
UNIT 20 THOMAS HARDY AND D.H. LAWRENCE

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20.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to:

- Talk about Hardy the poet, his life and work.
- Appreciate his poems 'To an Unborn Pauper Child' and 'Great Things'
- Understand and analyse D.H. Lawrence, the poet.
- Analyse the thematic as well as formal aspects of 'Bavarian Gentians'

20.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to Thomas Hardy and D.H. Lawrence, two major writers at the turn of the twentieth century. They were novelists of great repute, but their contributions to the world of poetry are equally seminal and individual. But unfortunately, their reputation as poets was subsumed within their status as novelists. Hardy had made his presence felt by the end of the Victorian era, while D. H. Lawrence who was his younger contemporary started writing at the beginning of the twentieth century. Both wrote novels which created great controversies because they lived in an age that was still in the grip of rigid Victorian moral attitudes. Both wrote poems which are noted for their distinctive voice and idiosyncratic treatment of subjects.

We will be reading about the two poets in detail in the separate introductions to each. Though there is a gap of forty five years between them, we are struck by certain similarities in their disposition and outlook. Both Hardy and Lawrence struggled against Victorian hypocrisy and prudery*. Both had to face censorship for their frank treatment of sex and immorality, though in varying degrees. Both immortalized the counties they came from, in their novels: Hardy made the county of Dorset and nearby lands famous as Wessex, while Lawrence wrote about the Mining town of Eastwood in Nottinghamshire in his novels. Lawrence was greatly influenced by Hardy, and published a study on him. Both died in the third decade of the twentieth century. Hardy in 1928 and Lawrence in 1930 – though Hardy was eighty seven years old and Lawrence just forty four.

In this unit, we will acquaint you with two poems of Thomas Hardy: ‘To an Unborn Pauper child’ and ‘Great Things’. You will notice how Hardy’s philosophies of fatalism and pessimism are deeply mirrored in the first. The second, a breezy little poem – rather uncharacteristic – offers a nice balance, and speaks about the small things that make the poet happy. The poem by D. H. Lawrence that you will read in this unit is ‘Bavarian Gentians’ – a sombre poem, full of beautiful and dense images and mythological allusions. By the end of the unit, you will be able to read, critically assess and appreciate these poems.

To read and understand Hardy and Lawrence one needs to know about the backgrounds from which they hailed. As writers who were influenced by the *zeitgeist* (the spirit of the times), it is necessary for us to delve into the Victorian age and the early twentieth century, the periods spanning their lifetimes. The next section will offer you an insightful peek into the historical background of the age in which these writers lived – glancing at the political, social and ideological upheavals of the times.

Different strategies have been adopted in examining the poems which have been selected for detailed study. The analysis provided along with the poems will serve as a guide to help you analyse poems on your own during examination. They will also help you comprehend the text better and learn to appreciate Hardy’s and Lawrence’s poetry for their metrical patterns and beauty of images. Read through the unit section by section, pause till you digest what you have read, and do the exercises as you read. Hope you enjoy your journey of discovering the poetic side of these literary giants.

20.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Now get ready for a swift tour of the Victorian age and the early Twentieth century. Victorian age, the period signifying the reign of Queen Victoria from her accession in 1837 to her death in 1901, was an age of contradictions. On the one hand, it was a period of incredible economic expansion and rapid change. Britain had become the mistress of sea and land, and its capital London had become the first urban capital of the world, the first metropolis. An urban economy based on manufacturing, international trade and financial institutions boomed, and the lay

* Victorian hypocrisy and prudery: Pretention of having higher moral standards and excessive, affected modesty, which is considered to be a characteristic of Victorian age.

of land changed with a rapidly enlarging city. Transport and communication facilities improved tremendously and distances shrank. England had become the workshop of the world, the world's banker as well as the world's policeman. But on the other hand, it was also an age of paradoxes and uncertainties. The success of the nation reached its pinnacle and then began to wane. By the end of the 19th century, the euphoria, optimism and positivism of the earlier decades started dwindling to be replaced by doubts, scepticism and even pessimism. The gulf between the haves and the have-nots had widened. The traditional villages and towns observed a depletion of population as London and other industrial cities burst at the seams with people gathering there from all over. The phenomenon resulted in the emergence of a new suburbia, with slums and rookeries*. Crime rate accelerated. A series of social reforms were initiated trying to address the problems and issues.

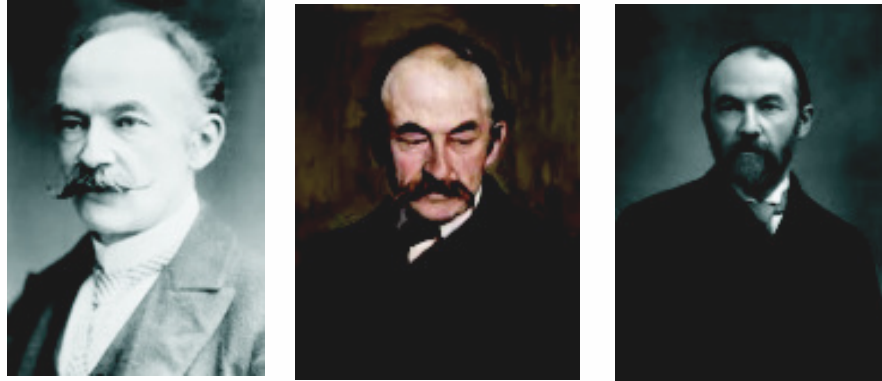
Ideologically too Victorian age sent contradictory signals. While religious and philanthropic movements gathered momentum, the very basis of belief systems crumbled. The concept of creation was questioned following the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. While family values were lauded and practiced, Queen Victoria herself towering as the emblem of customary domestic values, a bohemian life style started making its presence felt towards the end of the 19th century. These changes are apparent when we survey the literature of the times. Browning, one of the preeminent poets of the Victorian era had deemed that "God's in his Heaven/All's right with the world!" at the heyday of the Victorian period; but pangs of doubt trouble a pessimistic Matthew Arnold three decades later, who sees the present world as "a darkling plain /Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight, / Where ignorant armies clash by night." World was slowly turning rudderless, with doubt and despair climaxing in the literature of the times.

This is the world inhabited by Hardy. By the turn of the century, decadence had set in. Psychology was recognised as a science after the publication of Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretations of Dreams* in 1901. Old moral values which had signified the Victorian era eroded as they were held up to question. Victorian age gave place to the Georgian era, an age that witnessed the rapid degeneration of the British Empire after the Boer War in Africa and the emergence of new predicaments which had worldwide repercussions. Russian revolution had taken place and England witnessed the rapid rise of a labour class into power. In the second decade of the century, the World War I erupted when Hardy was in his seventies and Lawrence at the peak of his career. Modernism had dawned and existential philosophies had gained ground in the philosophical realm. The world had truly passed into the chaotic ethos of the twentieth century.

* Rookeries: overcrowded slums of London were known by this name in the 18th and 19th centuries and were the haunt of criminals and prostitutes. (As they were living like crows or rooks, nesting together and filling the surroundings with their hoarse cries)

20.3 THOMAS HARDY

[b. 1840 Upper Bockhampton, Dorset - d.1928 Max Gate, England]



Thomas Hardy was born on 2 June, 1840 in the village of Higher Bockhampton in the county of Dorset, one of the poorest and backward rural counties of England remaining unchanged for centuries. His father, also named Thomas, was a stonemason, builder and a fiddler who used to play in the local parish choir. His mother Jemima was the true guiding star of his life, who though, was a housemaid and a cook before her marriage, was an avid reader of literary books. Hardy inherited his musicality from his father and his love for books from his mother. It is said that Hardy loved solitude and drew his impulses from the natural world around him. He received his schooling first from National school in Bockhampton and later at Mr. Last's Academy in Dorchester, a non-conformist school. Though he showed great academic potential, his formal education came to an end at the age of 16, when he was apprenticed to a local architect, John Hicks.

During his tenure there he came across the Dorchester poet William Barnes who influenced him to write nature poems and Horace Moule, a scholar who encouraged him to read Greek tragedies and contemporary English literature. Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* had a profound influence on him. In 1862 Hardy moved to London and worked as an assistant architect to Arthur Blomfield who restored and designed churches. He won prizes from the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Architectural Association. Hardy was appointed to oversee the disinterment of graves in the churchyard of St. Pancras Old Church. This event had a great influence on him and he later wrote his 'grave' poems based on this experience. Hardy was drawn into the cultural life of London. He visited museums, galleries, attended plays and operas. He read avidly and started writing poetry. Though the first poems were rejected by publishers, one finally published in the Chambers Journal won him a prize. His poems highlighted his concerns which he had gleaned from reading and observation, and foreshadowed the themes of his later prose fiction. Disillusioned with traditional Christianity, Hardy became more and more aware of human misery and loneliness. His fatalism stemmed from the hard realisation of an uncaring universe and the role of chance in human life.

Disenchanted by London, Hardy returned to his native Bockhampton in 1867, worked for a while as an architect and then gave up his job to pursue a full time career as a writer. His first novel *The Poor Man and the Lady* was not published, and the next one *Desperate Remedies* was published anonymously. *Under the*

Greenwood Tree, which followed, was favourably received, as was *A Pair of Blue Eyes*. *Far From the Madding Crowd* gained public notice and brought him financial success which was repeated by *The Return of the Native*.

Thomas Hardy and D.H. Lawrence

In the meanwhile, Hardy who had experienced several rejections from women, fell in love with Emma Lavinia Gifford, a Cornish lady, and married her. It is believed that *A Pair of Blue Eyes* was inspired largely by their courtship. They settled at Max Gate, a large Mid-Victorian villa, which Hardy had designed himself, which he considered his ‘country retreat’ – and this became his permanent abode (*see image*).



Max Gate



Hardy's Map of Wessex



A view of Dorset

Though the couple had a happy and contented life, and shared several passions like travelling and cycling, as years passed, Emma grew estranged from her husband mainly due to the content of his fictional writings and his romantic attachments to artistic young ladies. Lack of offspring might have also be a reason for this. Though *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *The Woodlanders* and other novels had gathered popular as well as critical acclaim, Hardy's last and greatest fictional works *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895) shocked, dismayed and outraged the Victorian public with their subject matter. Considered too pessimistic, they accused Hardy of being too preoccupied with sex. Decried as ‘Jude the Obscene’ the hue and cry created by his last novel disturbed Hardy and made him give up writing novels altogether and return to his first love, poetry. Hardy considered poetry to be, “the heart of literature”. In 1898 he published the *Wessex Poems*.



WESSEX COUNTRY



Wessex is Hardy's fictional universe. (See pictures). Strongly identifying himself and his work with Dorset, Hardy borrowed the name of the old Anglo-Saxon kingdom, coined the names of villages and towns to represent actual places and even provided a map of the area (see images above). His novels were called *Wessex novels* and turning to poetry, he continued in the same vein. He was fascinated with other features of southern England especially the Stonehenge, the ancient druid rocks (see below), which interest is reflected in his poems like 'The Shadow of the Stone'.



Hardy's poetry wears a pessimistic, fatalistic and existential outlook evoking the dark, rugged landscape of Dorset. It laments the bleakness of human condition. He is one who "holds that if way to the Better there be, it exacts a full look at the Worst", as he states in his poem '*In Tenebris II*'. Even the term '*In Tenebris*', meaning 'in the darkness', which forms the title of a series of lyrics, highlights the bleak, doomstruck human world. His poems are haunted by a pervasive sense of the forlorn. There are instances in which Hardy's tragic view of life makes him refer to humans as 'Time's Laughingstocks', and point out to 'Life's Little Ironies'. Among Hardy's poems we will be able to identify a number of recurring themes and images. These overarching themes can be divided into three central categories of ghosts, grave and afterlife; God, nature and rural life; passage of time; love and war. His love poems are not traditional romantic love poems – but starker and darker poems of loss, ghosts and transience.

Hardy was inspired by the great panorama of Napoleonic Wars and wrote an epic drama in blank verse titled *The Dynasts*, published in three parts over five years. It presents Hardy's idea of "evolutionary meliorism", a belief in the power of humankind and a hope in the eventual amendment of the world through human actions. He also wrote lyric poetry which is considered to be his best. He forged a modern and original style combining colloquial diction and rough-hewn rhythms which nevertheless closely followed conventional techniques, paying attention to the musical aspects of language. His greatest poems were written after the sudden death of his wife Emma in 1912. They are considered to be the "finest and strangest celebrations of the dead in English poetry", according to the Hardy biographer Claire Tomalin. Shortly after Emma's death, Hardy married Florence

Dugdale, his secretary, who was forty years his junior. But he remained remorseful of Emma's death.

By this time, Hardy's literary authority was acknowledged beyond dispute. A very prolific writer, he has written 14 novels, two plays, more than 40 short stories and over 900 poems. The major collections of his poems include: *Wessex Poems*, *Poems of the Past and the Present* (1901), *Time's Laughingstocks and Other Verses* (1909), *Moments of Vision* (1917), *Satires of Circumstance* (1914), *Collected Poems* (1919) etc. The University of Aberdeen awarded him an honorary degree and in 1910, King George V conferred the Order of Merit on him. In 1912, the Royal Society of Literature awarded him a gold medal. Hardy was visited by several writers at Max Gate and he exercised tremendous influence on writers like James Barrie, Rudyard Kipling, G B Shaw, Virginia Woolf and many others. During the World War I he took active part in campaigns, visiting military hospitals and POW (Prisoner/s of War) camps. His poems on war, with their visceral imagery influenced the War poets like Siegfried Sassoon. After his 87th birthday, Hardy grew weaker and he became ill with pleurisy. He died on 11 January, 1928 and had two simultaneous funerals. His body was cremated and ashes deposited in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey, while his heart was buried alongside Emma in Stinsford Churchyard in Dorchester.

Did you find Hardy's life interesting? If you wish to know more about this fascinating man, his life and times and his novels and poetry, you can either refer to the Encyclopaedia or browse the net. The following sites may be helpful: *The Thomas Hardy Website* and the *Victorian Web*. Now try to answer these questions in Exercise I and check how well you have grasped the biographical details.

Self-check Exercise I

Answer the following questions in the space provided. Check your answers with the answer key provided in (20.9) after doing the exercise.

- 1) What was Thomas Hardy's profession before he became a full time writer? What stands as a major testimony to that profession?

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- 2) What is the imaginary fictional world created by Hardy? What is it named after?

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3) Which were the works that brought notoriety to Hardy?
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4) Mention two volumes of poetry written by Thomas Hardy.
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5) What is the name of the epic drama written by Hardy? What is it based on?
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6) What is the major philosophical tone of Hardy's poems?
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20.4 TO AN UNBORN PAUPER CHILD

20.4.1 Introduction

The poem 'To an Unborn Pauper Child' is taken from the collection, *Poems of the Past and the Present: Poems of Pilgrimage*, published in 1901. In the preface to the collection Hardy noted: "the road to a true philosophy of life seems to lie in humbly recording diverse readings of its phenomenon as they are forced upon us by chance and change." It is believed that the poem was inspired by an incident that occurred in the Dorchester Magistrate's Court, which he chanced upon. Hardy read of a pauper woman in the records of the court of petty sessions which said that "she must go to the Union-house to have her baby", and this occasioned the poem.

Hardy's poems convincingly convey the sadness of life and mirror the pathos encapsulated in Virgil's dictum: *Sunt lacrimae rerum* – "There are tears in things". There is nothing hopeful about earthly life. In this poem, Hardy adopts an anti-natal stance. He stands with the Greek dramatist Sophocles who said in *Oedipus at Colonus*, that, "Not to be born is, beyond all estimation, best; but when a man has seen the light of day, this is next best by far, that with utmost

speed he should go back from where he came.” Because what is life but “*Envy, factions, strife, battles, and murders*”. And in the end comes the pitiful lot of the old: “*blamed, weak, unsociable, friendless, wherein dwells every misery among miseries.*” “To an Unborn Pauper Child’ is a dark poem which is meant to be a warning to the yet-to-be born child. It bids the child to stop breathing while still in its mother’s womb and bid good bye to the world. The world is a dark, dreary one full of ‘travails and teens’ - difficulties and sorrows, with nothing alleviating about it. So it is better to sleep the eternal sleep.

There are several other pieces on the birth of young children in English poetry. Hardy’s poem is comparable to William Blake’s ‘Infant Sorrow’ in which the infant says: “Into the dangerous world I leapt”, or Louis MacNeice’s ‘Prayer before Birth’. Yet there are other poems in which we may detect a more optimistic outlook, as in Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s ‘Frost at Midnight’ and W.B. Yeats’ ‘A Prayer for My Daughter’.

Now let’s read the poem and get a hang of the cadences. Written in the traditional rhythmic mode, the poem consists of six stanzas of six lines each, rhyming aabbcc. The first, the second and the fifth lines in each stanza are cast in iambic tetrameter; the third and the fourth in iambic dimeter and the sixth, which is the last line, is fashioned in iambic pentameter, which gives the effect of a grand statement. Iambic is a traditional meter in English language composed of two syllables of which the first syllable unstressed or unaccented and the second one stressed or accented. The last three lines of the first stanza have been scanned for you, which would give you an idea about the three different feet or meter used here. Please note that the end of each foot or meter is indicated with a slash (/) mark. The stressed syllable is highlighted and underlined while the unstressed is indicated in ordinary font.

*The **Doom** /sters **heap*** (2) – Iambic dimeter

***Travails** / and **teens** / **around** / us **here**,* (4) – Iambic tetrameter

*And **Time** /-Wraiths **turn** /our **song** / **singsings** / to **fear**.* (5) – Iambic pentameter

If you read the poem aloud, you will get feel of the meter as it jolts over the evenly bumpy path of iambic. Use the glossary given beneath the text to understand unfamiliar words.

20.4. 2 The Text

To an Unborn Pauper Child

Breathe not, hid Heart: cease silently,
And though thy birth-hour beckons thee,
Sleep the long sleep:
The Doomsters heap
Travails and teens around us here,
And Time-Wraiths turn our songsings to fear.

Hark, how the peoples surge and sigh,
And laughters fail, and greetings die;
Hopes dwindle; yea,
Faiths waste away,
Affections and enthusiasms numb:
Thou canst not mend these things if thou dost come.

Had I the ear of wombed souls
Ere their terrestrial chart unrolls,
And thou wert free
To cease, or be,
Then would I tell thee all I know,
And put it to thee: Wilt thou take Life so?

Vain vow! No hint of mine may hence
To theeward fly: to thy locked sense
Explain none can
Life's pending plan:
Thou wilt thy ignorant entry make
Though skies spout fire and blood and nations quake.

Fain would I, dear, find some shut plot
Of earth's wide wold for thee, where not
One tear, one qualm,
Should break the calm.
But I am weak as thou and bare;
No man can change the common lot to rare.

Must come and bide. And such are we —
Unreasoning, sanguine, visionary —
That I can hope
Health, love, friends, scope
In full for thee; can dream thou'lt find
Joys seldom yet attained by humankind!

Glossary

Doomsters	: fate; deities presiding over fate
Travails	: oppressive labour
Teens	: woes, pains, inflicted harms
Wraiths	: spectre of the dead
Hark	: Listen! (interjection)
Ere	: Before
Terrestrial	: relating to the earth and its inhabitants



Terrestrial chart	:	the life span on earth
Vain	:	useless
Pending	:	not yet settled or decided
Fain	:	happily, gladly
Wold	:	a tract or large area of open land
Qualm	:	an uneasy feeling about the rightness of a chosen course
Lot	:	destiny, fate
Bide	:	wait, tarry
Sanguine	:	cheerfully confident, optimistic
Visionary	:	characterized by foresight
Scope	:	possibilities

20.4. 3 An Analysis of the Poem

The poem 'To an Unborn Pauper Child' begins with a shocking injunction. The poet bids the pauper child in his mother's womb not to breathe, but to cease or die silently. To sleep the eternal sleep though its hour of birth is approaching near. The poet warns the child that doomsters or deities of fate are heaping hard times of pain and woe on human life. The spectres of time are turning the spontaneously happy moments (songsingings) to fearful ones. He asks the child to listen to the sighs of countless people. In this world, laughter fails, greetings die in the throat. Hope diminishes; faiths lose their impact and cease to be. Affections freeze and enthusiasms abate. By being born on earth, the child cannot redress these pitiful things.

Hardy says that if he had the attention of the babies in the womb before their time on earth started, and if they in turn had the choice to decide whether they should live or die, he would describe to them the conditions of the earth and ask whether they were willing to be born under these circumstances. But this is a futile desire, as his warning would never reach the baby that is locked away in its mother's womb. None would be able to describe the plan that life has in store for them. And so the baby will be born ignorant of what awaits it in this world, even though earth shattering things are occurring here.

The poet says that he would gladly find some enclosed plot in the wide expanse of the earth, where the child would remain without a tear or disquietude. But the poet admits his incapacity to do this, as he is as weak as the baby. He cannot change the common destiny to a rare one. So, since he is unable to change the fate of the baby or to give warning of what is in store for it, he asks the child to come and dwell on the earth. And because humans are by nature happily optimistic, visionary and not given to reason, he can hope and wish that the baby, once it is born, will live in love, good health, friendship and possibilities galore. He dreams that the child will attain joys which are rarely attained by mankind.

Hardy's fatalism and pessimism is indisputably evident in the poem. The poet begins in utmost despair and speaks in a doom-filled voice that nothing is pleasant or promising for the yet-to-be-born child. But in the last stanza there is resignation in his tone and the poem ends by expressing a fervent prayer that things may be better for the child. Time is perceived as an enemy of man in

Hardy’s writings. Curious notions of Fate as Doomsters and of Time as Wraiths which haunt, lend it a note of ominous determinism. Time erodes all such natural positive values as “laughter”, “hopes”, “faiths”, “affections” and “enthusiasms”. While pitted against these positive nouns stand negative verbs: “sigh”, “fail”, “die”, “dwindle”, “waste” and “numb”, which highlight the withering process. Though the poem addresses the unborn ‘pauper’ child specifically, the terrible things he attributes to the world may be applicable to any child born into the world, even though it may be said that without the support systems needed to exist on earth, the lot of a pauper child may be all the more pitiable. Hardy has witnessed several disruptive events in the world, and had seen the various modes of fighting and the aftermath of World War I – and the line “Though skies spout fire and blood and nations quake” might be a reference to the aerial warfare and blitzkrieg* during the World War.

The poem is addressed to the child. It is an ‘apostrophe’: a rhetorical device in the form of an address to someone not present. Many of the stanzas begin with injunctions and interjections: “Breathe not, hid Heart: cease silently”, “Hark!” “Vain vow!” “Must come and bide”. Written in traditional meter and stanzaic pattern, the poem effectively makes use of alliterations such as, “hid Heart”, “cease silently”, “birth-hour beckons”, “Travails and teens” “surge and sigh”, “pending plan”, “wide wold” etc. Personification of Time as Time-wraiths conveys the vagaries of time as well as the tormenting and obsessive nature of the phenomena on human psyche. Provincialisms and archaisms such as ‘teens’, ‘wold’ and ‘fain’ which mean ‘harms’ ‘open land’ and ‘gladly’ respectively lend quaintness of the old world to the poem. There are strange coinages like ‘theeward’, which sound unfamiliar and rather awkward. The rhythm of the iambic meter imparts a rhythmic tone to the poem, similar to the rocking of a cradle. For Hardy, poetry was “emotion put into measure” where “the emotion must come by nature”, but measure must be “acquired by art”. ‘To an Unborn Pauper Child’ is a perfect synthesis of emotion and measure; a splendid blend of nature and art.

Self-check Exercise II

1) What is Hardy’s injunction to the unborn pauper child in the first stanza.

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2) What condition of the world makes it an undesirable place to be born?

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* German: Lightning War

3) What is the “vow” that Hardy is unable to fulfil?

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4) What are the tones conveyed in the poem?

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5) What is the wish that the poet has for the about-to-be-born child?

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20.5 GREAT THINGS (1964)

20.5.1 Introduction

This poem is different from the previous one, and is one of Hardy’s sunnier, springier and simpler poems. Highly nostalgic, the poem speaks about Hardy’s self-indulgent love for things like cider, dance and love, which he labels as “great things”. The poem ‘Great Things’ was included in the collection, *Moments of Vision and Miscellaneous Verses*, published in 1917. The theme of *Moments of Vision*, states Hardy, was to “mortify the human sense of self-importance by showing or suggesting, that human beings are of no matter or appreciable value in this nonchalant universe.” But as is often the case, Hardy’s poems within a collection, though often arranged under headings, may divert from their stated purpose.

Here we may see the young Hardy, footloose and fancy-free, or one who is very much in love with the merry aspects of life. He is one who is not torn apart or depressed by the “travails and teens” of life, but flinging into its mirth and gaiety with wholehearted gusto. A very simple poem, it itemizes and states what the

things he consider ‘Great’ are! It gives us a glimpse of Hardy country with its references to Weymouth and Ridgeway. We encounter the same sort of simplicity and ebullience that we find in the Scotch poet Robert Burns’ poems like “Auld Lang Syne”. Hardy was a lover of Omar Khayyam and the last book that was read to him just before his death was Edward Fitzgerald’s English translation of it. The hedonistic love that one finds in *Rubaiyat* comprising wine, women, verse and music is easily observable in ‘Great things’:

“A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!” (*Rubaiyat*)

The poem consists of four stanzas of eight lines each. The refrain at the end of each stanza is a repetition of the opening statement of each, a slight difference being made by appending ‘O’ in front of the refrain. But the last stanza is an exception, where the stanza begins in a question mode and ends with an emphatic ascertainment of the same. So we can state that the poet has made use of incremental repetition, which is considered to be one of the features of the ballad stanza. The first and fifth lines rhyme (e.g.: thing – summoning; things – flings) as do every second alternate lines in each stanza, (e.g.: me – thirstily – hostelry – me; me – silently – tree – me) lending it a euphonic congruence and cohesion. There are a couple of provincialisms that Hardy uses in the poem. Make a note of them.

Now read the poem, preferably aloud to get a feel of the sounds and the jiggy, toe-tapping rhythm. Read it again with the use of the glossary to understand the meanings and allusions.

20.5.2 The Text



Cider/Cyder



Dance

Great Things

Sweet cyder is a great thing,
A great thing to me,
Spinning down to Weymouth town
By Ridgway thirstily,
And maid and mistress summoning
Who tend the hostelry:
O cyder is a great thing,
A great thing to me!

The dance it is a great thing,
A great thing to me,
With candles lit and partners fit
For night-long revelry;
And going home when day-dawning
Peeps pale upon the lea:
O dancing is a great thing,
A great thing to me!

Love is, yea, a great thing,
A great thing to me,
When, having drawn across the lawn
In darkness silently,
A figure flits like one a-wing
Out from the nearest tree:
O love is, yes, a great thing,
A great thing to me!

Will these be always great things,
Great things to me? . . .
Let it befall that One will call,
“Soul, I have need of thee”:
What then? Joy-jaunts, impassioned flings,
Love, and its ecstasy,
Will always have been great things,
Great things to me!

Glossary

Cyder	:	or cider drink taken from apple
Weymouth	:	town in Dorset, England
Hostelry	:	an inn, pub or a hotel
Revelry	:	merrymaking; lively and noisy festivities
Lea	:	an open area of grassy or arable land
One	:	God, considered as the One.
Jaunts	:	a short excursion or journey made for pleasure
Impassioned	:	emotional, exciting
Flings	:	unrestrained pursuit of one's emotions or desires



Weymouth



Ridgeway



Hostelry

20.5.3 Discussion

Now that you have read the poem carefully, try to answer the following questions, so that we can discuss the poem.

- 1) Why does the poet consider 'sweet cyder' a great thing?

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- 2) What are the elements of dance that makes the poet like it?

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- 3) What are the romantic components of love that the poet identifies which makes it precious and great?

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- 4) What philosophy of life do you perceive in the final stanza of the poem?

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[1. The poet states that sweet cider is a great thing to him. As he passes by Weymouth and Ridgeway feeling thirsty, the mistress and the maid who run the hostelry or the inn, invite him to drink cider. A thing that assuages thirst and is sweet and pleasurable in addition, is definitely a great thing.]

[2. The poet likes dance because it happens in an atmosphere of mirth, gaiety and romance. In candle-lit ambience, with the most suitable partner, one may settle

down to night-long celebrations, and return only when the day starts dawning. These pleasurable moments make dance a great thing to him.]

[3. Love is beautiful for assignations and stolen moments in the dark. The lover moves across the lawn in darkness waiting for his partner. The lady love flits to her lover silently like the silent bird flying out of the tree. These secret meetings and trysts add to the romance and mystery of love, and make it a great thing.]

[4. The poet speaks about the inevitable death which would summon all people, one day. So when the final call comes and we are forced to make an exit, all the things that one found joy in when alive, such as joyous travels, impassioned dances and ecstatic love, will become things of the past, but nevertheless would remain precious and great. This philosophy ties it up closely to hedonism, Epicureanism and the concept of ‘carpe diem’ or ‘seize the day’.]

20.5.4 Comments

- It is a ‘feel good’ poem, written in a gay mood. It has the structure, feel and rhythm of a folk song.
- There are elements of hedonism, which is the philosophy or doctrine that states that pleasure or happiness is the highest good.
- The poet describes the pleasure of drinking sweet cider, partaking in dance and being in love.
- These activities have been identified as the sweetest by people in several lands. Omar Khayyam has glorified it. ‘Halavadi’ poets in Hindi Literature have done it. The poets who advocate ‘carpe diem’ or the philosophy of ‘seize the day’ have considered it the highest good.
- The poet imparts a local flavour to the practice of imbibing cider. Drinking cider and ale is an activity that is indulged in by country people. They visit the local pub or hostelry to drink. They are tended by the mistress of the pub or by the bar-maid. These characters impart a local flavour to the poem. The poet roots this activity in the reality of Dorchester by making references to Weymouth and Ridgeway, two important places in Dorset and Hardy world. The verb ‘spinning down’ instils a spirit of jaunty happiness and conveys a mood of tipsiness.
- Dance is the art of passion. Dancing with a partner is one of the happy activities that the people of the west indulge in. Often dances are all night festivities, where one takes turns dancing with various partners. With fast and slow dances such as a tango or a waltz, mood sets in. Candle-lit dances are romantic affairs. The dancers return home only when the day starts breaking. Hardy very poetically describes the day break. Dawn is a party-wrecker who peeps in to spy on the dancers.
- Dorset and whereabouts are always a part of Hardy’s world. References to the local places and terrain sprinkle the poem. The reference to ‘lea’ or open tract of land draws our attention to one of the physical features of Dorset.
- Love is a great thing because of its secretive and romantic nature. Lovers have a clandestine assignation at night in the garden, which is one of the thrills of being in love. The lover waits for his beloved in the darkness and

sees the joyous sight of his lady love flitting across the lawn to where he stands with the swiftness of bird which swoops silently from the tree nearby. The poet beautifully invokes the impatience of waiting and the rapture of the meeting. He also conjures up the atmosphere of darkness and secretiveness in which the impatient lovers meet furtively.

- The final stanza brings the reader down to ground realities. Life on earth is transient and death will come inevitably. The poet imagines Death calling out to him when his time is up. But even then, the joy jaunts to drink at pubs, passionate dances and secret meetings of love will always have been great things to him.
- In the last stanza the poem slides from simple present to future perfect, emphasizing the perennial quality of his likes. Whatever happens, these things would always remain great things for him. He wishes that it may be so forever.
- The fifth line of each stanza ends in ‘-ing’, (‘summoning’, ‘dawning’, ‘a-wing’) lending it a sensation of continued activity, that his love for these things is something perennially lasting. In the last stanza this line ends in the plural – ‘flings’ – in tune with the summing up that is being done in that stanza.

Self-check Exercise III

a) Read the first stanza and indicate the rhyme scheme.

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b) What does the presence of the mistress and the maiden in the hostelry convey to the reader?

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c) Why does Hardy consider dance as a great thing?

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d) What is so special about love that it makes it a great thing?

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e) What in essence does the final stanza of the poem say?

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20.6 D. H. LAWRENCE

(b. 11 September, 1885, Eastwood, Nottinghamshire – d. 2 March, 1930, Vence, France)



Introduction:

D.H. Lawrence was an iconoclastic writer who revolutionized fiction writing at the beginning of the 20th century with his frank portrayal of sensuality and earned notoriety while he lived. He was a versatile genius who was a novelist, poet, short-story writer, translator, essayist, critic and a painter. Born as the fourth child of Arthur John Lawrence, a barely literate miner and Lydia, a former teacher who passed on her sensitivity and intelligence to her children, Lawrence's formative years were spent in the mining town of Eastwood in Nottinghamshire. This land he called, "the country of my heart" and formed the background of much of his writings. The tensions latent in his family life, especially between his crude father and his sensitive and educated mother, informed his works. He attended the Beauvale Board School and won a scholarship to Nottingham High School.

He worked as a junior clerk in a factory for a few months, but left it after he contracted pneumonia. His friendship with Jessie Chambers burgeoned at this time, as both of them shared a love for books. He also started writing poems and short stories during this period. In 1907 he won a prize in the short story competition in the Nottingham Guardian, the earliest recognition of his talents. In 1908 he received a teaching certificate from the University College, Nottingham.

He left for London to teach at Davidson Road School, Croydon. His talent as a writer was recognized by Ford Madox Ford and he was commissioned to write a story for *The English Review*, titled the *Odour of Chrysanthemums*. In 1910 Lawrence's mother, with whom he had a very close relationship, died of cancer, leaving him devastated. During this time, his first novel *The White Peacock* was completed, and soon he started working on his celebrated novel, *Sons and Lovers*, which was closely autobiographical in nature. He had broken off his engagement to his childhood friend Louie Burrows in the meanwhile, and decided to become a full time writer.

Lawrence met Frieda Weekley, the wife of his modern languages professor and the mother of three children, and promptly fell in love with her. Frieda was six years older than him and of German parentage. Their elopement created a furore. They first settled in Metz, where the political tensions during the First World War had Lawrence arrested as a British spy. He was released at the intervention of his father-in-law and they left for Italy across the Alps. During their stay in Italy, Lawrence completed *Sons and Lovers*.

The couple returned to England and Lawrence soon became friends with writers and critics including John Middleton Murray, Katherine Mansfield and the Welsh poet W.H. Davies. They kept on shuttling between the continent and the British Isles. In July 1914, they got married and settled in Zennor, Cornwall. But the local government considered the presence of a controversial writer and his German wife so near the coast to be a war time security threat and banished him from Cornwall. Lawrence was forced to leave Cornwall at three days' notice under the terms of DORA – Defence of the Realm Act. He lived in Derbyshire for a while, shifting from address to address, due to poverty. This wrote his celebrated short story *The White Peacock* while living there.

Lawrence wrote and completed *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. The former was suppressed after an investigation into its alleged obscenity. All throughout his life Lawrence had to face censorship. *The Rainbow* was published only in 1920, and is now considered one of the major English novels with great intellectual subtlety.

After the war, during which he had to suffer trauma at the hand of local authorities, Lawrence began his voluntary self exile – which he terms his 'savage pilgrimage'. He returned to Britain only twice and went travelling all over the world, bitten by wanderlust and writing extensively. His novel *Kangaroo* relates some of his experiences in Australia as well as his wartime experiences in Cornwall. In 1922, Lawrence settled in a utopian community at Kiowa Ranch, near Taos in New Mexico, where he wrote some of his noted critical articles on American Literature. When his health deteriorated, they were forced to leave New Mexico for Italy. Lawrence completed *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, his last major novel, which reinforced his notoriety as a writer of pornography. Lawrence

defended himself in two of his collections of satirical poems *Pansies* and *Nettles* and also in his tract on *Pornography and Obscenity*.

Lawrence was a great advocate of the bodily instinct. He believed that European civilisation gave too much emphasis to the intellect. In his famous ‘belief in the blood’ speech, Lawrence says: “My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says, is always true. The intellect is only a bit and a bridle.” In a letter to Ernest Collings, Lawrence writes: “I conceive a man’s body as a kind of flame, like a candle flame, forever upright and yet flowing; and the intellect is just the light that is shed on to the things around.” He is concerned with the mystery of the flame forever flowing, which comes out of practically nowhere, and being itself, it lights up whatever there is around it.

In the final years of his life, Lawrence was exceptionally active, writing poems, essays, reviews as well as producing oil painting. His last important work was *Apocalypse*, a reflection on the Book of Revelation. He died due to complications of tuberculosis at the Villa Robermond in Vence, France.

Lawrence legacy is vast and varied. Though best known for his novels and short stories, he was also a prolific poet, writing about 800 poems. Though in the beginning, his style is Georgian with well-worn poetic tropes and archaic language, it changed dramatically after the World War I. Influenced by Walt Whitman, Lawrence adopted free verse as his medium, ridding himself of stereotyped movements. Lawrence believed in writing poetry that was “stark, immediate and true to the mysterious inner force which motivated it”. His best known collections are *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* and *Tortoises*, in which he deals with nature and natural subjects. ‘Snake’ is one of his most anthologized poems. He also wrote several love poems in the anthology, *Look, We have come through!* Many of his later poems are in the modernist tradition, though he is different from other modernists. His collections *Pansies* as well as *Nettles* contain bitter satires on the moral climate of England. The poems written during the final days were printed posthumously as *Last Poems and More Pansies*, and contain Lawrence’s most celebrated poems on death, ‘Bavarian Gentians’ and ‘The Ship of Death’.

Self-check Exercise IV

1) Which place does Lawrence call “the country of my heart”?

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2) Which is the most autobiographical of Lawrence’s works?

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3) Which novel of Lawrence was based on his experiences in Cornwall?

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4) What does Lawrence refer to his self exile as?

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5) Which poet influenced Lawrence to write in free verse?

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6) What does Lawrence speak about in his celebrated 'belief in the blood speech'?

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7) Which anthology contains love poems by Lawrence?

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8) Which poetic collections contain satires ridiculing the moral climate of England?

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9) Which are the famous poems on death written by Lawrence?

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Now read the poem 'Bavarian Gentians' to get a taste of Lawrence's poetic style. Please make use of the glossary to understand the terms and the various mythological allusions in the poem. Read several times to grasp the poem wholly and make a special note of the inherent, informal music of the poem.

20.7 BAVARIAN GENTIANAS



20.7.1 Introduction

The poem 'Bavarian Gentians' is included in the collection *Last Poems and More Pansies*. For Lawrence, the phenomenal world of flora and fauna held a mystical aura, often teaching human beings the higher moral values of life. The subject, be it a bird, beast, plant or a flower, stands as a symbol of various facets of human nature. 'Bavarian Gentians' is a poem of death and eternal life. There are two versions of the poem with the texts differing in the latter half.

Written during his last days on earth, the poem stems from the interminable long-suffering wait of D.H. Lawrence as a tuberculosis patient for death to descend on him. The movement towards death is slow and sure. John Keats, another poet whose tragic life was cut off in its prime, bemoans the plight of the world in his poem 'Ode to the Nightingale': "Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies", referring to the sad end of his brother who was a tuberculosis patient. Thomas Mann at the end of his novel *The Magic Mountain* says to his protagonist about the ravages of TB and its almost inevitable excruciating end, "The wicked dance in which you are caught up will last many a sinful year yet, and we would not wager much that you will come out whole." Lawrence too must have felt that he was caught up in its wicked dance. And the only way was to wait to descend into death. Lawrence's poem seduces the reader with the slow dance with blue death using the symbols of the Bavarian gentians.

Bavarian gentians are a rarity. These dark blue flowers are outdoor plants often found in rocky terrain. By taking something decorative and incidental as a flower and turning it into a strong personal symbol which encompasses Lawrencian duality, is a remarkable poetic feat and a triumph of genius. Lawrence is famous for presenting different sides of a single image – he yokes contraries together as metaphysical poets do. Here the Bavarian Gentians symbolize Pluto's gloom of death and darkness and yet they are torches that shed bright blue light of life as a torch, showing the way to death.

"The poem itself is a complex web, a trance like dream that suggests both a gravitation toward death and a transcendence beyond it", says Ferris. The cadence of the poem is haunting in its ruminant mood, made possible by repetition of words and phrases, and its spiraling motion suggesting descent into death. Written in *vers libre* or free verse, with a liberal use of *enjambement* or run-on lines, and extended sentences with appended clauses, the poem captures in its stylistic peculiarities, the slow and inexorable movement towards death.

Now read the poem with the help of the glossary, and see whether you are able to capture the sadly entrancing mood of the poem.

20.7.2 The Text

Bavarian Gentians

Not every man has gentians in his house
in Soft September, at slow, Sad Michaelmas.

Bavarian gentians, big and dark, only dark
darkening the daytime torchlike with the smoking blueness of Pluto's
gloom,
ribbed and torchlike, with their blaze of darkness spread blue
down flattening into points, flattened under the sweep of white day
torch-flower of the blue-smoking darkness, Pluto's dark-blue daze,
black lamps from the halls of Dis, burning dark blue,
giving off darkness, blue darkness, as Demeter's pale lamps give off
light,
lead me then, lead me the way.

Reach me a gentian, give me a torch
let me guide myself with the blue, forked torch of this flower
down the darker and darker stairs, where blue is darkened on blueness.
even where Persephone goes, just now, from the frosted September
to the sightless realm where darkness was awake upon the dark
and Persephone herself is but a voice
or a darkness invisible enfolded in the deeper dark
of the arms Plutonic, and pierced with the passion of dense gloom,
among the splendor of torches of darkness, shedding darkness on the
lost bride and groom.

Glossary:

- Bavarian Gentian** : is a blue tubular flower. It is a typical, personal Lawrencean symbol. [See picture above]
- Michaelmas** : [pron. /mik^hlms/] is a Christian feast that celebrates the Archangel Michael, and is held on September 29th. It is associated with the coming of autumn.
- Pluto** : The Roman God of the underworld. In Greek mythology he is called Hades which is also a name for the underworld.

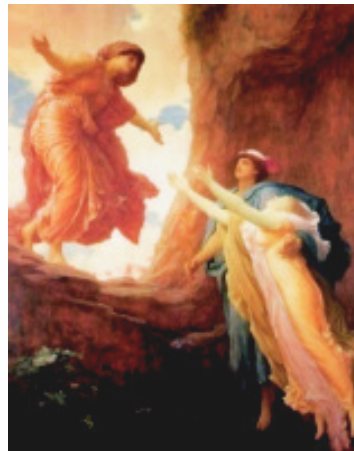
Hades was Zeus' brother. He abducted and forcibly wedded his niece Persephone, the daughter of Demeter, the Goddess of Harvest and Grain. Demeter was devastated and searched for her daughter high and low. But when Demeter finally succeeded in finding Persephone, it was found that she had eaten some pomegranate seeds, the food of the deceased. Hence she was forced to return to the underworld for one third of every year. It is believed that Demeter mourns her separation from her daughter during this time which is considered the reason for autumn and winter on earth. So, in the poem, September, which is the advent of autumnal season, is the time of the descent of Persephone into hell, into the arms of waiting death.

(Persephone is Proserpina in Roman and Demeter is Ceres; while Pluto is Hades in Greek – it is not clear why Lawrence has mixed up the Roman and Greek mythological names.)

- Ribbed** : with something resembling a rib supporting or strengthening a part; ridged. In this case, the petals are ridged.



Demeter



Demeter- Persephone & Hermes



Pluto & Persephone

- Demeter** : Also called Ceres. Goddess of harvest and grain. Fertility Goddess.
- Dis** : Another name for Hades.
- Persephone** : Also called Kore, daughter of Demeter; Proserpina in Roman mythology, abducted by Pluto or Hades.

20.7.3 Analysis

‘Bavarian Gentians’ is a deep and dense poem invoking darkness of death, loaded with personal symbolism and interwoven with mythological allusions. Lawrence makes use of an extraordinary symbol – that of Bavarian Gentians; one which embodies and reinforces Lawrencian duality of death and life, darkness and light.

The poem begins with a casual yet unusual two line statement by the poet who comments upon the rarity of the flower. It is not found in every house at Michaelmas during ‘soft September’. Michaelmas which falls on the 29th of that month heralds the coming of the autumnal season. The poet defines Michaelmas as slow and sad, underscoring the relentless advent of chilly frost of September as determined as death making steady progress on him. His use of “frosted September” later in the poem testifies to the chill. The adjectives “soft”, “slow” and “sad” that the poet uses in the line, beautifully and poignantly convey the feeling of the silent, inexorable and dismal creeping of death.

Gentians are big and dark. Their blue darkness is brilliant like torchlight, evoking the blueness of Pluto’s darkness. Contrarily, their intense blue darkens the daytime during which they flower. Lawrence uses an oxymoron ‘blaze of darkness’ to convey this contradictory nature. His sharp powers of observation capture every single feature of the flower, from its ribbed, tubular torchlike shape, to its blue petals flattened to a point, making it blaze forth like a torch, spreading blue darkness, invoking the trance of Pluto’s underworld. He calls them black lamps from the halls of Dis, burning dark blue, which contrary to Demeter’s pale lamps of the day, give off only darkness. It is then that the poet openly states about the journey he himself is about to undertake into Pluto’s dark realms. All these minutely detailed descriptions from the beginning were leading to this imperative “Lead me then, lead me the way” making clear the function of the Bavarian Gentians for him. The task of the gentian is to show him the way, blazing forth as a torch, lighting his descent to the halls of Dis.

The poet clearly equates the gentian with a torch. He wants to be guided by this blue forked torch down the dark stairs, getting darker still as he descends. Just as Persephone goes to visit her bridegroom in the Hades at the advent of autumn, after spending her time on the earth during spring and summer seasons, he is ready to make his fated journey during the “first-frosted September”, which is a phrase that Lawrence uses in another version of the poem. He wants to go into those dismal and sightless realms where darkness is awake upon the dark. Like Persephone, the lost bride, who is nothing but a voice in the darkness, is enveloped and pierced with the passion of dense gloom by Pluto, Lord of the underworld and the king of darkness, lying awake and waiting to enfold her in his strong arms and celebrate their nuptials in the chamber lit with torches of darkness, the poet too envisages being enveloped in the eternal arms of darkness.

Death turns celebratory. While life on the earth is painful, eternal repose in the enveloping darkness of death is like being in the hands of one's lover. Lawrence's identity fuses with that of Persephone who celebrates her nuptials with her eternal lover. Lawrence seems to say that we are all brides to death, virgins to be pierced with the passion of dense gloom, to be enveloped in "the arms Plutonic". Using the symbolism of the phantasmal underworld of classic mythology, Lawrence invokes the transcendental nature of death. The blue gentian is the body of man, lit with living flame. It is with the help of this flame that one can seek eternal repose in the arms of death. And the reason why everyone has not "gentians in his house in soft September" is because not everyone knows how to be truly alive in the flesh.

Written in free verse, the continuous enjambement or run-on lines spilling from one to another, to the end of each stanza, invokes the feel of a meandering and spiraling movement of a descent downwards, keeping in tune with the motif of a journey. As Milton describes it in *Paradise Lost*, Bavarian Gentians makes "darkness visible". Lawrence has been able to capture the intensity and density of a palpable darkness through the reiteration of words "blue" and "blueness" and "dark" and "darkness" throughout the poem. The use of soft sibilants and liquid sounds creates a feel of being lovingly cocooned in the "embalmed darkness". Heavily alliterative and reiterative, the poem is able to conjure up a trance-like mood, slowly and hypnotically gravitating towards the vortex of death. The pathos of the final line inherent in the expression "the lost bride" is reverted by the reference of her conjoining with her groom. Though Persephone is lost to the earth, as man is at death, she reaches the safe haven of the arms of her Plutonic lover, suggesting that 'heaven' lies in the warm embrace of death for man too, thus emphasizing the transcendental nature of death.

Self-check Exercise V

- 1) What is the significance of the statement that "not every man has gentians in his house"?

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- 2) Why does the poet refer to "slow, sad Michaelmas"?

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3) Why does the poet compare Bavarian gentians to a torch?

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4) What does the poet wish to do with the gentian?

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5) Describe the nuptial imagery in the poem.

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6) What are the stylistic beauties of the poem?

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20.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you were introduced to two poets – Thomas Hardy and D.H. Lawrence – both of them remarkable and controversial novelists, but consummate poets nonetheless.

Two poems of Hardy, both as different from each other as chalk and cheese, introduced you to the varied moods and themes of this great poet. The first one pessimistic, tender, exhortatory, fatalistic and brooding, speaks to an unborn pauper child, while the next one celebrates and glorifies pleasurable activities

such as drinking cider, candle-lit dancing and amorous trysts, as great things. The poem by Lawrence uses the symbol of Bavarian Gentians and the classical mythology of Pluto and Persephone to convey the duality of life and death. You were introduced to the stylistic features of each poem and were taught to analyse them critically. The introductory notes on the age as well as the poets, we hope, must have given you an exhaustive background knowledge as well as whetted your appetite to learn more about them. You may refer to encyclopaedias and critical works available in your study centres and local libraries as well as check out for on-line reference material available.

20.9 ANSWERS TO SELF-CHECK EXERCISES

Self-check Exercise I

- 1) That of an Architect. His home Max Gate.
- 2) Wessex. After the old Anglo-Saxon kingdom.
- 3) *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*.
- 4) *Wessex Poems*
Poems of the Past and the Present
Moments of Vision or any others mentioned in the Introduction
- 5) *The Dynasts*. The Napoleonic Wars.
- 6) Fatalism & Pessimism

Self-check Exercise II

- 1) Not to breathe, cease silently, sleep the long sleep, though the birth hour is near.
- 2) The doomsters heap troubles and pains, time-wraiths turn pleasant moments to fearful ones. It is a world where laughter fails, greetings die, hope dwindles, faiths waste away, affections and enthusiasms numb.
- 3) The vow that if he had the capacity to reach out to souls still in their mothers' wombs, that he would inform them of all the trouble that awaits them in this world, which is "Life's pending plan".
- 4) The poem wavers between sympathy, despair and hopelessness and ends on a note of resignation and hope.
- 5) Since the child will be born contrary to the poet's wishes, he should come and live on this earth. And being happy and optimistic in disposition, he hopes that the child attains full health, love, friends and possibilities on earth and finds joys which are seldom attained by mankind.

Self-check Exercise III

- a) abcbabab
- b) The presence of these ladies conveys a local flavour and creates a feel of the English pub atmosphere.

- c) It is a great thing because it is night-long revelry with suitable partners in candle-lit ambience, returning only at daybreak.
- d) Love is full of romantic interludes in the darkness, where the lover clandestinely awaits his lady-love in the garden, when she flits towards his side silently like a bird.
- e) The final stanza posits the question whether the things mentioned in the previous stanza such as cider, dance and love would remain great things to him. He says that when the inevitable Death calls upon him, these things would still have remained great things to him.

Self-check Exercise IV

- 1) The mining town of Eastwood in Nottinghamshire
- 2) *Sons and Lovers*
- 3) *Kangaroo*
- 4) 'The Savage Pilgrimage'
- 5) Walt Whitman, the American Poet
- 6) He says that, the flesh is wiser than the intellect. We may go wrong in our minds, but what the blood feels, believes and says, is true.
- 7) *Look, We have come through!*
- 8) *Pansies and Nettles*
- 9) 'Bavarian Gentians' and 'The Ship of Death'

Self-check Exercise V

- 1) It means that not everyone knows how to be truly alive in the flesh
- 2) Michaelmas refers to the advent of the autumnal season, and symbolically points out to the commencement of man's slow journey towards death.
- 3) Because of their shape of the flower and its petals and also its colour. The dark blue blaze of the flattened petals, converging to a point like a flame of the torch, the tubular shape of the flower, reminiscent of a torch, and the dark blue colour of the flowers make this imagery apt.
- 4) He wishes to use the flower as a torch to guide him and lead him down to the netherworld of darkness, to show him the way taken by Persephone to reach her dismal lover.
- 5) Persephone descends to the sightless world of the dark into the enveloping arms of her lover who is waiting for her in the chambers lit with the splendour of torches of darkness to celebrate the nuptials and be pierced with the passion of dense gloom.
- 6) *Enjambement*, use of sibilants and liquid sounds, alliteration and reiteration etc. (refer to the last paragraph of the analysis)