

STUDY MATERIAL ---II SEMESTER B.Com --POETRY

SONNET NO. 130

William Shakespeare

1. What type of poem is this?

Sonnet.

2. Who is the subject of the poem?

Poet's beloved/ Dark Lady

3. What does the poet say about his beloved's eyes?

He says that they are not like the sun.

4. What is redder than the lips of the poet's beloved?

Coral.

5. What are the hairs compared to?

Black wires.

6. What is more pleasing than his beloved's voice?

Music.

7. What is more delightful than his mistress' breath?

Perfume.

SUMMARY

In sonnet no.130 Shakespeare satirises the way his peers described women. He says that he will not praise his Mistress as bearing the conventional colouring. He dismisses all the traditional comparisons. Comparing women's eyes to sun, lips to coral, breasts to snow, cheeks to roses, breath to perfume, voice to music is false according to him. He sarcastically admits that his Mistress is not a goddess. Yet he compliments his beloved saying that she is a rare beauty.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

John Keats

1. What type of poem is La Belle Dame Sans Merci?

Ballad.

2. What does the poet the Knight?

The poet asks the knight why he is sad.

3. what is the season referred to in the poem?

Autumn.

4. What does the poet see on the brow of the knight?

A dull lily.

5. How do the cheeks of the knight look?

Like fading rose.

6. Whom did the Knight meet?

A beautiful lady.

7. Where did the Knight meet the lady?

In the meadow.

8. What did the Knight make for the lady's head?

A garland.

9. How did the lady react?

She moaned with love.

10. What did the lady sing?

A faery's song.

11. Where did the lady take the Knight?

To a cave.

12. How did the Knight shut her eyes?

With four kisses.

13. Where did the Knight find himself?

On the cold hill's side.

SUMMARY

The poet meets a Knight who is loitering alone. He asks him the cause of his sorrow. The Knight answers that he saw a beautiful lady in the meadow. She had long hair and bright foot. He made garland, bracelet and sweet smelling belt for her out of flowers. She looked at him with love. She gave him sweet roots and honey. She took him to a cave. She lulled him to sleep. In his sleep, the knight dreamed of pale kings and princes. Their lips were dry. They said that she was a lady with no mercy. They also said that she had him under her spell. When he woke up he found himself on the cold hill's side alone.

WORK

D.H.Lawrence

1. What is the poet's advice regarding work?

He says that there is no point in work if it does not give pleasure.

2. When will work be meaningful according to the poet?

When it absorbs us.

3. What are the Hindus compared to in the poem 'work'?

To a tree in spring.

4. What is the shell of a snail compared to?

To natural creation.

5. How should man build houses, ships and wagons?

Effortlessly like a snail building its shell.

6. What do Hindus do?

They weave long lengths of cloth.

7. How do Hindus weave cloth?

Like a tree putting forth leaves.

8. How Hindus clothe themselves?

Like a tree that covers itself with leaves.

9. What according to the poet will happen to machines?

Man would destroy them.

10. Where will man go after cancelling the machines according to the poet?

He would go back to nature.

SUMMARY.

D.H.Lawrence condemns mechanisation in his poem 'Work'. He says that there is no point in work if it does not absorb us. The work that we do should give pleasure. He gives the example of Hindus who work in an organic, joyful and productive way. He calls upon man to have natural approach to creation. He should not manufacture things. He hopes that man would return to nature after cancelling the machines.

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

Alfred Tennyson

1. Where does the sea break?

On the cold grey stones.

2. What do the words 'cold grey stones' refer to?

To the poet's inexpressible grief.

3. Who is singing on his boat?

Sailor's boy.

4. What is the wish of the poet?

He wants to express his grief.

5. What is the fisherman's boy doing?

He is playing with his sister.

6. Who is shouting with his sister?

Fisherman's boy.

7. Where do ships go?

To their haven under the hill

8. Vanished hand refers to.....

His friend, Arthur Hallam.

9. What is the poet longing for?

For a touch and sound of his friend.

10. What according to the poet will never come back?

The day that is gone.

SUMMARY

Tennyson's 'Break, Break, Break' is an elegy. The waves are breaking against the rocks on the shore. But the poet is unable to express his grief caused by the death of his friend. The fisherman's boy is shouting while playing with his sister. The sailor's boy is singing. The ships are happily going to their haven. Everything around him is happy. But the poet alone is sad. He longs for a touch and sound of his friend. His grief increases as he realizes that he cannot relive the past.

Break Break Break by Alfred Lord Tennyson: Critical Analysis

Break, Break, Break is an elegy by Alfred Lord Tennyson on the death of his friend Arthur Hallam. The author imagines to be standing near the cliff on the seashore and addressing to the sea waves which are lashing the rocks repeatedly. The poet finds an analogy and expresses it implicitly.

He wishes that the 'waves' of his grief would break the inarticulateness (inability to speak out) in his heart, so that he also expresses his grief easily. The speaker emotionally commands the sea to "break". He wants the sea waves to break on the cliffs; but it is also possible to interpret the lines as demanding to 'break' the cold gray stones of the cliff. The 'cold gray stones' are symbolic of the hardened heart of his inexpressible grief.

In the first stanza the poet says that the torment of his heart as the death of his friend is tremendous. There is a struggle like the struggle of the sea waves on the stormy shores. The question before him is how he can express adequately the thoughts which are rushing into his mind. In the second stanza the poet says that life is full of joy for the fisherman's son and daughter who are laughing and shouting merrily. The poet, on the other hand, is entirely in a different mood. He is restless and grief-stricken at the death of his friend. The poet admires the innocent joy of these youngsters but he is sorry because he cannot share it.

The lad of the sailor is also happy and sings in his boat face to face with the magnificence of the sea. But such joy is not for the poet. In the third stanza the poet says that the majestic ships ply on their destination under the hill. The poet however has no definite plan about his life and he misses his friend Hallam whose voice and touch were so soft and tender. The grief of the poet is terribly intense. In the two lines:

But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand
And the sound of a voice that is still!

The speaker turns aside seas and a very different picture of life. Unlike himself (grief-ridden) and the cold grey stones, the fisherman's boy who is playing with his sister looks gay. So does the sailor's lad singing in his boat on the bay. They're also the "stately" ships going 'on' to their destinations. They all contrast with the speaker's plight. They put the speaker's grief-stricken situation on a contrastive prominence. He remembers the touch of his friend's "vanished hand", and the sound of his voice. The friendly voice has become still.

The speaker looks at the sea again and addresses to it once more. By this time he realizes that even if he manages to express his grief, the grace of his friend will never come back to him. The wish to express is itself no solution to the problem.

The poem is remarkable for the sound symbolism in it. The refrain “Break, Break, Break” that consists of one word repeated thrice parallels the waves that repeatedly beat the cliffs.

Syntactically (structure of sentence) the line is a broken sentence. Economically empathic, the idea is further reinforced by the nature of the very sound the word is made of. The sentence of b-r-k makes a cracking sound; ‘b’ explodes; ‘r’ is harsh and ‘k’ stops before the pause of comma, ‘gray’, ‘stone’, ‘utter’, ‘crag’, ‘dead’ and even ‘tender’ (ironically) reiterate the same plosive, harsh and heavy sounds. They go together with the ideas of grief and the wish of breaking wherever they occur. We can also draw a neat distinction of these features with the absence of such sounds in the second and third stanza, which draw a picture of carefree children’s life and the ships.

The poem is written in four stanzas of four lines each: the first four and the last six are about grief, and the third stanza falls short of giving happy life. The rhyming scheme is abcb but with the harmony of the children’s life the rhyme also adds up to aaba. Master of technical and musical perfection, Tennyson seems to carve each word carefully into perfect form. Our understanding of the real incident of his friend’s death strikes us the more with the heartrending appeal to the ‘sea’ – a vast image of sorrow of the sad!