

Q. Shelley's expression of personal despondency/despair to hope in *Ode to the West Wind*.¹⁵

Ans: P. B. Shelley with his far-sighted philosophy and futuristic ideals was one of the most purely visionary and radical poets in English literature. He thrived with a craving to unshackle mankind from the clutches of morbidity and lack of liberty. This lent to his poetry an elemental force, vehemence as vigorous as that of the Wild West Wind. *Ode to the West Wind* puts across Shelley's spirit of liberty which is tempestuous and prevailing as the West Wind itself. *Ode to the West Wind* may be called a spiritual autobiography of Shelley as ode to a nightingale for Keats. It records his journey from his note of despondency/anguish to hope. Donald H. observes: **"the ode embodies the conflicting themes of the poet's personal despair and his hopes for social renewal in the images drawn from the seasonal cycle"**.

Shelley addresses the Wild West Wind of autumn and identifies his spirit with its spirit. He describes the mighty sweep of the Wind, and appeals to it to remove his emotions of regret, nostalgic sentiment, self pity and anguish. The poet regrets that he is not an object of nature like a leaf, a cloud or a wave. As he is a human being he cannot come out of his confinement like the objects of nature controlled by the Wind. He had high spirits in his boyhood when he could imagine flying high. But now he feels that it is impossible task for him to pursue his dream of an ideal society; and so he supplicates to the powerful Wind for assistance.

Shelley is an impatient idealist and wants to sweep all the ills of society- tyranny, slavery and exploitation and the evils of ignorance and superstitions. He wants liberty and equality for all irrespective of creed and religion. His tormented being is suffering from deep despondency. So he groans:

"I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!"

'A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed' him. Shelley seems to evoke an image of Christ suffering at the cross.

Though the wind is reflective of damage and destruction, it is also the harbinger of change. M.H. Abrams observes that the Ode **'weaves around the central image of the destroying and preserving wind; the full cycle of the myth is s of death, and regeneration, vegetational, human and divine'**(The Mirror and Lamp). Shelley depicts the impact of the West wind on the dead leaves of autumn symbolizing desolation and hopelessness. They are driven by the West Wind as Ghosts fleeing from an enchanter. They are like pestilence-stricken multitudes-yellow, black, pale and hectic red. The West Wind destroys the old decaying leaves. It scatters the seeds and thus preserves life. Likewise, the poet looks forward that

the stagnant conventions die and make way for regeneration. The clouds on the sky are the seraphs of rain and lightening. Yet again the picture of the West Wind as Preserver and Destroyer is sustained here. Rain is emblematic of fertility, while lightening echoes devastation and death. It appears, though Shelley utilizes 'Despondency' in his poems, it is only to foreground the oncoming optimism. He wants the West Wind to lift him from his despondency.

Shelley draws the attention of the unconquerable wind to his miserable plight and tries to convince it that he himself was once uncontrollable. He seeks emancipation from all bondage and restriction and immediately after he demands that the wind should shape its power to his will:

'Be thou. Spirit fierce, My spirit! be"thou me. impetuous one'

He appeals to this wild and impetuous spirit- to use him as a lyre.

Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy

He would like **Demogorgon** to fight his battles and destroy the old order, and carry sparks of spiritual fire. Though the fire of his individual thoughts may be dead and though his physical life is dying, he prays the wind

'to Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth

Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!

He appeals to the mighty West Wind to initiate a new birth and scatter his message of Golden Millennium like seeds among mankind, like ashes and sparks from an extinguished hearth. Thereby to herald and salute Change he observes:

"If winter comes

Can spring be far behind?"

Shelley's anguish has been has been vanished away gradually. The poem ends in a note of hope. Shelley believed that only when revolutionary efforts are truly radical by reorienting human drives from egotism to altruism and from hate and pride to love and justice can there be meaningful progress. In *Ode to the West Wind* Shelley uses the West Wind as a vehicle of his message to the suffering humanity, the destruction of obsolete, unwanted, dead institutions and beliefs are required in order to regenerate the world. Thus Shelley has completed his journey from despondency to hope.

Gulliver's Travels

Gulliver's Travels, or Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, and then a Captain of Several Ships is a prose satire^{[1][2]} of 1726 by the Irish writer and clergyman Jonathan Swift, satirising both human nature and the "travellers' tales" literary subgenre. It is Swift's best known full-length work, and a classic of English literature. The book has four parts with a letter from Captain Gulliver to his cousin Sympson in the beginning.

Part I: A Voyage to Lilliput

Part II: A Voyage to Brobdingnag

Part III: A Voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Luggnagg, Glubbdubdrib and Japan

5 August 1706 – 16 April 1710

Setting out again, Gulliver's ship is attacked by pirates, and he is marooned close to a desolate rocky island near India. He is rescued by the flying island of Laputa, a kingdom devoted to the arts of music, mathematics, and astronomy but unable to use them for practical ends. Rather than use armies, Laputa has a custom of throwing rocks down at rebellious cities on the ground.

Gulliver tours Balnibarbi, the kingdom ruled from Laputa, as the guest of a low-ranking courtier and sees the ruin brought about by the blind pursuit of science without practical results, in a satire on bureaucracy and on the Royal Society and its experiments. At the Grand Academy of Lagado in Balnibarbi, great resources and manpower are employed on researching preposterous schemes such as extracting sunbeams from cucumbers, softening marble for use in pillows, learning how to mix paint by smell, and uncovering political conspiracies by examining the excrement of suspicious persons (see muckraking). Gulliver is then taken to Maldonada, the main port of Balnibarbi, to await a trader who can take him on to Japan.

While waiting for a passage, Gulliver takes a short side-trip to the island of Glubbdubdrib which is southwest of Balnibarbi. On Glubbdubdrib, he visits a magician's dwelling and discusses history with the ghosts of historical figures, the most obvious restatement of the "ancients versus moderns" theme in the book. The ghosts consist of Julius Caesar, Brutus, Homer, Aristotle, René Descartes, and Pierre Gassendi.

On the island of Luggnagg, he encounters the struldbrugs, people who are immortal. They do not have the gift of eternal youth, but suffer the infirmities of old age and are considered legally dead at the age of eighty.

After reaching Japan, Gulliver asks the Emperor "to excuse my performing the ceremony imposed upon my countrymen of trampling upon the crucifix", which the Emperor does. Gulliver returns home, determined to stay there for the rest of his days.

Part IV: A Voyage to the Land of the Houyhnhnms

7 September 1710 – 5 December 1715

Despite his earlier intention of remaining at home, Gulliver returns to sea as the captain of a merchantman, as he is bored with his employment as a surgeon. On this voyage, he is forced to find new additions to his crew who, he believes, have turned against him. His crew then commits mutiny. After keeping him contained for some time, they resolve to leave him on the first piece of land they come across, and continue as pirates. He is abandoned in a landing boat and comes upon a race of deformed savage humanoid creatures to which he conceives a violent antipathy. Shortly afterwards, he meets the Houyhnhnms, a race of talking horses. They are the rulers while the deformed creatures that resemble human beings are called Yahoos.

Gulliver becomes a member of a horse's household and comes to both admire and emulate the Houyhnhnms and their way of life, rejecting his fellow humans as merely Yahoos endowed with some semblance of reason which they only use to exacerbate and add to the vices Nature gave them. However, an Assembly of the Houyhnhnms rules that Gulliver, a Yahoo with some semblance of reason, is a danger to their civilization and commands him to swim back to the land that he came from. Gulliver's "Master," the Houyhnhnm who took him into his household, buys him time to create a canoe to make his departure easier. After another disastrous voyage, he is rescued against his will by a Portuguese ship. He is disgusted to see that Captain Pedro de Mendez, whom he considers a Yahoo, is a wise, courteous, and generous person.

He returns to his home in England, but is unable to reconcile himself to living among "Yahoos" and becomes a recluse, remaining in his house, avoiding his family and his wife, and spending several hours a day speaking with the horses in his stables.

It is now generally accepted that the fourth voyage of Gulliver's Travels does embody a wholly pessimistic view of the place of man and the meaning of his existence in the universe.

Dry September

William Faulkner

"**Dry September**" is a short story by William Faulkner. Published in 1931, it describes a lynch mob forming (despite ambiguous evidence) on a hot September evening to avenge an alleged (and unspecified) insult or attack upon a white woman by a black watchman, Will Mayes. Told in five parts, the story includes the perspective of the rumored female victim, Miss Minnie Cooper, and of the mob's leader, John McLendon. It is one of Faulkner's shorter stories.

I

The opening paragraph of "Dry September" sets the tone of the story by focusing on the oppressive heat and the resultant, uncontrolled and heated passions of Jefferson's citizens. Sixty-two hot, rainless days have created a frustration among the townspeople and have fueled Miss Minnie's accusation that she was raped by a black man. The first sentence stresses the rapidity with which the rumor — "like a fire in dry grass" — has spread throughout the town. The dry spell also causes the twilight to appear "bloody red," which emphasizes the bloody events that are about to transpire. Already fueling people's need for violence, the alleged attack has occurred in the early morning of the day that begins the story. Faulkner establishes a major theme by linking the rumor of Miss Minnie's attack and the weather: Throughout the story, characters refer to the weather as an excuse for their behavior.

The men assembled in the barbershop are unsure about the Southern woman's claim: "Attacked, insulted, frightened: none of them . . . knew exactly what had happened," or whether anything had happened at all. We must remember the discussion of the White Goddess concept as we form opinions about these men; it should surprise none of us that many characters, although they have their private doubts about the truthfulness of Miss Minnie's claim, do nothing to question her or to stop the killing. Henry Hawkshaw, one of the barbers, is instantly on the defensive as he insists repeatedly that those men who want to act rashly should first find out the facts before they rush to judgment. In the midst of the tension caused by the rumor, Hawkshaw is the voice of reason. But he is immediately trapped by the stereotype of being a "damn niggerlover." When McLendon demands to know "Who's with me?" some of the men enthusiastically join him, while others "sat uncomfortable, not looking at one another, then one

by one they rose and joined him." McLendon is wild, impassioned, and sadistic. Faulkner notes of the two men, "They looked like men of different races."

When someone suggests that Miss Minnie has reported imaginary stories before, McLendon, revealing his extreme sadistic and bloodthirsty nature, replies, "What the hell difference does it make? Are you going to let the black sons get away with it until one really does it?" This statement, part of the White Goddess mentality, clearly shows that even McLendon doesn't believe the rumor. But for him and other bigots like him, a white woman's word is to be taken as the absolute and unquestionable truth. If Miss Minnie says that she was molested and the white men do nothing to punish the accused, such inaction might be interpreted to mean that the whites do not care about the well-being of Southern women. Whether or not Will Mayes attacked Miss Minnie is inconsequential so long as he is killed as an example to other black men. McLendon and his bigots are not interested in justice; they are out for blood, and nothing will satisfy them until they have murdered a black man, thus preserving the prejudices of the region.

II

A rapid and effective transition from the tenseness of the barbershop to the outwardly peaceful life of Miss Minnie begins this section, which recounts her early social exploits and emphasizes the emptiness of her current life. Daily, she follows a purposeless and repetitive schedule of swinging on her Faulkner recounts Miss Minnie's school years to stress the disparity between her youth and her present age. The importance of how she was received during her school days compared to how she is treated as a middle-aged adult cannot be overemphasized: The decline in her social popularity is a direct cause of her sexual inhibition, which is one reason for her accusing Will Mayes of raping her. When young, Miss Minnie's attractiveness "enabled her for a time to ride upon the crest of the town's social life." Growing up, her friends were unaware of her family's lower social standing in Jefferson, but they became conscious of social class as they aged and recognized that Miss Minnie was their inferior. Although her contemporaries married, Miss Minnie did not — but not because she didn't want to. Instead, she became known as "aunty".

Much of the information supplied in this section supports the contention that Miss Minnie wants to reawaken the town's interest in her sexuality and to convince herself that she is attractive and desirable. Apparently, she partly accomplishes this goal; in Section IV, after reporting the sexual attack, she again becomes the center of attention, and people once again look at her as a sexual woman: "Even the young men lounging in the doorway tipped their hats

and followed with their eyes the motion of her hips and legs when she passed." If it were Miss Minnie's intent to regain attention for herself by reporting a sexual assault, she achieves her purpose-at the expense of Will Mayes' life.

III

This section returns to the actions leading up to and including the murder. Again, the weather is associated with the men's behavior. The "lifeless air," the "spent dust," and the "wan hemorrhage of the moon" emphasize the dry September, and all of these images are connected with death.

When Hawkshaw joins McLendon's group, they think that he has changed his mind and has come to join their revenge; however, Hawkshaw continues to try to convince them to stop their thirst for murder. He questions the believability of Miss Minnie's charge, pleading with the group to consider how "a lady will kind of think things about men when there aint any reason to . . ." Because his reasoning falls on deaf ears, he changes his strategy and argues that Will would have left town by now if he were guilty.

When the mob captures Will at his workplace, they are ready to kill him on the spot until McLendon stops them. After roughly handcuffing Will and throwing him in the car, they are so agitated that they need something on which to release their pent-up feelings. First McLendon, then the others, strike Will; in defense, Will "swept his manacled hands across their faces and slashed the barber upon the mouth." Hawkshaw strikes back instinctively, and suddenly he went out of the car. Hawkshaw's desire to get out of the car can be interpreted in several ways. He wants nothing to do with the violence, and he fears that, in striking back at Will, he, too, is becoming emotionally caught up in the murderous fever of the others. Hawkshaw jumps from the car, and the men drive on. When the car returns, Hawkshaw hides in a ditch, afraid that the mob might be hungry for more violence, this time against him. He counts only four people in the car; we know that the men have killed Will.