

## CHAPTER : I

### NATURE OF POETRY

The study of Poetry has fascinated scholars, critics, researchers, and laymen, too, for thousands of years. Poetry is one of the major branches of literature. The word 'Poetry' is derived from the Greek 'Poiesis' which means a 'construction' and the word 'Poet' means 'Maker' or 'Creator'. Poetry is inherited from the universe. Poetry has emerged from the earliest times and is the oldest form of composition. It has developed in all ages and countries. The birth of poetry existed in the basic needs of people. Elizabeth Drew writes:

".....For though the sociologists tells us that man's basic needs are food, shelter and sexual fulfilment, it seems that he has always had another need something that on the face of it seems quite superfluous and useless \_\_\_\_ the urge to self-creation in art. Even in his primitive stages, man adorned his cave walls with drawings. As he developed his civilizations he fashioned jewellery and metal work and decorated his dishes and pots and funeral urns. He danced and chanted rhythmical incantations and for the last two to three thousand years we have records of how he used his speech not only utilitarian purpose of communicating directly with his fellows but to create in musical patterns, the stores of his people and the records of his thoughts, his feelings and his sensations."

Poetry being an old form of expression , different sorts of people have enjoyed writing poetry in different ages. According to Elizabeth Drew:

"Poetry has been written in times of religious and political beliefs, even in times of war and peace. It has been written under monarchies, democracies and dictatorships by every sort of people like Princess, Scholars, revolutionists and even by man men."<sub>2</sub>

Poetry is the enriched form of literature. The language of poetry is highly structured more than any other forms of literature. It varies from the language of prose writing. It uses finer, richer and more powerful words than Prose. Marjorie Boulton notices the changes in Poetry writing:

"The form of poetry is often more obvious than the form Prose, Partly because though the most beautiful form of literature, is also historically the most primitive. The earliest Poetry was social in purpose, the incantation the rite, the carol, the records of the tribe, the ballad, they were associated with ritual dance or feasting. Now a days Poetry tends to be a personal intimate even introspective activity."<sub>3</sub>

Poetry is the art of making and the Poet is a 'maker' , a 'creator'. A Poet is a man of divine instinct or a great excellence. Poet is gifted with a genuine insight for creating a monumental work. A Poet is a Par-excellent man. He is like many other men but separated from the

ordinary by abnormally developed power of using language. His inexplicable power usually can make him write Poetry.

## ii. DEFINITIONS OF POETRY.

Poets and critics of Poetry have tried to define Poetry from age to age but they have failed to cover all aspects of Poetry in one single definition. Hence a number of definitions prevail. Some significant examples are cited here :

1. Poetry, therefore, is an art of imitation. Mimesis means a representing, counterfeiting or figuring forth, Metaphorically speaking it means a speaking picture with this end to teach and delight.

- Sir Philip Sidney.

2. Poetry as metrical composition and added that it is the art of uniting pleasure with truth by calling imagination to help of reason.

- Dr. Samuel Johnson.

3. Poetry is the art of employing words in such a manner as to produce an illusion on the imagination, the art of doing by means of words what the painter does by means of colours.

- Macaulay.

4. Poetry is Musical thought.

- Carlyle.

5. Poetry is a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, it makes its origin from emotions recollected in tranquillity.

- William Wordsworth

6. Poetry means the best words in the best order.

- S. T. Coleridge.

7. If poetry comes not as naturally as leaves to a tree, it had better not come at all .... It should surprise by a fine excess. It should strike the reader a wording of his own highest thoughts and appear almost a remembrance.

- John Keats.

8. Poetry may be defined to be the expression of the imagination and poetry is connected with the origin of man.

9. Poetry is the universal language which the heart holds with nature and itself ..... Poetry is that fine particle within us that expands, rarefies, refines, and raises our whole being....

- William Hazlitt.

10. Poetry defines as the suggestion by the imagination of noble grounds for the noble emotions.

- John Ruskin.

11. Poetry is simply the most delightful and perfect form of utterance that human words can reach. It is a criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such a criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty.

- Matthew Arnold.

12. Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion but an escape from emotion, but it is not the expression of personality but an escape from personality. The poet has not a personality to express but a particular medium which is only a medium and not a personality in which impressions and experience combine in peculiar and unexpected ways.

- T. S. Eliot.

13. Poetry is the art of producing pleasure by the just expression of imaginative thought and feeling in metrical language.

- Prof. Courthope.

14. A poem begins as a lump in the throat a sense of wrong sickness, a lovesickness. It is at its best when it is a tantalizing vagueness. It finds its through or it makes its thought. . . . . It makes us aware of things, we always know but forgotten. It begins in delight and ends in wisdom.

- Robert Frost.

15. If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold, no fire can ever warm me. I know it is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off; I know this is poetry. Is there any other way ?

- Emily Dickinson.

16. The writing of a poem to me is the physical and mental task of constructing a formally water-tight compartment of words preferably with a main moving column (i.e. narrative) to hold a little of the real causes and forces of the creative brain and body.

- Dylan Thomas.

17. If a line of poetry strays into my memory, my skin bristles so that the razor ceases to act. Poetry indeed seems to me more physical than intellectual.

- A. E. Housman.

18. Poetry is nothing if not the record of just how the forces of the universe try to redress some balance disturbed by human error.

- Ted Hughes.

These examples prove that no single, simple and complete definition of poetry seems to be possible as all the features of poetry cannot be brought in one single definition.

### **iii. FEATURES OF POETRY**

The chief characteristic feature of poetry is to provide emotional and imaginative interpretation of life. Poetry relates our feelings and passions. Imagination takes the secondary place at the time of creation, but if there is powerful imaginative impulse, poetry becomes stronger. Poetry deals with facts, experiences, problems of life. Emotion and imagination are the integral parts of poetic process.

These essential qualities may exist even in the Prose work too.

W.H. Hudson comments on the distinction between Prose and Poetry.

" There is much Poetry which is purely 'Prosaic', there is much Prose which is markedly 'Poetical' but a dividing line between Prose and

Poetry still exist. What does imply this It implies that Poetry. specially so termed is a particular kind of art, that it arises only when the poetic qualities of imagination and feeling are embodied in a certain form of expression.”<sup>4</sup>

Poetry strikingly stands aside from Prose. Poetry has a specific structure containing stanzas, intonation and rhythm. So rhythmical language or metre becomes an essential part of the poetry. Emotion and imagination embody in the form of rhythmic language or metre to make poetry more effective.

But there is a little controversy among the critics whether the poetry should consist of rhythmical language or not Critics like Coleridge and others declare that poetry of the highest kind may exist without metre. They feel that rhythmic language or metre is the external aspect of poetry. But certain critics feel that the use of metre is essential. Metre is the most general and constant feature of poetry. The employment of metre in prose may be richly poetical, but it becomes actual poetry only when metre is used. Without metre even the most emotional and imaginative subject would remain prosaic.

The function of poetry is to give aesthetic pleasure . Poetry is an art appeals to man's aesthetic sense and the sense of enjoying pleasure in beauty. Poetry creates beauty through rhythm, sound and feeling. It portrays characters through the special use of language. The strength of

Poetry reflects only when there is a mixture of nice rhythm and grandeur subject. Poetry grows only after treating a great subject worthily.

Poetry is knowledge. Poet, at every time, does not reveal his emotional and imaginative interpretation of life. He provides knowledge too. He represents knowledge through his experiences. Cleanth Brooks in the Preface to his book *Understanding Poetry*, writes:

"Poetry gives us knowledge. It is a knowledge of ourselves in relation to the world of experience, and to that world considered not statistically but in terms of human purposes and values. Experience considered in terms purposes and values, in dramatic in that it is concrete, in that involves a process and in it embodies the human effort to arrive through conflict - at meaning. We know that to conceive of poetry as knowledge is not only possible way of conceiving."<sub>5</sub>

#### iv. CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN AGE

It is rather difficult to determine the exact year of modern age. It is believed that twentieth century began simultaneously with the first world war. But Frank Kermode and John Hollander mention the number of dates for the beginning of the modern age in their book **Modern**

**British Literature :**

"1857: Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal* and Flaubert's *Madam Bovary*, 1859: Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, 1899: the year Arthur Symonds's *The Symbolist Movement in France* was published."<sub>6</sub>



The modern age emerged with certain characteristics. Two world wars are the main events in the world. The first world war broke out in 1914 and ended in 1918. The four year world war affected social and economic life of European countries. It was terrific shock to European society which had to witness destruction of life and devastation of property. The end of war created many problems and brought drastic changes in English society. Economic depression became the dominant factor. The collapse of the war economy brought the unemployment. Taxes were greatly increased in order to meet the enormous loss. This newly changed economic policy imposed on people to make them poorer. Poverty became an integral part of the pauper class. The industrial and agricultural way of life had been changed. The first world war not only affected economic policy but it brought some changes in political thinking too. The whole system of British empire had changed the new political theories of the state. As the result of political changes, there came into existence the doctrine of communism in Russia after 1917, fascism in Italy after 1922, and Nazism in Germany after 1923. All these doctrines made effect on the English national morale.

The second world war broke out in 1939, and ended in 1945. The six years of world war strikingly different than the first world war because in this conflict not only military forces but the civilian population were intimately involved. Winston Churchill described the

second world war was as 'blood, sweat, tears'. It also brought some changes in economic system and its financial resources. Though the second world war brought its effects on the English life, it brought some social reforms in the welfare society. The life of working class had been improved. There was a great improvement in the health and economic condition of the lower classes. The private schools and universities increased gradually and the youngster built their high educational quality. The working classes had seen the better day than ever before. By and large England became an 'affluent society'. In this way the social fabric was changed.

The second world war also changed the political situation of Britain. During the post-world war the British Government became the consulting and supervisory state. The Government expanded the scope of Welfare State by carrying out social reforms. The economic planning was made. This was the real picture of England after the two world wars.

The remarkable improvement in education was another important development of modern age. After the second world war British Government gave full scope to the public education. By the act of 1902, education became the prominent aspect of the modern society. Educational opportunity available to the people of all classes. The effect of literacy was profound in the modern Britain. Earlier the people had

been the evils of the industrial Revolution but the rapid increasing literacy brought the awakening of the national conscience.

The main features of modern age are the scientific discoveries and technological advancement in the field of science. The new discoveries of science brought a change in the attitude of men. Charles Darwin's the revolutionary book, Origin of Species shook the conservative thinking of Christianity. Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity laid some new ideology. Herbert Spencer, T. H. Huxley, and John Tyndall made contribution to the field of science. The new inventions and discoveries hit a blow to the traditional values, beliefs and emotions. People lost their belief in spiritual values. The new technological inventions took place in related the media as radio, cinema and television. Cinema became the main part of leisure activity. Television became the great mechanical invention in the modern age.

In the beginning of the modern age, people observed some more technological advancement like the steam engine, Gas lighting, air-raid protection, telegraph, railways, bomb blasts, aero planes etc. Science introduced some another important scientific researches as automobile, electric lighting, wireless, telegraphy. All the branches of science developed in the modern age. But the development in scientific researches brought a great change in the habits of thought and man's attitude to

Christian faith. The features like the loss of faith, loneliness, frustration, alienation, impact of mass media, etc. became quite prominent.

The study of psychology became one of the chief characteristics of modern time. Professor Sigmund Freud published his books *Interpretation of Dreams* in 1900 and *The Psychology of the Every day* in 1914. His psycho-analytical theories influenced the European mind.

Some philosophical theories of modern age laid its dominance on the mind of people. Philosophers like Henry Bergson, Sigmund Freud, Bertrand Russell, economic theorists as Malthus and Adam Smith gave new approaches to the modern people. Writers like James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Charles Morgan and J. B. Priestley got influenced by the philosophical doctrines.

## **v. POETRY IN THE MODERN AGE**

### **A. CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN POETRY.**

Twentieth century English literature generally falls into two phases, namely 'modernist' and 'Post-modernist'. These dividing lines are drawn by the two world wars. Two world wars not only brought socio-economic and political changes in Europe but imposed certain ideas and trends on modern literature. The modern Poetry, too, is influenced by the great two world wars. Before the war time, Poetry was much pre-occupied with the creation of a dream-world. But modern poets

brought a mixture of the traditional and experimental revolution in forms and content of poetry. They refused to accept the old and traditional conventions in poetic process.

The younger generation of poets had a strong desire for the establishment of a new tradition in poetry. Modern poetry was struggling for a new tradition so it became poetry of revolt against tradition and experimentalism. There was a deliberate break with tradition. The important changes are brought in poetic style and form by the enthusiastic pursuit of experiment. Concreteness, economy, and exactitude of expression in poetry became one of the chief feature of modern poetry. Although modern poets revolted against traditional concepts and practices, they did not entirely rule out the values of the traditions. The modern poets like T. S. Eliot, W. B. Yeats tried to preserve the traditional values.

The modern poets were deeply influenced by the impact of science. They widened the scope and nature of poetry. They turned away from the decadent romantic tradition which persisted in Georgian poetry. The revolt against the tradition was mirrored in the poetry of T. S. Eliot. He saw in its naked realism and felt the common place subjects, too suitable for modern poetry.

The changing new poetry of modern age was realistic. The poets displayed the grim realities of life which shattered all illusions and romantic dreams. Thus modern poetry became bitter and mostly

pessimistic. The modern poets expressed the elements of pessimism more poignantly than their precursors. But it doesn't mean that modern poetry is only a poetry of despair and pessimistic. Even in the works of the most pessimistic poets - will, satire, humour may be visible.)

Modern poetry is a complex structure. Vagueness, complexity, new symbolism, psycho-analytical approach are some of the chief features of modern poetry. The modern poets brought modernity in poetry employing old traditions in the new forms. For Eliot metaphysical conceits, and a marvelous feature of Donne's poetry had a strong pull. The rebirth of metaphysical conceits displayed the newness in modern poetry.

Symbolism is the other feature of modern poetry. The French symbolists such as Laforgue, Verlaine, Mallarme were eminent poets. Eliot and Yeats followed these symbolists and made use of extensive symbolism to communicate their vision and sensations. The complex and intricate became the chief features of their writing.

The psychological researches and political theories were reflected in the poetry of some early decades of twentieth century. Sigmund Freud's impact would be seen in the works of W.H. Auden, Dylan Thomas, Stephen Spender.

Modern poetry had emerged in some innovations as Imagism, neo-romanticism, realism and surrealism. The Imagist poets

revolted against Georgian tradition. The Imagist headed by Ezra Pound laid some rules for poetry as clarity of expression through the use of hard accurate and definite images to convey their intellectual and emotional complexes. Dylan Thomas and George Barker wrote poetry on mode of surrealistic approach. They were the chief among the surrealist movement.

The modern poets tried to establish new traditions and poetic techniques. They discarded old poetic forms. Poets like Robert Bridges wanted to change the old poetic forms considering them worn out and old fashioned. The new poets of the 1950's known as the 'Movement' discarded the defiance of tradition. Philip Larkin did not believe in any tradition of poetry. Ted Hughes voiced the natural and animal world through its violence. He made extensive use of myth displaying the violence of nature and animal.

## **B. DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN POETRY UPTO TED HUGHES.**

Modern poetry has a long history of over one hundred years. It is believed that modern English Poetry begins after the death of Tennyson and Browning. Modern Poetry has developed through some movements, currents and cross-currents. David Perkins mentions phases in modern poetry :

" The Aesthetic - Impressionist - Symbolist poetry of the 1880's. The phase of 'Popular Modernism' that began approximately in 1910 and lasted until the end of the first world war. The later style was widespread which exemplified before the first world war in the poetry of Yeats, Pound, and Williams and also represented by the Imagists T.E. Hulme - Aldington and Edit Sitwell. The third phase was that of the 'High-Modernist' style which was fully matured in T.S. Eliot and Pounds Poetry. The young poets of the 1930's such as Auden and Dylan Thomas and other poets of the Romantic revival in England during the 1930's and 1940's, in the later career of the high modernist poets themselves in Philip Larkin and the group of poets known as the 'Movement' that emerged in Great Britain in the 1950."

Twentieth Century English poetry is generally divided into four main divisions namely : 1. Edwardian Poetry (1900-1910) with sub-divisions as 'The Decadents' 'The Realists', 'The Pessimists', and 'Transitional Poets', 2. Secondly the Georgian Poetry (1910-1935) with subdivisions The 'Imagist Poetry', the 'Soldier Poetry', the 'New Country Poetry' and the 'Metaphysical Poetry'. 3. The third group of modern poetry is the Poetry of the second world war (1939-1945) consisting some movements like 'The Apocalyptic Poetry of 1940's' and 'Topographical Poetry'. 4. The Poetry of post-world war with the sub-divisions like 'The Movement' and 'The Group'.



The above categorical divisions would represent the large map of modern English poetry. This vast map of modern poetry can be traced the brief survey.

The English poetry of 1900-1910 is labeled as 'Edwardian Poetry.' This group of poets began to unite poetry in the last years of Queen Victoria's reign and continued to create all through the short reign of King Edward. They praised the Kings and Queens. Rudyard Kipling was a poet Laureate during the reign of King Edward. Thomas Hardy and A.E. Housman were the other poets of Edwardian era. They brought pessimistic approaches in modern poetry. They were not satisfied with the advancement of science. Thomas Hardy brought new ideas into the Edwardian Poetry. G. M. Hopkins wrote mainly religious poetry. Rudyard Kipling, a realist, was the most popular English poet of his age. The 'Decadent' poets like Oscar Wilde, Ernest Dowson, Lionel Johnson, Arthus Symans were called the 'Tragic Generation' because they observed the grim realities of their age. Robert Bridges, G.M. Hopkins and W. B. Yeats tried to bridge the 'transition' from Victorian to the Georgian era.

The next development in modern poetry is the Georgian Poetry of 1910-1920, when King George V was ruling over England. The Georgian Poetry emerged with certain characteristics. A. S. Collins writes:

"The Georgians had, of course, a positive aim, it was to treat natural things in a clear natural and beautiful way neither too modern nor, too like Tennyson. In their treatment of nature and social life they discarded the use of archaic diction such as 'thee' and 'thou' and eschewed such poetical constructions as 'winter' 'dear' and 'host' an armed host. They dropped all gorgeous and grandiloquent expressions in thought."<sup>8</sup>

The chief Georgian Poets are John Masefield, Walter-de-la-mare, John Drink water, and W. H. Davies. John Masfield's 'Salt Water Ballad' , De-la-Mare's 'The mocking fairy' , Drinkwaters 'collected poems' and W.H. Davies's 'The Autobiography of a Super Tramp' are the representative work of Georgian Poetry.

There was a strong reaction against Georgian Poetry before the first world war. The reaction against the Georgians emerged in the hands of a group of poets called Imagists. The Imagist thinking began with the writing of F.S. Flint. He may be considered the pioneer of the movement. Dr. B. Prasad writes some rules of Imagists in his book A

**Background to the Study of Literature.** They were :

"1. direct treatment of the thing. 2. to use absolutely no word that did not contribute to the present action. 3. to compose in sequence of the musical phrase not in sequence of a metronome. 4. use of no superfluous word, no adjective which does not reveal something. 5. and go in fear of abstractions. "<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile Ezra Pound published his anthology in 1914 including pieces by Hilda Doolittle, Amy Lowell, Richard Aldington, James Joyce and himself. The Imagist movement extended with Ezra Pound and Edith Sitwell in English Poetry.

The first world war broke out in 1914 and some poets got involved in the war directly. They began to sing of Patriotism and about the mother land, England. The poets of the first world war like Rupert Brooke, Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon directly associated with the war. The soldier poets brought a deliberate revival in modern poetry. Love, Death, Patriotism and Warfare were the chief themes of war Poetry. Among the themes, Patriotism was the central subject of their Poetry. The other minor war Poets were Julian Grenfell, Robert Nichols - Robert Graves - Edmund Blunden and C.H. Sorely.

The period between the two world wars was an age of confusion and bewilderment. The confusion and disillusioned temperament of the age was effectively expressed in novel and drama of this Period. Relatively Poetry became subordinate. In spite of dominance of novel and drama, a new and living poetic tradition started between the wars by T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats, W.H. Auden, Cecil Day Lewis and Louis MacNeice, with the writings of towering personalities poetry again became a vital literary form.

In a real sense, modern poetry starts from 1920's. 1920's is one of the most fruitful periods in the whole history of modern poetry. M. L. Rosenthal calls it "**as an heroic age**".<sup>10</sup> The poetic technique and forms of poetry of 1920's brought new revolution by the group of 1920's.

The 'Revival of Metaphysical Movement' was the chief contribution in the domain of 1920's poetry. Herbert Grierson's edition of "Donnes: Metaphysical Lyric and poems of the Seventeenth century" was published in 1912. It was a deliberate revival of metaphysical movement. The 'metaphysical movement' was taken to the peak of height in the 17th century by John Donne and his other fellow-poets. The poets of 1920's were influenced by the toughness and complexity, their fusion of thought and passion. The group of 1920's tried to give a new shape and world-wide view to the revival of modern metaphysical movement.

The chief and exponent poet of the revival of metaphysical movement was T. S. Eliot. His dominance as the great poet had run throughout the half century. He genuinely rediscovered and re-created the 17th century tendency once again. His study of French, German and classical works of Dante and Eastern mysticism shaped him as a genuine poet of 1920's. He expressed the disillusionment of generation of his time in his monumental work *The Waste Land*. By the publication of *The Waste Land* Eliot became the most influential English poet of 1920's. The portrait of a lady. The love song of J. Alfred Prufrock'. 'The Waste

Land'. 'The Hollow Men' are the chief works of Eliot. T. S. Eliot and his other predecessors certainly raised the status of English poetry.

Edith Sitwell is another worth-mentioning poet of 1920's. Her first anthology called *wheels* appeared in 1916. The six cycles of *wheels* revolted strongly against the popular Georgian poetry. She was deeply conscious of the unhappiness and emptiness of the inter-war years. Her major works: 'Clowns Houses', 'The Wooden Pegasus' and *Bucolic* canedio 'Gold coast customs' may create a wholly artificial world from the dreams of childhood.

W. B. Yeats is another poet of the pre-war years. He also observed the disillusion and the emptiness of the age. He was acutely conscious of the spiritual bareness of his age. 'The wind among the Reeds', 'The shadow water' 'The Green Helmet and other poems'. and 'The Responsibilities' are the best collections of him.

In the second half of the interwar period, the new group of young poets grouped as the poets of the 1930's were W. H. Auden. Stephen Spender, Louis MacNeice, and Cecil Day Lewis. They had been friends at Oxford. As a well educated and conscientious group, they had to see the mass unemployment, the depression, economic collapse, and the growing threat of a second world war. These poets are deeply concerned with the social problems. They are also called the poets of "social awareness".

As they were conscious poets of the 1930's, they were not only influenced by the social awareness but political ideology from different parts of world. The political events had affected the writing of poets of the 1930's.

W. H. Auden is one of the dominant poets of the 1930's. He took much interest in the anti-fascist movement. His 'About the House', 'Epistle to a Godson', 'Thank You Fog', and 'Academic Graffiti' are the best works. Louis MacNeice is a member of the Auden group. He never embraced wholeheartedly any political creed. C. Day Lewis has his own identity. His early 'Transitional poem', and 'From Feathers to Iron', are the best collections.

Stephen Spender is a well-appreciated poet of 1930's. He was deeply moved with the sufferings and unhappiness of inter-war period. He has written poems on pity of war and the emotions of the lover, 'Vienna', 'The Still Centres', 'Ruins and visions', 'Poems of Dedications' are his important poetry collections.

Another poet of the Auden group is Christopher Isherwood. He collaborated with W.H. Auden. His two anthologies : 'The Poets Tongue' and 'The Oxford Book of Light Verse' are well-known. 'The Age of Anxiety', 'Another Time' and 'Collected shorter poems' deal with his personal approaches to the age.

The decade 1940's is rich because of various movements developing during the period. The movements like 'Neo-Romanticism', 'Apocalypse Movement' 'The Revival of Religious Poetry', 'The Revival of Regional poetry' are the main developments in the poetry of 1940's.

The 'Neo-Romantic' Movement started as a new reaction against 'New Country Movement' of 1930's. The chief poets of neo-romanticism are George Barker, David Gascoyne and Dylan Thomas. They were influenced by the surrealist movement. The surrealist movement got revived in 1936 when International Surrealist Exhibition was held. Surrealism was a theory of pure art, a reaffirmation. Herbert Read was one of its chief English exponents who wrote of the romantic principle. The surrealists entirely opposed the socialist realism. Dylan Thomas was a great figure in the neo-romantic poetry of the forties.

'The Apocalypse Movement' began in 1939 by Henry Treece, K.F. Hendry, Nicholas Moore, G.S. Fraser and Tom Scott. The Apocalyptic movement proclaimed the hatred of the machine age and its faith in individual rather than in any theory. These poets rebelled against the political and social poetry of the early 1930's. I. F. Hendry and Henry Treece both edited two collections of the poems of the new school under the titles of 'The New Apocalypse', and **The White Horseman**.

The other two minor movements are mentioned by Edward Albert.

"Two other movements started as 'a revival of religious poetry' and 'a revival of regional poetry'. The main contributors of revival of religious poetry were Kathleen Raine, Christopher Hassall, Norman Nicholson and David Gascoyne. The revival of regional Poetry began with keidrych Rhys, R.S. Thomas, Hugh McDiarmid."<sup>11</sup>

Dylan Thomas is the dominant poet of 1940's. He was anglo-welsh who became aware of the imported innovations of international surrealist writing. His *Death and Entrance*, *The Map of Love*, *Fern Hill*, *A Refusal to Mourn the Death by Fire* are the best collections. He immortalised the 'Death' in his great works.

The two 'Soldier Poets' who were killed in the second world war are Sidney Keyes and Keith Douglas. They wrote poetry of war. Alun Lewis was a specifically Welsh poet of war. His first volume *Raider Dawn* paid tribute to another soldier Poet Edward Thomas.

✓ The birth of 'Movement' in 1950 is another development in the modern Poetry. The 'Movement' arose when an anthology *Poets of the 1950's* (1955) edited by D. J. Enright including poems by Enright himself, Kingsley Amis, Robert Conquest, Donald Davie, John Holloway, Elizabeth Jennings, Philip Larkins and Jane Waine come out. Another anthology edited by Robert Conquest: '*New Lines-I*' was published in 1956, which included the same eight poets and added on more than Gunn. They were named as 'Oxford and Cambridge group of Movement Poets.'



The original poets of 'Oxford Group of Movement' were Philip Larkin, Kingsley Amis and John Wain. They strongly condemned against the deliberate revival of Romanticism of Dylan Thomas. They returned for inspiration to Hardy, Georgian poetry of the 1910's and 1920's, and to the Augustan poets of 18th century. The language of Movement poetry became sober, low keyed, exact and reflective. Philip Larkin is the great poet of this movement. He freed English poetry from political themes of the Auden Group and also from the impact of Dylan Thomas and the Apocalyptic .

Thom Gunn, Donald Davie and D. J. Enright were Cambridge graduates. They formed the group movement poets. Than Gunn was anti-romantic. Donald Davie is another poet of movement. Bridges of Reason is his important poetry collection. D. J. Enright, the editor of Poets of the 1950's was influenced by F. R. Leavis.

Modern Poetry has passed through currents and cross-currents, through reactions. Another strong reaction of the middle of 1950's revolting against to the 'Movement' poetry of 1950's is called 'The Group'. The reaction was given by the younger poets of Cambridge and London. They formed a 'Group' and organized poets-group first in Cambridge under the leadership of Philip Hobsbaum and more importantly at Edward Lucie-Smith's house in London.

Among the Group Poets, Hobsbaum and Lucie-Smith themselves, Peter Porter, George Macbeth, Ted Hughes, Peter Redgrove and Alan Brown John. All Group poets along with David Wevill, Tener Baybars wrote for A Group anthology (1963). Peter Porter is the most successful poet of the Group. He has emerged as an elegiac poet. He has remodeled many Martail's (the Roman poet of the first century A.d.) epigrams. George Macbeth is another prolific poet of the 'Group'. He published his poems in the early and mid-1950's. His poems are published in Penguin Book of Sick Verse, The Orland poems are a parallel to Ted Hughes's Crow. Poems of love and Death.<sup>2</sup> The Long Darkness are the best works of George Macbeth. Peter Redgrove and Edwin Brock are another poets. Redgrove's Mr. Waterman and The Serman are clearly dramatic monologues. Ted Hughes, the most distinguished and dynamic poet of 'Group' contributed much to develop modern poetry. He was associated with the Group but he discarded the Group's innovations and made special identity by employing new strategies in his cannons of poetry. He was considered the towering Personality of the modern times.

The other poets of the 1960's who without associating with the Group have shared some of its manners and concerns are Brain Jones, Jon Stallworthy, David Holbrook, Fleur Adcock and Jenny Joseph.

The 'Concrete Poetry' , 'The Confessional Poetry' , 'The Review and after Poetry', 'Pop and after' poetry of the 1960's and 1970's' are some of the major poetic developments in modern British Poetry.

Modern Poetry has passed through some reactions, tendencies and some groups. It reached on the high-peak in the middle career of T. S. Eliot and W. B. Yeats. Both brought new techniques and strategies in the form of modern Poetry. The 'movement' poets like Philip Larkin, Kingsley Amis, Donald Davie, Thom Gunn revealed the anti-romantic tendencies. The Group poets including Ted Hughes tried to give new treatment to modern Poetry. Modern Poetry took a new form in the hands of Ted Hughes.

#### **vi. TED HUGHES**

##### **A. LIFE AND WORKS :**

Modern Poetry develops through the creations of dominant poets like T.S. Eliot, W. H. Auden, Dylan Thomas, Philip Larkin, Ted Hughes and such others.

Ted Hughes is one of the versatile poets of the early 1960's and 1970's. He is honoured as 'Poet Laureate' of England in 1984 by Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace. Though he is regarded mainly as a profile writer of verse, he has also written for children. Hughes

wrote plays for radio and stage; and wrote some very fine critical essays too.

Ted Hughes is one of the conscious poets of the Post War II.

A. Alvarez regards him as the authentic poet of genius in modern poetic scene. His greatness as a famous poet is well summarized by A. Alvarez in his essay on Ted Hughes:

"Over the years, I have met dozens, may be hundreds of people who called themselves poets. Some were published, a few famous many were - and still are - unknown. But Hughes was one of the few who had an authentic voice like no else's, a voice that comes out of nowhere and is always unexpected. He belongs up there with the other true poets of this half century whom I have been lucky to know: Zbigniew Herbert Robert Lowell, John Berryman, Mirosław Holub, and, of course, Sylvia Plath."<sup>12</sup>.

The Range of Hughes's poetic career is enormous and is enriched by the various trends in modern poetry. He is associated with 'Movement' poets of 1950's indirectly and he is one of the members of 'Group Poets' of mid 1950's. He moved through the poetic trends of modern poetry and became one of the outstanding poets of modern time.

Ted Hughes ( Edward James Hughes ) was born in Mytholmroyd on August 17, 1930 in a middle class family. Mytholmroyd was a small mill town in West Yorkshire - Pennines which surrounded by bleak, barren moors. He was the youngest son of William Henry Hughes

and Edith Farrar Hughes. His father was a village carpenter. When Hughes was seven, his family moved to Mexborough, a coal-mining-town in South Yorkshire. His father changed his old profession of making portable wooden buildings and bought a news paper store and a shop of tobacco to run the family.

In this meantime his father participated the trenches of world war I. His family stayed there for few years. Ted enjoyed the countryside, animals, birds. He played with town boys - sons of miners and railway men. He was fascinated by a nearby farm, woods and a lake. His older brother hunted and fished with Ted.

Ted attended the local grammar school of Yorkshire. He was bright in his study of the school. When he was fifteen he began writing poems in the manners of galloping Kiplingesque rhythms, most of them about Zulus or the wild west. As a school boy he read the Bible from cover to cover. Before moving to Cambridge for his higher education, he took a part time job of National Services in ROYAL AIR SERVICE (RAS). He worked as a radio mechanic in Northern Yorkshire. Then Hughes entered Pembroke College at Cambridge to study English. While studying at Pembroke College, he was celebrated as a clever, bright and handsomest student with great personal magnetism. He was an open Exhibition to Pembroke College, Cambridge in 1948. He was given as a prize of scholarship from his grammar school.

In the third year, he changed his course of study from English as Archaeology and Anthropology. In June 1954, Hughes published several poems in 'Cambridge Literacy Magazine', under the pseudo-name Daniel Hearing. His poems were written under the influence of Dylan Thomas. He supported himself by securing a number of odd jobs. After graduation he worked as a rose-gardener, night watchman, a zoo attendant and a script-reader for J. Arthur Rank, the film production company at Pinewood. He became a school teacher for some years. During this academic career, he came under the influence of prominent like Sir Fraser, Gilbert Murray, Francis Corn ford and A.B. Cook.

Once Ted met Sylvia Plath at a lunch party which held to inaugurate the 'st. Botolph's Review' on Feb 1956. Sylvia was on a 'Fullbright scholarship' in Cambridge University. Plath got attracted especially to charming and handsomest personality of Ted. Hughes was deeply moved by Sylvia's brilliant approach to him. Sylvia Plath praised her future husband in her letter to her mother April 17, 1956, in the following words:

"I met the strongest man in the world, ex-Cambridge brilliant poet whose work . . . I loved before I met him, a large, hulking healthy Adam, half-French Half-Irish with a voice like the thunder of God - a singer, a story-teller, lion and world-wanderer, a vagabond who will never stop  
...." <sup>13</sup>

Their close friendship turned into husband and wife relation after four months only in 1956.

Sylvia was also a born poet. They woke each morning at dawn bringing new ideas. They wrote poetry every day. As the result of it, before leaving for America, Hughes finished his first collection of poems *The Hawk in the Rain* and published in 1957. Though it was his first book, it made an immediate impact on Critics, poets and readers.

In the following year the couple went to United States of America with a plan of simple living, studying and writing. They enjoyed their remarkable creative partnership at Yaddo, the artist colony in Upstate New York. Hughes taught English and creative writing at Amherst college in University of Massachusetts for a year, and Plath taught literature of Smith and Boston College. Ted Hughes received a 'Guggenheim foundation Award.'

After spending a few years in the writer's colony of Yaddo, the couple returned to England in December 1959. Hughes published his second volume '*Lupercal*' in 1960. His second volume confirmed his reputation as an important young poet. He was awarded 'the Hawthornden prize' for the volume. In the following year, his *Meet My Folks* and '*The wound*' a juvenile drama got published.

In the meanwhile, a daughter Frieda Rebecca was born on 1 April 1960 and years later a son Nicholas Farrar was born in January

1962. The Earth-owl and other Moon-people, another collection of children's poems was published in 1963. Their married life of six years was a strong union of supremely dedicated writers but their personal relation as husband and wife was not successful. Hughes was a great lover of Devon country side but Plath felt it heartless, bleak and uninviting. During the summer of 1962 her married life to Hughes began to buckle. Sylvia's jealousy was roused because of Ted's affair with Assia Wevill. She became upset and wracked by self-doubt. Assia Wevill was a wife of a friend to Hughes and also she was a fellow poet. Hughes left Plath for Assia in February 1963. After that Plath was divested and thinking of suicide. She moved from Devon to London with Frieda and Nicholas. Her depression, frustration led her mind to think of putting an end to her life. In the morning of 11 February 1963, Plath carefully laid out milk and bread for her sleeping children, put her head in oven and gassed herself. Hughes stopped writing of poetry for three years because of Sylvia's tragic death. But he came over the situation by writing poetry. His The Burning of the Brothel and The Price of Bride, a juvenile drama, came in 1966. Another volume of poems Gravestones published in 1967 as Poems: Ted Hughes's Faint light and Sillitoe. The Iron Giant: A story in Five Nights were published in 1968. Between publication of Wodwo and Crow (1970) another tragedy occurred. Hughes began to live with Assia Wevill; but his stay with Assia was not satisfactory. In 1969, Assia



wevill killed herself and her 27 year daughter Shura ended her life using gas as Plath had used. Hughes was greatly tormented by these deaths. Crow : From the life and songs of the crow' was published in 1970. It was one of his most startling achievements and reflected the deprived mood of Hughes throughout the collection. His Fighting For Jerusalem and Eat Crow (drama) were published in the following year.

A very little known is about his second marriage. Hughes married again in 1970 to Carol Orchard. She was a farmer's daughter. They settled down at Devon farm and worked with his father-in-law, Jack Orchard. He threw himself into his own writing as he became wary of his private life. In this wary mood, he produced dozens of books of prose and poetry for both adults and children. He produced translations, wrote plays, and edited volumes of poetry by Plath and others. The Iron Man and Orpheus, both dramas were published in the same year. His season poems Spring, summer, Autumn Winter were revised and an enlarged edition was published as Season Songs in 1975.

**Earth-Moon, Guadete and Remains of Elmet** were published in i.e. 1976, 1977, 1979. His best-known poetry. Moortown describes Hughes's experiences working on a Devonshire farm with his father-in-law. Under the North Star was published in 1981. The Rattle Bag: An Anthology of Poetry edited with Seamus, Hean was published in 1982. His New selected poems : 1957 - 1981 were published in 1982

and another collection *River* was published in 1983. In 1984, he succeeded Sir John Berjeman as a poet Laureate. He wrote poetry on natural instincts of animals and his *Collected Animal Poems* (1984) for children won both the 'Guardian children's fiction award' and 'signal poetry award'. His *flowers and Insects : Same Birds and a Pair of Spiders* published in 1986. *Wolf-watching* is the next important volume published in 1989. Hughes handled not only poetry but prose for. His most striking prose work, *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being*, was published in 1992. *Tales from Ovid* is a translation from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* published recently in 1997. His *tales from Ovid* won the 1997 White Bread Book of the Year Award. The next volume *By Heart : 101 poems to Remember* was published in 1997.

The last few years of Hughes's life were torturous. He had been suffering from Cancer for about eighteen months but he told about his illness only to closest friends. He kept it secrete. During his illness, Hughes requested to publish his last work *Birthday Letters*, a sequence of love poems in 1998. It was a collection of passionate poems about his fraught fragile relationship with Plath. This volume is of an autobiography of the past memories of beloved wife Sylvia Plath. Hughes was awarded the 'forward Poetry Prize' for *Birthday Letters*. Hughes died on 28 October 1998 at his home in Devon North Tawton in South Western England. He was 68 at the time of death. In his long span of poetic

career Hughes produced a large bulk of poetry. He has published more than 400 poems. His poetic output is enormous.

Every writer is a product of his time. He is influenced by the race, the social, economic, cultural and religious atmosphere; and the moment. These forces are the formative elements in the personality and creativity of every great writer and his work.

Ted grew up in west Yorkshire area. He absorbed the west Yorkshire dialect and made use of Yorkshire dialectal language in the early poems. But he gave up the Yorkshire dialect at the middle of his poetic career. He read Wordsworth's *Leech-Gatherer* and Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* at the time of his staying in dreary London Lodgings. Ted Hughes is very common with Emily Bronte because both were brought up in the same rugged district of East Yorkshire.

Hughes's early poetry is over crowded with various influences of writers such as Donne, Hopkins, Dylan Thomas Wilfred Owen, D. H. Lawrence and sometime T. S. Eliot. Hughes admired Donne of his satires and epistles. He extensively read the works of D. H. Lawrence. Hughes praises William Blake for his supreme mysticism. When Ted Hughes had gone through the works of W. B. Yeats, he became spell bound for about six years. Hughes looked upon Yeats as the judge for his development. He could do well because of Yeats and his principles. Hughes was influenced by Chaucer and Shakespeare too. Shakespeare became the

favourite poet to Hughes. He read all the works of Shakespeare. He wrote **Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being** in 1992. Hughes is indebted to Lawrence and Dylan Thomas. He respected Hopkins and read his poetry very closely. He is thrilled by Walter de-la-Mare. Dylan Thomas's **Death and Entrance** became a holy Book to Hughes. He liked Bowra's primitive songs. He read also American Ransome. He took a model from Crowe Ransome.

Ted Hughes is a versatile and prolific writer. He wrote many philosophical essays modeling on Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. He was deeply moved by the influence of Indian and Chinese philosophy, and religious writings. He was much interested in mythology and folklore. '**Bardo Thodol**' (Tibetan Book of Dead) became the important book for Hughes. It was on Tibetan Buddhism. Hughes was wide read poet in modern time. He took inspiration from different sources and developed his poetic insight in the manner of a great poet.

The last but not least influences at his work was of the poet's father. His father fought in war for years. He revealed horror stories about trench warfare in world war I. He collected the experience from his father. He was ten in 1940, and only fifteen when the war ended. He observed the German Bombing and rocket-raids of world war II.

Hughes spent six years of life with his wife Sylvia Plath. She was also a poetess of high merit. Hughes was influenced by Plath's writings too.

## **B. POETRY OF TED HUGHES**

Ted Hughes has been labeled as "a poet of animal" and "a poet of nature" in his early poetic career. His early poetry displays the life of animals and birds. His interest in animal kingdom began from the early childhood days. He was brought up among the lead toys and the real animal instinct and cunning. He deliberately avoided the conventional subjects of the poetry like social and cultural milieu other themes. He has created his own animal kingdom including wild and natural animals. Fox, Jaguar, Horses magpies, owls, fish, rabbits, weasels, and curlews are the animals consisting appearing in his poetry and helped him to make his own identify in the modern poetic scene.

His first two volumes *The Hawk in the Rain* and *Lupercal* displayed the non-human universe. Hughes caught the violence from the animal world and from nature. Hence violence became one of the major themes of his poetry. The natural world and animal kingdom became the topics of his early poetry.

Though Hughes has been considered as a poet of nature and landscape, he is quite different from the Romantic mode of writing poetry. Romantic poets glorified the nature. But Hughes expresses the natural

world as a sense of horror lying beneath the safe surface. In his early poetry we find description of English Landscape. His next *Moon town* portrays the English landscape of Devonshire farm on which Ted Hughes raised sheep and cattle in his boyhood days. *Moortown* celebrates the glory of large animal life. Beyond the domestic animals, there are equally impressive lives, hedge grow birds, the deer and fox.

Through **Remains of Elmet** Hughes depicts historical landscape of Yorkshire. Describing Elmet he places the present loss of Calder valley in a historical perspective. Godwin's photograph describes a contemporary landscape turned in barren because of textile mills. Historical perspectives became one of the sources for displaying natural phenomenon. He laments on the loss of natural and spiritual vitality. He had observed the glory of Yorkshire but is now spoilt by Industrial Revolution. He writes his vision of the land, at the end of the volume :  
How Young the world was! He has a great urge of nostalgic events.

Hughes employed new strategies for his poetry. Myth and Legendry enriched his poetic output. Like Milton, Hughes was a great lover of Biblical themes. His *Crow* is a startling achievement which places him in galaxy of modern poets because of his new mythological references. There are few references of myth even in *The Hawk in the Rain*, *Graduate*, *Wodwo* and *Cave birds*. Hughes handled conventional

poetic forms such as elegy and odes. His *Moortown* presents the elegiac form of poetry. He mourns over the loss of animal sentimentalism.

Another important feature of Hughes's later poetry is the infusion of autobiographical elements. He emphasizes on the inherent wilderness of Yorkshire through his autobiographical elements. The mill of Yorkshire was rich in the landscape of Hughes youth. The mill and chapel symbolizes the fusion of technology. He laments the loss of landscape but he admires the gain. Hughes avoided making use of personal material directly for his poetry.

The poetry of 1930's and 1940's tackled social, political and economical problems on different levels. Hughes turned back from these mean subjects and paved path for new kind of poetry. He had observed and experienced the horror of war. His father was the source of collecting war experiences.

Hughes poetic height is measured sometimes by the use of special terminology, grandiose themes and Biblical theology. His poetry radically differs from his contemporary poets. He exploits images and aural patterns like Dylan Thomas. His poetry is rich with metaphors. He is close to Donne and Eliot as far as the metaphoric terminology is concerned. His *Crow* is the significant volume that displays the variety of stanza forms where he experiments with the vocabulary of woods and animals.

Ted Hughes's flowering volume *New Selected Poems 1957-1994* deals with the variety of human themes such as momentum, death, violent death of animals and of people. The poems of volume are based on Capulation and death. Death appears in a note of light heartedness and even joy. His early volume *The Hawk in the Rain* reflects death in gruesome and torturous manner. The fear of both life and death is also the theme of Hughes poetry. The theme of violence and death are the central themes in Ted's poetry. Ted has once said, "What excites my imagination is the war between vitality and death."<sup>14</sup>



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