to fight off the evil and to protect the good.

For the Englishmen religion is just an ethical code. They do not realize that through religion they can enter into a direct connection with the divine. Forster says that this might be the reason why there are few prophets in England such as found in Judaism or Islam. He states that in other countries this is not the case. There is the example of Joan of Arc in France, a mere peasant girl who chosen and directed by God, was able to win The Hundred Years' War with England but was later burnt alive on charges of witchcraft. Then he states the example of Savonarola, an Italian friar

and preacher who was also hanged and burnt as he stood against papacy on grounds of clerical corruption and exploitation of the poor.

When in Germany Martin Luther, a monk and priest effected Reformation by rejecting some of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, the same happened in England due to palace intrigue. Forster states that it is a relief that religion helps the English to live a decent life with a steady life of piety and that the Englishmen are not entirely unspiritual.

He again draws a comparison between the East and the West. He rejects the accusation that the West is materialistic. He says that the West is also spiritual even though it never expresses their belief in fasting and visions, not through prophetic rapture but in their common and daily lives. This might make the Englishmen incomplete, but not cold and unspiritual.

Fifth note:

Then he launches the reader into the fifth note. He tries to rid the English of the accusation of hypocrisy. Forster says that all nations are accused of one low quality or the other. For instance, the Germans are called brutal, the Spanish cruel, the Americans superficial while the prime charge made against the Englishmen is hypocrisy (perfidy Albion). They have built up an "Empire with a Bible in one hand, a pistol in the other and financial concessions in both pockets." Foster moves on to analyse whether the charge of hypocrisy is true. Is it conscious deceit or unconscious deceit? Or is it **muddle-headedness**? He states that the Englishmen have little of the Renaissance Villain about them. They take a wrong action because of their muddle-headedness which cannot be rectified even by a public school education. He cites an example from the novel "Sense and Sensibility" by Jane Austen. He states that Jane Austen has a marvellous insight into the English mind and that her characters never commit any scarlet sins.

He uses the example of the character of old Mr. Dashwood in the novel. On his death bed he asks his son John, from the first marriage to support his wife and three daughters from the second marriage. Even though John agrees moved by his father's last wish, he ends up providing nothing to the second wife or the daughters.

At first John mentally decides to give each of his sisters a thousand pounds. But when he reveals this to his wife, she opposes the idea as such a large sum will deprive their own little boy. Therefore John decides to give five hundred pounds each to his sisters. Even that seems to be a large sum to him. He eventually decides to present them either a sum of fifty pounds or fish occasionally. In the end he does not help them in anyway. Forster here launches a question as to whether the John Dashwoods are hypocrites.

Forster points out that John was not able to understand the evil forces he was succumbing to. His wife who has the worst character was also self-deceived. She was thinking of her own child when she heard of old Mr. Dashwood's dying wish. Forster blames her way of thinking on muddle-headedness, which he states as the typical character of the men and women in England. Forster then moves on to find a similarity between national faults and national diseases.

He states that cancer and consumption should be the national diseases of England as they are slow and insidious (*harmful*), pretending to be something else. On the other hand the diseases proper to the South are cholera and plague as they kill a man quickly. Here Mr and Mrs Dashwood are moral consumptives who gradually collapses without realizing that they are sinning. Therefore they are not dramatic and violent and they cannot be called villains.

Forster further investigates on the other charges such as treachery, cruelty and fanaticism laid against the English as a nation. He rejects the accusation saying that all those charges are conscious sins, sins committed knowingly and deliberately like Tartuffe and Iago. Iago, a character in Shakespeare's "Othello" effects the downfall of Othello through deliberate scheming, a General. He was Othello's trusted, but jealous and traitorous ensign. Tartuffe in "Tartuffe, or The Impostor, or The Hypocrite" written by Molière is a religious hypocrite who worships the Devil as he prefers evil to good.

But the average English are not villains like them. Forster states that their character which does not let them rise to certain heights will also not let them sink to such depths. The Englishmen are neither saints nor villains. They neither produce mystics or prophets nor do they produce anarchists or fanatics. He says that we can find cruel and treacherous people in England in the police courts and such examples of public infamy as found in the Amritsar Massacre. But the soul of England lies with the common Englishmen who are not villains and their soul cannot be found in the police courts or the military mind. Even then it is always the treacherous and cruel character that is highlighted by the critics when it comes to England. Forster believes that the critics are annoyed with certain genuine defects and they blame them on cruelty. This misplaced accusation makes the world believe in a falsehood.

He concludes by saying that the English character is incomplete like any other nation. But the defects in the English character annoys the foreign observer. They are self-complacent, unsympathetic and reserved on the surface. They never use their emotions. When it comes to their brain power which is there in plenty they use it to "confirm prejudices than to dispel them." All these account to their unpopularity. Forster confirms that there is "little vice" in the English and no real coldness.

He blames everything on the machinery. He hopes for a change in the national character in the next twenty years, into something which is less unique and more loveable. The middle class supremacy will end probably. He keeps faith in the working class and hopes that they will not be educated in the public schools.

It is secondary that these notes blame or praise the English character. Forster says that he is just a student trying to find the truth and that he expects the assistance of the others in this regard. He states that the diplomacy cannot re-call the cats which are already out of their bags. He has no faith in the governments but he keeps immense faith in the truth. He calls for the understanding of other nations without the intervention of the governments. He believes in the power of communication which will eradicate all the misconceptions.

UNIT-IV (DRAMA)

MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL

-T.S.ELIOT

AUTHOR INTRO :

T.S. Eliot, in full **Thomas Stearns Eliot**, (born September 26, 1888, St. Louis, [Missouri](#), U.S.—died January 4, 1965, [London](#), England), American-English poet, playwright, literary critic, and editor, a leader of the [Modernist](#) movement in [poetry](#) in such works as [The Waste Land](#) (1922) and [Four Quartets](#) (1943). Eliot exercised a strong influence on Anglo-American [culture](#) from the 1920s until late in the century. His experiments in [diction](#), style, and versification revitalized English poetry, and in a series of critical essays he shattered old orthodoxies and erected new ones. The publication of *Four Quartets* led to his recognition as the greatest living English poet and man of letters, and in 1948 he was awarded both the [Order of Merit](#) and the [Nobel Prize](#) for Literature.

Eliot was descended from a distinguished [New England](#) family that had relocated to St. Louis, Missouri. His family allowed him the widest education available in his time, with no influence from his father to be “practical” and to go into business. From Smith Academy in St. Louis he went to Milton, in Massachusetts; from Milton he entered Harvard in 1906; he received a B.A. in 1909, after three instead of the usual four years. The men who influenced him at Harvard were [George Santayana](#), the philosopher and poet, and the critic [Irving Babbitt](#). From Babbitt he derived an anti-Romantic attitude that, amplified by his later reading of British philosophers [F.H. Bradley](#) and [T.E. Hulme](#), lasted through his life. In the academic year 1909–10 he was an assistant in philosophy at Harvard

He spent the year 1910–11 in France, attending [Henri Bergson](#)'s lectures in philosophy at the Sorbonne and reading poetry with [Alain-Fournier](#). Eliot's study of the poetry of [Dante](#), of the English writers [John Webster](#) and [John Donne](#), and of the French Symbolist [Jules Laforgue](#) helped him to find his own style. From 1911 to 1914 he was back at Harvard, reading [Indian philosophy](#) and studying Sanskrit. In 1913 he read Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*; by 1916 he had finished, in Europe, a dissertation entitled “Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F.H. Bradley.” But [World War I](#) had intervened, and he never returned to Harvard to take the final oral examination for the Ph.D. degree. In 1914 Eliot met and began a close association with the American poet [Ezra Pound](#)

Eliot rigorously kept his private life in the background. In 1915 he married Vivien Haigh-Wood. After 1933 she was mentally ill, and they lived apart; she died in 1947. In January 1957 he married [Valerie Fletcher](#), with whom he lived happily until his death and who became his literary executor. She was responsible for releasing a range of editions of Eliot's work and letters, and she also approved [Andrew Lloyd Webber](#)'s [adaptation](#) of Eliot's [light verse](#) from *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (1939) into the musical *Cats* (1981).

SUMMARY:

Murder in the Cathedral is a fictionalized verse drama of the **martyrdom** of **St. Thomas Becket** written by TS Eliot and first performed in **1935**. Written and performed at a time when **fascism was on the rise in continental Europe**, the play considers the agency of the individual in resisting temporal authoritarianism.

In life, Thomas Becket was a close **personal friend and chancellor of Henry II**, though he had decided to devote his life to the (Catholic) Church from a relatively young age. During this time Becket enjoyed the earthly pleasure of wealth and influence in the state and even led contingents of knights too fight alongside the king. It was ultimately Henry who suggested that the vacant Archbishopric of Canterbury Cathedral (the highest Church office in England) go to Becket, even though he initially refused.

Becket was conscious that were he to become Archbishop the two would likely no-longer be friends, and Henry may even come to hate Becket because the king had been infringing on the rights of the Church, which Becket would not allow. Eventually, despite his protestations Becket was elected to the seat, and as predicted his relationship with the king became strained. After his appointment Becket lived piously, his influence and friends at court ceased to be of importance to him, and he and the king often clashed over the relative powers of the Church and the State.

After several other conflicts between the two, the final straw occurred in 1170 wherein Becket excommunicated the Archbishop of York and two other bishops for presiding over the coronation of Henry II's son, which was the traditional right of Canterbury. Angered by this latest assertion of power Henry condemned Becket. Regardless of the king's intent, it appeared to those in attendance to be an order for Becket's death.

Becket had been seeking refuge in France and the counsel of the Pope, but decided to return to England even though it appears from historical accounts that he was both aware of the danger and had predicted his own imminent death. After his return to England, four knights rode to Canterbury Cathedral, hid their weapons outside and demanded that Becket leave with them by order of the king.

When he refused, the knights gathered their weapons and returned to the cathedral. They killed **Thomas Becket and cut off his head on December 29, 1170**. A monk, **Edward Grim** was in attendance and sustained an injury to his arm attempting to defend Becket. His account of the murder heavily informs Eliot's version. Becket was canonized just three years after his death and is revered as saint in both the Catholic and Anglican faiths.

The play is in **two parts, separated by a short interlude**. Following in the traditions of Greek drama, the play begins with the entrance of the chorus, which serves as a narrator of sorts and also passes judgements on the action of the play. Half the chorus is comprised of women, gone to the cathedral for shelter from the growing danger and

oppression of the state. The other half of the chorus is made up of priests, who also **foreshadow** the coming struggle.

Although Becket is a good leader, they wish him to remain in France and in safety. However, Becket returns to the Cathedral and bids the women stay and bear witness to the coming events.

Four tempters arrive, each offering Becket a way to save his own life, or glorify his memory at the expense of his true beliefs.

The first tempter reminds Becket of the friends that he once had at court, and suggests that if Becket were to be less severe and relax his principles, he might escape his fate; **Becket refuses**.

The second tempter reminds Becket of the power **he wielded as chancellor** to the king, and that he could wield such power again and no one would oppose him. He says that holiness is only useful for the dead and power is necessary for the living; **Becket refuses** him as well.

The third tempter recommends Becket overthrow the crown, giving the church supremacy over England, and again **Becket refuses**.

The fourth tempter is the most difficult for Becket to resist, because he suggests that Becket continue on his path, and seek the **reverence and glory of martyrdom**. **Becket realizes** that allowing himself to be killed for personal glory would be a sin against his faith, and sends the man away.

The scene alludes to **the three temptations Christ**, and also **foreshadows the four knights** who arrive to kill Becket on the King's behalf.

In the interlude Becket gives a **sermon on Christmas day**, ruminating on the inherent conflict of a day devoted both to celebration and lamentation, a conflict that is also applied to martyrs. Becket is aware of **his imminent death**. The second half of the play is concerned with the murder of Thomas Becket by the four knights who arrive to charge him. They defend their actions, stating that they will not benefit from carrying out the orders of the King, and will instead be exiled.

The King himself will mourn the loss, because (as they tell it) he had raised Becket to the Archbishopric in the hopes of united the powers of church and state, and it was Becket who sought supremacy and a martyr's death for himself. They conclude that his death must be viewed as a suicide and leave, while the chorus mourn.

THE APPLE CART

-G.B.SHAW

AUTHOR INTRO:

George Bernard Shaw was the third and youngest child (and only son) of **George Carr Shaw** and Lucinda Elizabeth Gurly Shaw. Technically, he belonged to the Protestant “**ascendancy**”—the landed Irish gentry—but his impractical father was first a sinecured civil servant and then an unsuccessful grain merchant, and George Bernard grew up in an atmosphere of genteel poverty, which to him was more humiliating than being merely poor. At first Shaw was tutored by a clerical uncle, and he basically rejected the schools he then attended; by age 16 he was working in a land agent’s office. His fiction failed utterly. The semiautobiographical and aptly titled *Immaturity* (1879; published 1930) repelled every publisher in London.

His next four novels were similarly refused, as were most of the articles he submitted to the press for a decade. Shaw’s initial literary work earned him less than 10 shillings a year. A fragment posthumously published as *An Unfinished Novel* in 1958 (but written 1887–88) was his final false start in fiction.

Theatre Guild, a theatrical society founded in [New York City](#) in 1918 for the production of high-quality, noncommercial American and foreign plays. The guild, founded by Lawrence Langner (1890–1962), departed from the usual [theatre](#) practice in that its board of directors shared the responsibility for choice of plays, management, and production. The first two seasons, which included plays by Jacinto Benavente, St. John Ervine, [John Masefield](#), and [August Strindberg](#), demonstrated the artistic soundness of the plan.

Following the world premiere of [George Bernard Shaw’s](#) *Heartbreak House* in 1920, the guild became Shaw’s American agent, producing 15 of his plays, including world premieres of *Back to Methuselah* and *Saint Joan*. [Eugene O’Neill’s](#) long association with the guild began with its production of *Marco Millions* in 1928. Other American authors whose works were produced by the guild included [Sidney Howard](#), [William Saroyan](#), [Maxwell Anderson](#), and Robert Sherwood—all [Pulitzer Prize](#) winners.

Many distinguished actors appeared in Theatre Guild productions, including [Helen Hayes](#) in *Caesar and Cleopatra* and [Alla Nazimova](#) in *Mourning Becomes Electra*. Lynn Fontanne and Alfred Lunt first acted as a team there in [Ferenc Molnár’s](#) *Guardsman* and went on to act together in many other notable guild productions, such as *Arms and the Man* and *The Taming of the Shrew*.

George Bernard Shaw, (born July 26, 1856, [Dublin](#), Ireland—died November 2, 1950, Ayot St. Lawrence, [Hertfordshire](#), England), [Irish](#) comic dramatist, literary critic, and socialist propagandist, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1925.

SUMMARY:

The Apple Cart, which was completed in December 1928, is a wry political satire by George Bernard Shaw. Its plot concerns a monarch who is assaulted by his elected cabinet. They feel that the king is too meddlesome and threaten to resign if he does not sign an ultimatum, which in effect would strip him of his authority and turn him into a powerless figurehead.

Either way, the king would be doomed, without a cabinet or without power; his dilemma is the play's catalyst. What follows is political debate, as many sides and problems are discussed and revealed. Added to the commentary on politics is a brief interlude on marriage and adultery, as well as a scene with an American ambassador mocking full democracy and capitalism. Coupled with Shaw's astute insight and sparkling wit, the play succeeds brilliantly in exposing 'the unreality of both democracy and royalty as our idealists conceive them.' His adept portrayal of Breakages, Limited, offers foresight and perspective into the 'destruction, waste, and disease' brought by private capitalism that are all too topical today.

As A.C. Ward points out the title 'Apple Cart' is taken from an old English proverb according to which a person is said to "upset the apple cart" when he spoils or frustrates someone else's carefully arranged plans." It also refers to an attempt at the overthrowing of the existing and well-established order, customs and traditions. The play suggests both these possibilities which are worked out through a comediatic paradox which runs through the play and is resolved at the end. Shaw has added lengthy Prefaces to his plays and most of them are masterly expositions of his views. They are intimately connected with the central theme of the play. The "Preface" to the Apple Cart is no exception in this respect. It gives us his views on democracy, constitutional monarchy and absolute monarchy, on socialism and capitalism and their role in a democracy. As Sen Gupta remarks "In the play 'The Apple Cart' Shaw discusses a political problem and shows that it has a social solution." He has frankly criticised the present working of democracy, exposed its weaknesses, but he has also shown how a clever and strong man, even though he may be a king, can win the elections, and make a successful, democratically elected Prime Minister.

The "Preface" is a clever piece of self-justification and an effective reply to the critics who had made out that Shaw had ceased to be a democrat and had turned a royalist. In Dresden the performance of the play was actually prohibited as a blasphemy against Democracy. The "Preface" was written as a reply to such scandalous criticism. Shaw has exposed both the weaknesses of democracy, as well as justified it by showing its inherent strength and the way in which it can be effective and successful. Shaw has exposed, "the unreality of both democracy and royalty as our idealists conceive them. Our liberal democrats believe in a figment called a constitutional monarch, a sort of Punch puppet who cannot move until his Prime Minister's fingers are in his sleeves. They believe in another figment called a responsible minister, who moves only when similarly actuated by the million fingers of the electorate. But the most superficial inspection of any two such figures

shows that they are not puppets but living men, and that the supposed control of one by the other and of both by the electorate amounts to no more than a not very deterrent fe& of uncertain and under ordinary circumstances quite remote consequences."

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

-HAROLD PINTER

AUTHOR INTRO:

Harold Pinter, (born Oct. 10, 1930, [London](#), Eng.—died Dec. 24, 2008, London), English playwright, who achieved international renown as one of the most complex and challenging post-World War II dramatists. His plays are noted for their use of understatement, small talk, reticence—and even silence—to convey the substance of a character's thought, which often lies several layers beneath, and contradicts, his speech. In 2005 he won the Nobel Prize for Literature.

The son of a Jewish tailor, Pinter grew up in London's [East End](#) in a working-class area. He studied acting at the [Royal Academy of Dramatic Art](#) in 1948 but left after two terms to join a repertory company as a professional actor. Pinter toured [Ireland](#) and [England](#) with various acting companies, appearing under the name David Baron in provincial repertory theatres until 1959. After 1956 he began to write for the stage. *The Room* (first produced 1957) and *The Dumb Waiter* (first produced 1959), his first two plays, are one-act dramas that established the mood of comic menace that was to figure largely in his later works. His first full-length [play](#), *The Birthday Party* (first produced 1958; filmed 1968), puzzled the London audiences and lasted only a week, but later it was televised and revived successfully on the stage.

After Pinter's [radio](#) play *A Slight Ache* (first produced 1959) was adapted for the stage (1961), his reputation was secured by his second full-length play, *The Caretaker* (first produced 1960; filmed 1963), which established him as more than just another practitioner of the then-popular [Theatre of the Absurd](#).

His next major play, *The Homecoming* (first produced 1965), helped establish him as the originator of a unique dramatic [idiom](#). Such plays as *Landscape* (first produced 1969), *Silence* (first produced 1969), *Night* (first produced 1969), and *Old Times* (first produced 1971) virtually did away with [physical activity](#) on the stage. Pinter's later successes included *No Man's Land* (first produced 1975), *Betrayal* (first produced 1978), *Moonlight* (first produced 1993), and *Celebration* (first produced 2000). From the 1970s on, Pinter did much directing of both his own and others' works.

[Dialogue](#) is of central importance in Pinter's plays and is perhaps the key to his originality. His characters' [colloquial](#) ("Pinteresque") speech consists of disjointed and oddly ambivalent conversation that is punctuated by resonant silences. The characters' speech, hesitations, and pauses reveal not only their own alienation and the difficulties they have in communicating but also the many layers of meaning that can be contained in even the most [innocuous](#) statements.

SUMMARY:

Act I

The play begins in the living room of a seaside boarding house in 1950s England. [Petey](#), the boarding house owner, and his wife [Meg](#), both in their sixties, sit at the living room table and engage in tepid conversation while eating breakfast. Meg is an inquisitive character who peppers Petey with repeated questions concerning his food, his job, etc. Petey informs his wife that two gentlemen will soon arrive to stay at the boardinghouse; he met them the night before. Meg is flustered by the news at first, but quickly recovers to promise she will have a room ready for them.

She then calls out to [Stanley](#) Webber, their boarder who is asleep upstairs. When he doesn't answer, she goes upstairs to fetch him, and then returns a bit disheveled but amused. Stanley, a bespectacled, unkempt, surly man in his thirties, soon follows.

Petey and Stanley speak of mundane topics while Meg prepares cornflakes and fried bread for Stanley's breakfast. After Petey leaves for work, the atmosphere changes. Meg flirts with Stanley, who jokingly calls her "succulent" while criticizing her housework. When Meg becomes affectionate, he rudely pushes her away and insults her.

Meg then informs him that two gentlemen are coming. The news unsettles Stanley, who has been the only boarder for years. He accuses Meg of lying, but she insists that she speaks the truth.

Before Meg leaves to shop, [Lulu](#), a young girl in her twenties, arrives with a package. Meg instructs Lulu to keep the package from Stanley, and then she leaves. Lulu and Stanley chat for a little while, mostly about Stanley's lack of enthusiasm and his appearance. Lulu calls him a "wash out" and then quickly exits. Stanley washes his face in the kitchen, and then leaves by the kitchen door.

In the meantime, [Goldberg](#) and [McCann](#) enter the living room. They are the two gentlemen who had requested rooms for the evening. It becomes immediately apparent that Goldberg and McCann have come under mysterious circumstances to "finish a job." The job in question seems to be Stanley, though details are scarce. Goldberg reassures McCann that they are at the right house, and that this job will cause no more stress than their jobs usually

cause them. Goldberg rambles on about his uncle until Meg arrives, and introductions are made.

Goldberg's sweet temperament and suave demeanor soon set Meg at ease. Goldberg asks after Stanley, and Meg tells him that Stanley was once a successful pianist but had to give it up. Meg also reveals that it is Stanley's birthday, and Goldberg suggests they have a party. Thrilled with the idea, Meg shows the gentlemen to their room. Later, Stanley returns to the living room as Meg arrives to put the groceries away. She tells him about the two gentlemen, and Stanley is visibly upset to learn Goldberg's name. To cheer him up, Meg suggests he open his birthday present, even though Stanley insists that it is not his birthday. To humor Meg, he opens the package and finds a toy drum with drumsticks. He hangs the drum around his neck and parades around the table beating the drum merrily until his rhythm becomes erratic and chaotic. He beats the drum possessively and looms over Meg with a crazed expression on his face.

Act II

Later that same evening, McCann sits at the living room table shredding a newspaper into five equal strips. Stanley arrives, and the two men awkwardly greet one another. McCann, in a calm tone of voice, congratulates Stanley on his birthday, and says it is an honor to be invited to his party. Stanley replies that he wants to spend the evening alone and tries to leave, but McCann will not let him.

Stanley sits at the table and touches one of the newspaper strips, which upsets McCann. Stanley speaks of his past, and suggests he has never been one to cause trouble. Stanley insists that he has met McCann before, and grows upset when McCann denies the connection.

Stanley wants to know why he and Goldberg are at the boardinghouse, and grows frantic when McCann claims they are there on a short holiday. Desperate, Stanley grabs McCann's arm, who violently hits him off. Shocked into submission, Stanley calms himself and speaks of his love for Ireland, for its people, its sunsets, and its police. He asks McCann to accompany him to a nearby pub, but is interrupted when Petey and Goldberg enter the room.

Petey introduces Stanley to Goldberg, and then leaves. The situation in the room grows tense, as Goldberg yammers on about his past. Despite Goldberg's soothing words, Stanley remains on edge and refuses to sit down when McCann asks him to. It is not McCann's threats that convince him to sit, but rather Goldberg's quiet insistence.

After Stanley submits, Goldberg and McCann interrogate him about his past - they accuse him of betraying their "organization," of killing his wife, of leaving his bride at the altar, of being a waste of space, and more. Stanley answers at first, but is soon struck dumb by the sheer number of questions being thrown at him. The questions grow progressively more ridiculous and nonsensical. Finally, Stanley hits Goldberg in the stomach. McCann and Stanley threaten each other with chairs, but are cooed back into civility when Meg arrives, beating Stanley's toy drum. She is dressed for his birthday party. Goldberg compliments her, and the tense atmosphere quickly dissipates as Meg makes a moving tribute to Stanley in a toast while McCann flashes a torch in Stanley's face like a spotlight. Lulu arrives, and Goldberg gives a second toast which includes more reminiscing.

The party begins in earnest. Lulu and Goldberg flirt, while Meg and McCann speak of Ireland. Stanley sits alone at the table until Meg suggests they all play blind man's buff. During Stanley's turn, he is blindfolded by McCann, who breaks his glasses and puts the toy drum in his path so that Stanley's foot smashes through it. When Stanley reaches Meg, he begins to strangle her. Goldberg and McCann pull him off, but then the lights suddenly go out.

In the darkness, the two gentlemen cannot find Lulu, who has screamed and fainted. McCann shines his flashlight on the table to discover Stanley standing over Lulu as though about to sexually assault her. He giggles manically as the men slowly approach him and the curtain closes.

Act III

The next morning, Petey sits at the living room table reading a newspaper, while Meg frets about having no breakfast food left. Her memory is hazy from the night before, and she forgets that Petey was not there as she tries to remember what happened. When she leaves to shop, she sees Goldberg's car in the driveway, and grows frightened. Petey calms her down.

As Meg prepares to leave again, Goldberg enters the room and sits at the table. Meg asks him about the car, but he ignores her. She finally leaves. Petey asks Goldberg about Stanley, and Goldberg explains that Stanley suffered a nervous breakdown, and needs to be taken to a doctor whom Goldberg knows. Petey wants to see Stanley when he wakes, despite Goldberg's insistence that he should simply leave for work.

McCann enters with two suitcases, and tells Goldberg that Stanley is trying to fit his broken glasses into his eyes. When Petey suggests a way to fix the glasses and offers to fetch a doctor, Goldberg dismisses him. Petey departs to tend

to his peas, insisting he be told when Stanley wakes, and Goldberg sits slumped over the table.

McCann demands they expedite the job, but Goldberg ignores him. Angry, McCann shakes Goldberg's chair and calls him "Simey," which causes the latter to attack him. McCann pacifies Goldberg, who then admits he feels poorly and is confused by the feeling. He tells McCann about his father and about his own principles on family, and finally makes a strange request by asking McCann to blow into his mouth twice. McCann does so without question, and Goldberg is calmed.

Lulu enters, and McCann leaves them alone. Lulu accuses Goldberg of having taken sexual advantage of her the night before. They argue over blame until McCann reenters and tells Lulu to confess her sins. Startled by this bizarre turn of events, Lulu flees.

McCann then leaves to fetch Stanley, who enters cleanly shaven and nicely dressed. The two men seem to take pity on Stanley, and Goldberg promises to buy him new glasses. In a reprise of the interrogation from Act II, they pepper Stanley with gentler questions and comments. Goldberg asks Stanley if he wants to leave with them, but Stanley can only muster gurgling sounds.

They begin to exit with Stanley, but Petey arrives and tells them to stop. Menacingly, they ask Petey if he wants to accompany them. Petey allows the two men to take Stanley away, but before they leave, he cries out "Stan, don't let them tell you what to do!"

Afterward, Petey returns to the living room table and picks up his newspaper. Meg arrives and asks if Stanley has come down to breakfast yet. Petey lies and tells her Stanley is still sleeping.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

-CHARLES DICKENS

AUTHOR INTRO:

Charles Dickens was a British novelist, journalist, editor, illustrator and social commentator who wrote such beloved classic novels as *Oliver Twist*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Great Expectations*.

Dickens is remembered as one of the most important and influential writers of the 19th century. Among his accomplishments, he has been lauded for providing a stark portrait of the Victorian-era underclass, helping to bring about social change.

Dickens was born Charles John Huffam Dickens on February 7, 1812, in Portsmouth, on the southern coast of England.

The famed British author was the second of eight children. His father, John Dickens, was a naval clerk who dreamed of striking it rich. Charles' mother, Elizabeth Barrow, aspired to be a teacher and school director.

Despite his parents' best efforts, the family remained poor. Nevertheless, they were happy in the early days. In 1816, they moved to Chatham, Kent, where young Dickens and his siblings were free to roam the countryside and explore the old castle at Rochester.

In 1822, the Dickens family moved to Camden Town, a poor neighborhood in London. By then the family's financial situation had grown dire, as John Dickens had a dangerous habit of living beyond the family's means. Eventually, John was sent to prison for debt in 1824, when Charles was just 12 years old.

Following his father's imprisonment, Dickens was forced to leave school to work at a boot-blackening factory alongside the River Thames. At the run-down, rodent-ridden factory, Dickens earned six shillings a week labeling pots of "blackening," a substance used to clean fireplaces. It was the best he could do to help support his family.

Looking back on the experience, Dickens saw it as the moment he said goodbye to his youthful innocence, stating that he wondered "how [he] could be so easily cast away at such a young age."

But when Dickens was 15, his education was pulled out from under him once again. In 1827, he had to drop out of school and work as an office boy to contribute to his family's income. As it turned out, the job became a launching point for his writing career.

Within a year of being hired, Dickens began freelance reporting at the law courts of London. Just a few years later, he was reporting for two major London newspapers.

SUMMARY:

Great Expectations follows the childhood and young adult years of Pip a blacksmith's apprentice in a country village. He suddenly comes into a large fortune (his great expectations) from a mysterious benefactor and moves to London where he enters high society. He thinks he knows where the money has come from but he turns out to be sadly mistaken. The story also follows **Pip's dealings with Estella**, a young woman he adores but who cannot return his love.

Great Expectations by Charles Dickens tells the story of Pip, a young boy who grows up and learns many valuable life lessons about himself and others.

The young Pip meets and assists the escaped convict Magwitch on the marshes near his home where he lives with his sister and Joe Gargery, the village blacksmith.

1. Pip goes to Satis House where he meets the eccentric Miss Havisham and her adopted daughter Estella. He returns on several occasions.
2. After working as a blacksmith's apprentice for a number of years, Pip grows up and is one day informed that he has come into a great deal of money. He assumes that this has come from Miss Havisham.
3. Pip travels to London where he becomes a gentleman. He grows increasingly fond of Estella but neglects to maintain contact with his family.
4. Magwitch illegally returns from abroad and announces that he is Pip's secret benefactor.
5. Estella plans to marry Bentley Drummle and Miss Havisham is involved in a terrible fire.
6. After Pip unsuccessfully tries to get Magwitch out of the country, Magwitch dies in prison and Pip loses his fortune.
7. Pip, now older and wiser, returns to his family home and meets Estella once more.

***Great Expectations* is about Pip's journey from a poor childhood into privileged adulthood and the power that money and social class have to change him as he grows up.**

Great Expectations by Charles Dickens tells the story of Pip, a young boy who grows up and learns many valuable life lessons about himself and others.

Pip helps Magwitch - an escaped convict

Pip is a young orphan who lives with his sister (known as Mrs Joe) and her husband, Joe Gargery, the strong but gentle blacksmith. As Pip visits his parents' graves he has a terrifying meeting with Magwitch an escaped convict. Pip helps the convict but he is eventually recaptured and taken back to prison. Pip continues his simple existence as a poor but honest boy but he cannot help feeling unhappy with his place in life.

Pip meets Miss Havisham and falls in love with Estella

Pip is taken to meet Miss Havisham, an eccentric lady who has shut herself away ever since her wedding was called off at the last minute. She never leaves her house, still wears her wedding dress and despises all men. Pip also meets Miss Havisham's adopted daughter Estella who is being brought up by Miss Havisham to break men's hearts. Estella therefore treats him cruelly especially when she talks about Pip's background as a common boy. Pip makes many visits to them and gradually falls in love with Estella. He dreams of becoming a gentleman so that he can be worthy of her.

As a reward for his visits Miss Havisham pays the money which allows Pip to become Joe's apprentice; he works in the forge with Joe and Orlick. Though it is not what he really hoped for, Pip becomes a steady worker trying to educate and improve himself with the help of a local girl, Biddy. During this time Mrs Joe is savagely attacked and becomes unable to care for the family anymore. Biddy moves into the family home to help them out.

Pip finds out he has come into a lot of money

One day Pip, who is by now a young man, is visited by a London lawyer, Mr Jaggers. Jaggers tells Pip that he has come into a fortune and must go to London to become a gentleman, improve his education and take up a higher class life. Pip convinces himself that the money has come from Miss Havisham and that this means that she plans for him and Estella to be a couple.

Pip learns how to be a gentleman

Grown-up Pip, now a gentleman

Pip travels to London where Mr Jaggers, the lawyer, will be his guardian until he legally becomes an adult. He lives with Herbert Pocket, a young man related to Miss Havisham, who teaches him how to behave like a gentleman by developing good manners, wearing nice clothes and speaking more formally. Pip is a quick learner and is soon able to mix with people from the upper classes such as Bentley Drummle. During this time Pip repeatedly meets Estella, falling ever more deeply in love with her.

Pip turns into a snob and forgets his family

Unfortunately, in his efforts to win Estella and impress people, Pip begins to look down on others. He becomes ashamed of his origins, neglecting his family in the process. He is even uncomfortable when he returns to attend his dead sister's funeral. He starts to spend too much money and soon he and Herbert are in debt.

Magwitch returns

Magwitch returns after many years in Australia

Pip begins to feel that he is being followed. One dark stormy night he answers his door to a ragged figure who turns out to be Magwitch, the ex-convict Pip helped out as a child. Magwitch has spent many years in Australia, transported from England on pain of death should he return. However, he has made a great deal of money and has risked everything to come back and tell Pip that he is the mystery benefactor who gave Pip all of his money. Pip is horrified, feeling that the money is contaminated and, even worse, finds that his assumptions about Miss Havisham wanting him and Estella to be together have been wrong all along.

Pip hatches a plan to help Magwitch escape

Pip, Herbert and Wemmick (Mr Jaggers's clerk) form a plan to get Magwitch safely out of the country. They aim to row along the river and catch a boat which is leaving England.

Miss Havisham is severely burned

Miss Havisham, shortly before the fire that brings about her tragic demise

At this time Pip also hears that Estella is going to marry Bentley Drummle. He pleads with her not to do this but she is determined. She rejects not only Pip but also Miss Havisham. As Pip does not wish to use Magwitch's money he asks Miss Havisham to help Herbert set up in business. She agrees but in a tragic accident her decayed wedding dress catches fire and she is severely burned.

Magwitch is caught and returned to prison

Mrs Joe's mystery attacker is revealed as Orlick. The escape plan for Magwitch is carried out but they are caught at the last minute. Magwitch falls in the river, is hurt, captured and returned to prison. Shortly afterwards he is sentenced to death but he is dying anyway. Pip has worked out that Estella is Magwitch's long lost daughter and tells him that he has always loved her.

Pip returns home and to Estella

Pip no longer has any money as it has been confiscated as the earnings of a criminal; he also has severe debts. Pip falls ill and is nursed back to health by the ever faithful Joe; he also pays off what Pip owes. After this Pip returns to his original home at the blacksmith's. He intends to marry Biddy but he is too late – Joe has already proposed to her. Many years later Pip meets Estella again. She is now a widow and the way seems clear for Pip to pursue his lost love again.

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

-THOMAS HARDY

AUTHOR INTRO:

Thomas Hardy was an English novelist and poet who set his work--including *The Return of the Native* and *Far from the Madding Crowd*--in the semi-fictionalized county of Wessex. Thomas Hardy was born in Dorset, England in 1840. As a novelist he is best known for his work set in the semi-fictionalized county of Wessex including, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*.

He was also an accomplished poet. Hardy died in 1928. His ashes are in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey and his heart is buried in Stinsford with his first wife. By 1862, when he was 22, Hardy left for London to work as a draftsman in the office of Arthur Blomfield. While in London, Hardy was influenced by the works of Charles Swinburne, Robert Browning, and Charles Darwin (the author of *Origin of Species*, 1856). Poor health forced Hardy to return to his native region in 1867, where he worked for Hicks again and for another architect, G.R. Crickmay.

Hardy's education was interrupted by his work as an architect. He had wanted to attend the university and become an Anglican minister, but lack of funds and his declining interest in religion swayed Hardy away from that avocation and more toward a self-study of poetry and writing. Hardy tried his hand at writing when he was 17 and wrote for years while he was a practicing architect. His first novel manuscript, *The Poor Man and the Lady* (1867-68), was rejected by several publishers, but one editor, George Meredith encouraged him, and so Hardy set out to refine his style. A second story, *Desperate Remedies* (1871), was accepted and published. His next novel, *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), demonstrates a more polished Hardy now coming into his own style.

By 1870, Hardy was sent by his employer to begin a restoration project of the St. Juliot Church in Cornwall. Here he met his first wife, Emma Lavinia Gifford, whom Hardy married in 1874. Emma encouraged Hardy to write, and by 1872, Hardy left architecture to devote his time to his literary career.

Hardy was quite prolific during this period, writing some 900 poems on a variety of subjects. In 1912, Hardy's wife, Emma, died, ending 20 years of "domestic estrangement." In 1914, Hardy married Florence Emily Dugdale, with whom he lived until his death on January 11, 1928.

Hardy's body was buried at Westminster Abbey in Poet's Corner, while his heart was buried in Stinson, England, near the graves of his ancestors and his first wife, Emma. His second wife was later buried near her husband.

SUMMARY:

At the beginning of the novel, Bathsheba Everdene is a beautiful young woman without a fortune. She meets Gabriel Oak, a young farmer, and saves his life one evening. He asks her to marry him, but she refuses because she does not love him. Upon inheriting her uncle's prosperous farm she moves away to the town of Weatherbury.

A disaster befalls Gabriel's farm and he loses his sheep; he is forced to give up farming. He goes looking for work, and in his travels finds himself in Weatherbury. After rescuing a local farm from fire he asks the mistress if she needs a shepherd. It is Bathsheba, and she hires him. As Bathsheba learns to manage her farm she becomes acquainted with her neighbor, Mr. Boldwood, and on a whim sends him a valentine with the words "Marry me." Boldwood becomes obsessed with her and becomes her second suitor. Rich and handsome, he has been sought after by many women. Bathsheba refuses him because she does not love him, but she then agrees to reconsider her decision.

That very night, Bathsheba meets a handsome soldier, Sergeant Troy. Unbeknownst to Bathsheba, he has recently impregnated a local girl, Fanny Robin, and almost married her. Troy falls in love with Bathsheba, enraging Boldwood. Bathsheba travels to Bath to warn Troy of Boldwood's anger, and while she is there, Troy convinces her to marry him. Gabriel has remained her friend throughout and does not approve of the marriage. A few weeks after his marriage to Bathsheba, Troy sees Fanny, poor and sick; she later dies giving birth to her child. Bathsheba discovers that Troy is the father. Grief-stricken at Fanny's death and riddled with shame, Troy runs away and is thought to have drowned.

With Troy supposedly dead, Boldwood becomes more and more emphatic about Bathsheba marrying him. Troy sees Bathsheba at a fair and decides to return to her. Boldwood holds a Christmas, to which he invites Bathsheba and again proposes marriage; just after she has agreed, Troy arrives to claim her.

Bathsheba screams, and Boldwood shoots Troy dead. He is sentenced to life in prison. A few months later, Bathsheba marries Gabriel, now a prosperous bailiff.

THE RAINBOW

- D.H.LAWRENCE

AUTHOR INTRO:

D.H. Lawrence is best known for his infamous novel 'Lady Chatterley's Lover,' which was banned in the United States until 1959. He is widely regarded as one of the most influential writers of the 20th century.

Born in England in 1885, D.H. Lawrence is regarded as one of the most influential writers of the 20th century. He published many novels and poetry volumes during his lifetime, including *Sons and Lovers* and *Women in Love*, but is best known for his infamous *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. The graphic and highly sexual novel was published in Italy in 1928, but was banned in the United States until 1959, and in England until 1960. Garnering fame for his novels and short stories early on in his career, Lawrence later received acclaim for his personal letters, in which he detailed a range of emotions, from exhilaration to depression to prophetic brooding. He died in France in 1930.

Early Life

Author D.H. Lawrence, regarded today as one of the most influential writers of the 20th century, was born David Herbert Lawrence on September 11, 1885, in the small mining town of Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, England. His father, Arthur John Lawrence, was a coal miner, and his mother, Lydia Lawrence, worked in the lace-making industry to supplement the family income. Lawrence's mother was from a middle-class family that had fallen into financial ruin, but not before she had become well-educated and a great lover of literature. She instilled in young D.H. a love of books and a strong desire to rise above his blue-collar beginnings.

Lawrence's hardscrabble, working-class upbringing made a strong impression on him, and he later wrote extensively about the experience of growing up in a poor mining town. "Whatever I forget," he later said, "I shall not forget the Hags, a tiny red brick farm on the edge of the wood, where I got my first incentive to write."

As a child, Lawrence often struggled to fit in with other boys. He was physically frail and frequently susceptible to illness, a condition exacerbated by the dirty air of a town surrounded by coal pits. He was poor at sports and, unlike nearly every other boy in town, had no desire to follow in his father's footsteps and become a miner. However, he was an excellent student, and in 1897, at the age of 12, he became the first boy in Eastwood's history to win a scholarship to Nottingham High School. But at Nottingham, Lawrence once again struggled to make friends. He often fell ill and grew depressed and lethargic in his studies, graduating in 1901 having made little academic impression. Reflecting back on his childhood, Lawrence said, "If I think of my childhood it

is always as if there was a sort of inner darkness, like the gloss of coal in which we moved and had our being."

SUMMARY:

The Rainbow tells the story of three generations of the Brangwen family, between 1840 and 1905. The Brangwens have owned and worked Marsh Farm in Nottinghamshire, England, for generations, and the family includes craftsmen as well as farmers. Tom Brangwen hasn't much left the Midlands counties of [Nottinghamshire](#) and [Derbyshire](#), where the farm is located.

Tom works the land in near isolation, with only an old woman housekeeper as company. However, one day, the vicar of the local church hires a Polish widow, Lydia Lensky, to be his housekeeper, and Lydia brings with her her young daughter, Anna. After a few months, Tom musters the courage to bring Lydia a bouquet of flowers, and he asks her to be his wife.

From the outside, their marriage is a happy one and Tom is a caring stepfather to Anna. Lydia and Tom, however, find that their differences in culture and language put a strain on their relationship. They find it difficult to connect or be together in the way a married couple should. At one point, Lydia even suggests that Tom should find another woman. They stay together, however.

Eventually, Anna comes of age after a childhood of dreaming about being a queen. When she is eighteen, one of Tom's nephews, Will, comes to work in the lace factory in nearby Ilkeston. He lives with Tom's family at Marsh Farm, and Anna and Will fall in love.

Theirs is a rather innocent love, as neither has much experience in romance, but it is sincere, and soon they announce their plans to marry. Tom throws them a large wedding, rents a home for them in the village, and gives them 2,500 pounds as a gift. The married couple spends their first two weeks entirely by themselves, wrapped up in the world that exists only between them. Anna returns from this happy haze first, and Will struggles to re-enter the real world of reality and responsibility.

This continues throughout their marriage. Will struggles to see Anna as anything other than his lover. The real world, however, constantly comes between them, especially when Anna begins having children.

Their youngest daughter is a child named Ursula. She experiences the freedom to explore that the other Brangwens never could, though Ursula continues to feel the pressures from the materialist society that confines her. Ursula is passionate, spiritual,

and sensual, and as such, undertakes a series of relationships, including a same-sex love affair with one of her teachers.

Eventually, Ursula enters into a relationship with Anton Skrebensky, a young man of Polish descent in the British Army. Their affair is passionate and extended, lasting happily for many years. Things take a turn, however, when Anton asks Ursula to marry him. She explains that she doesn't want to be married because she finds the convention too confining. This refusal hurts Anton deeply, and he leaves.

Ursula regrets turning down Anton's proposal, feeling empty in his absence. She pines for Anton, and at this point, comes to realize that she is pregnant. Her remorse is heightened by this news, but Anton is gone.

Still, she understands that the freedom she thought she couldn't have as a married woman can now only be achieved if she agrees to marry Anton. At this point, she observes a rainbow in the sky, and takes it to be a sign of a new reality for humanity. The book describes it this way: "She saw in the rainbow the earth's new architecture, the old, brittle corruption of houses and factories swept away, the world built up in a living fabric of Truth, fitting to the over-arching heaven." Afterward, Ursula sits to write a letter to Anton, asking him to return.

The Rainbow addresses the competing interests of modernity and tradition. The characters across the generations each struggle under the weight of expectations as they feel pulled toward a different sort of life than the one they are leading. In particular, Lawrence critiques the institution of marriage. The relationships he depicts in the novel are all deeply flawed, marriages that exist primarily as a result of function or convenience. The book argues that people should abandon these conventions in favour of following their urges and more animal instincts.

The Rainbow frankly, and at times explicitly, discusses human sexuality and sexual attraction, and that earned the novel an obscenity trial in England in 1915. Unsold copies of the book were seized and burned, though it remained available in the United States.

Critics have praised the novel's artistry, and have gone on to remark favorably on the book's depiction of sexual attraction. Most critics also agree that Lawrence's treatment of convention in the face of modernity is noteworthy.

Lawrence wrote a sequel to *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love*, with Ursula as the main character. In that book, she continues her search for emotional and spiritual growth through other relationships.

The novel was adapted into a film in 1989.
