

Contemporary Literature
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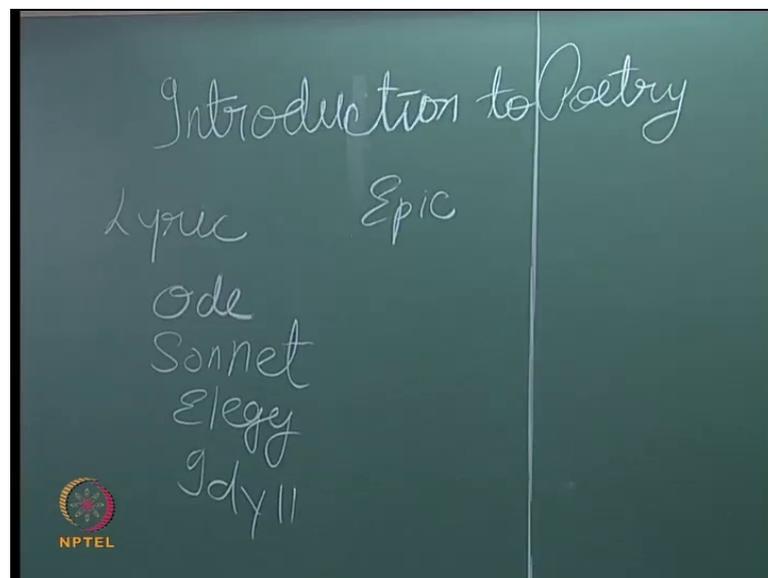
Good afternoon. So, this is our first session on discussion of poetry. So, my question is, what is poetry? Anyone? The poetry is defined in different ways, by different people. Some, even call it spontaneous expression of emotions and some may disagree, that anything which is written after much contemplation and with a definite line of thought, cannot be all that spontaneous. So, poetry as a genre, has as many admirers as detractors. So, some people are passionate lovers of poetry and some people have, you know, absolute dislike, disdain for the genre. One of our most famous contemporary poets, Marianne Moore, she says, I too dislike it; that is her take on poetry. And, W H Auden, the celebrated war poet from Britain, he famously said, poetry makes nothing happen; still we read and enjoy poetry. A very few genres give us as much pleasure as reading good poems.

So, poetry makes nothing happen; well, we will see. So, today, what we are going to do is, look at certain stylistic devices, certain sub genres of poetry and also, in certain influential poetic movements, down the years. And, while doing so, I will give you certain examples from a various genres; of course, I will give you more recent, more contemporary examples of different kinds of poems, written especially during the late 60s and 70s onwards. So, what does poetry require? Poetry, of course, like all works of art, all works of literature, it requires imagination. So, one is imagination; it is also a sort of musical game. Of course, all literature is music; whether it is a prose, or a play, there is an element of music in language. So, yes, but it is more so, in poetry. So, poetry is also, engenders certain kind of music and it is one of the reasons for the immense popularity and the kind of pleasure it evokes in people.

Poetry, of course, is also, one genres, one of the genres, which require lots of a stress on rhyme, meter and a structure, **ok**. Still, there are no hard and fast rules; there are no set

codes, or rules, to write, or a structure; poetry, it can even be free verse. And today, we are going to look at several examples, where we will find that, there is absolutely no structure, especially, in the so called, postmodern poetry. But, still, there is lot of depth, lot of meaning embedded in those poems. So, the patterns that exists within language, you know, and we are talking, with this specific reference to poetry; one is word order; sentence order, sentence, a structure, sound, emphasis, rhythm, stress and the way it is displayed on a page, on, on, on the page, ok. So, the kind of pattern it forms on the page, all these constitute poems, poetry. Let us come to the basic styles. So, basic is, what are the different kinds of a style of poetry?

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So, one is lyric. Lyric is a kind of poem, which is, which expresses a single emotion and can be set to music; and think, some major poems by Lord Tennyson. So, he is one of the more well known writers of, poets of, in the lyrical form. Of course, we have ode and when you talk ode, you know, during the past three to four hundred years, one name that suddenly comes to me, is John, John Keats; all those wonderful, extremely beautiful odes; An Ode to the Nightingale, Ode to Autumn, for example, Ode to the Grecian Urn, that is my personal favorite. So, ode is a serious and dignified composition kind of poem, which is exalted in subject matter. But then, I am also going to give you an example, where the subject matter is not so exalted, ok. So, how, definitions, or our understanding of genres change, or changes, down the years, down the ages, that is what we are going to talk about.

We have sonnet, as one of the examples; sonnet is a poem in fourteen lines. Shakespearean sonnets, Spenserian sonnets, even Miltonic-sonnets and what do they do, they express a single thought. So, that is one important idea. And then, we have elegy. So, grace elegy; it is lamentation for the dead; basically, it is lamentation for the dead. It is an, it is a poem of tragedy, expressing a very, heart-felt tragic emotions. So, that is elegy. We have idyll. **Idyll** does not have a set form; it is basically associated with pictorial quality. And, now let us go on to epic.

Now, epic, when you talk epic, what comes, especially in the, from the western context, what comes immediately to our minds? Iliad and Odyssey, and what are they? So, an epic is a long tale in verse; it has a deep sense of moral purpose, with exalted heroes as principal characters. So, think Achilles and think Odyssey; so, I am **sorry**, Ulysses, **ok**. So, all these are epic heroes. So, an epic needs a hero; even in our Indian context, we have the two famous epics; so, which tell us the story of great heroes. Next we have the ballad. Ballad is more like an oral form; it is also like a, like an epic. It arises out of folk literature, you know, the kind of a poem, that has been passed down from one generation to another, generation to generations, **ok**. So, that is, it tells a story, again in verse. So, think of Sir Walter Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, that is a very good example of a ballad.

Then, you have satire. Satire is, the purpose of satire is to ridicule, to correct certain social, is a kind of some problem. So, there is, there, **there** could be some, or it sometimes, it is also a personal attack. So, that is a satire. So, it is intended to ridicule certain attitudes and certain sort of, certain sorts of behavior; and, it can be found in both prose as well as poetry. Think Byron's *Vision of Judgment* and Butler's *Hudibras*.

Now, these are the major kinds, or styles of poetry. Now, from here, let us go down to the major poetic movements. Of course, I am sure, you are familiar with the romantic movement; we also have a meta physical movement, the classical movement, as well as the modernist movement. You have the poetry of the First and the Second World War, and then, you have the postmodern poetry, something which we are going to discuss in the subsequent classes. So, postmodern poetry, who are the major poets? What are the major names associated with postmodern poetry?

So, one is Philip Larkin; then Thom Gunn, Ted Hughes, Geoffrey Hill and Anthony Hecht. So, these are the people, but you know, they are not, this is not a definitive list; these are not all; we have several more examples of major postmodern poets, who have been writing this and who came into prominence, especially during the 60's and the 70's onwards. So, one defining feature of the postmodern poetry is, is anti postmodernist; of course, that is, a major feature of postmodern is a anti-modernist. So, if poets like, let us think, Ted Hughes, so, they are, they, a completely opposite; they go totally against the tide of modernism. We look at certain examples and then, discuss that. Postmodernist poetry also engenders anxiety and reflects desire for change.

Philip Larkin defied traditional beliefs, as found in the modernist poetry as, I have no belief in tradition, or a common myth, or causal allusions in poems, to other poems or poets. So, what he did was, a total turnabout; this is therefore, this is the importance of Philip Larkin; one of the major and most influential contemporary poets. So, his output includes majorly, The North Ship, in 1945, The Less Deceived in 1955, The Whitsun Weddings in 1944. So, these poems reflect an ironic humor, with which he accepts and sustains a sense of defeat; larger subject is the un-lived life of the English provinces. So, Charles Tomlinson, the famous British poet and translator, he observed that, Larkin is more interested in the provincial life; the not so sophisticated life of the British people. So, that is and we are just going to look at one of his more famous poems. So, born in 1922, so, that is 1922 to 1985, that is Philip Larkin's dates, he was educated in Oxford and his poetry emphasizes solitude, transience and provincial.

So, he was, he was a rebel in many respects, and when you read his poems of the provincial life, they do not depict what you find in the works of Wordsworth or Coleridge; but, they are extremely defined and angry pieces. His poetry is a mix of high language, you know, high style, as well as slang and colloquialism. So, he mixes the two. Of course, and he, they are underlined by deep feelings of anger and melancholy. One of his final collections of, were poems was published in 1974, a decade before his death; it was called To the Sea, and you must know that, one thing about Philip Larkin is that, he was, all through his life, he was criticized for having bigoted views on race, gender and politics. So, To the Sea reflects his engagement with public affairs, one, and also the spoilation of rural England; as we were looking, just discussing earlier, that he was a writer of rural England, the provinces, and his concern was the spoil, you know, the

decay of the rural England. They, in, To the Sea his collection, there is a poem called Posterity, which is extremely anti-American and as well as anti-Semitic.

So, and what I am trying to tell you is that, he, **he** was concerned with a broad range of areas, broad range of topics and subject matters; and, not always politically correct; not always making the popular choices. So, that is Philip Larkin, and I am going to talk to you, about one of his very famous, and also, very short poem called Ambulances. So, that will give you some idea, about what Philip Larkin was all about.

So, Ambulances and here it goes.

Closed like confessionals, they thread

Loud noons of cities, giving back

None of the glances they absorb.

Light glossy grey, arms on a plaque,

They come to rest at any kerb:

All streets in time are visited.

Also notice that meters, so, it is like a b a b a b. So, of course, he is very conscious of the rhyming pattern, but the, it is the idea. The ambulances, it is a very, you know, every day kind of an object; not some very exalted subject, right. But to write a poem on something, which is so commonplace. Ambulances, who would ever think of writing a poem about ambulances? But then, ambulances symbolize something for the poet. What do they symbolize? What do they stand for? Disease, sickness, maybe, even death. So, ambulances are compared to; so, you find an example of a simile; closed like confessionals. What is a confessional? You go to the church and confess your sins, confess your fears. So, what is a confessional supposed to be? It is supposed to be private, secret, as well as sacred; something which is inscrutable; it cannot be deciphered. So, that is what ambulances stand for. No one knows what goes behind those closed doors. So,

Closed like confessionals, they thread

Loud noon's of cities

So, ambulances going all through the city and they stop it some, at some curb and take the patient and drive away; but, it is to be noted that, all streets in time are visited. So, it is not just he or she, but all of us. So, everyone's time will come; that is the idea. It is inevitable. So, ambulances are not, just what happened to others; it happens to, they happened to everyone. So, it is just a matter of time.

Then children strewn on steps or road,

Or women coming from the shops

Past smells of different dinners, see

A wild white face that overtops

Red stretcher-blankets momentarily

As it is carried in and stowed

So, children strewn on a steps or roads, or woman coming from the shop; no one is immune to, it can happen to anyone; ambulances can be required by anybody, **ok.**

Past smells of dinner different dinners, see

a white, a wild white face.

Now, look at the contrast in colors in the next two, in these two lines; a wild white face that overtops red stretcher blankets.

So, wild white face, white here is the color of death; you know, deathly pale, deathly white and red is suitable contrast. So, red is a color of the blankets. So, death wrapped in red; this is, as it is carried in and is stowed.

And sense the solving emptiness

That lies just under all we do,

And for a second get it whole,

So permanent and blank and true.

The fastened doors recede. Poor soul,

They whisper at their own distress

So, it is not like, somebody is going; that the person who is dead, or who is hurt, or you know, who is sort of victim, it will happen only to them; but, it is also, when people sympathize with the person who is being carried away in an ambulance, it, they also sympathize for themselves; that is the idea. So, the hollow, the general hollowness of life, **life's** emptiness; this is the fate; this is going this is something that is going to happen to all of us.

For borne away in deadened air

May go the sudden shut of loss

Round something nearly at an end,

And what cohered in it across

The years, the unique random blend

Of families and fashions, there

At last begin to loosen. Far

From the exchange of love to lie

Unreachable inside a room

The traffic parts to let go by

Brings closer what is left to come,

And dulls to distance all we are.

So, accepting the inevitability of death, without ever mentioning the word death. So, that is the beauty of Philip Larkin. I mean, Ambulances is all about accepting that, death is an

integral part of life; it is an inevitable part of life. But the, he says so, without once using the word death. So, this is a device that he uses. So, he never uses the word accident; he never uses the word disease, or sickness, or victim, or body, or death. And, without saying all these words, which are commonly, generally associated with ambulances, he, you know, very firmly establishes his point that, you know death is random; death can strike anyone; death is inevitable.

So, that is Philip Larkin, one of the most important poets of the postmodern era and that is his Ambulances. And, he has, you know, when we were talking, when I was introducing the poet to you, I talked about the note of anger, melancholy and despair, that that underscore all his poetry. So, this is one good example of, you know, Philip Larkin's style.

Now, when I started, and when I was introducing you the various styles of poems, I told you about odes. What is an ode? An ode is an exalted form of poetry. So, traditionally, ode is used, when the subject of the poem is extremely serious. But now, let me read you, read you a poem by Pablo Neruda, which is called Ode to Clothes. Now, clothes, and ode is a direct address to the subject. So, a direct address to something, as banal, as commonplace a subject, as clothes; something we, you know, one, something to which one is so accustomed, and, which is an everyday object.

So, Ode to Clothes by Pablo Neruda.

Every morning you wait,

clothes, over a chair

So, that is the, you know, position of the clothes; they wait for, **for** the poet, for the wearer to wear them. So, they are all, you know, spread out on a chair.

to fill yourself with

my vanity, my love,

my hope, my body.

Barely

risen from sleep,
I relinquish the water,
enter your sleeves,
my legs look for
the hollows of your legs,
and so embraced
by your indefatigable faithfulness
I rise, to tread the grass,
enter poetry,
consider through the windows,
the things,
the men, the women,
the deeds and the fights
go on forming me,
go on making me face things
working my hands,
opening my eyes,
using my mouth,
and so,
clothes,

I too go forming you,
extending your elbows,
snapping your threads,
and so your life expands
in the image of my life.

In the wind
you billow and snap
as if you were my soul,
at bad times
you cling
to my bones,
vacant, for the night,
darkness, sleep
populate with their phantoms

Your wings and mine.

I wonder
if one day
a bullet
from the enemy
will leave you stained with my blood

and then

you will die with me

or one day

not quite

so dramatic

but simple,

you will fall ill,

clothes,

with me,

grow old

with me, with my body

and joined

we will enter

The earth.

Because of this

each day

I greet you

with reverence and then

you embrace me and I forget you,

because we are one

and we will go on

facing the wind, in the night,

the streets or the fight,

a single body,

one day, one day, some day, still.

Now, the profound thoughts that are expressed, for a subject, which is so banal; which is some, something, you know, some or something of so, everyday occurrence, that most of us would not give a second thought to. **Ok**, but then, for the poet, clothes are very important; clothes are not, clothes are him. So, it is like, without clothes, you are nothing; clothes define you; clothes make you; clothes protect you; clothes are with you, forever, **ok**.

So, in sickness, or in happiness, or in death, if you are shot dead, then, they will get stained along with you; if you are buried, they will be buried along. So, clothes form a very important part; you know, almost like a second skin to a human being and that is what the, the poet is trying to tell us. So, the idea here is that different kinds of poems. So, we have, on one hand we have someone like Phillip Larkin, who talks about a subject so serious as death, through ambulances; and then, you have someone like Pablo Neruda, who contemplates the nature of life and death, a violent death or an ordinary death, through the means of clothes and writing Ode to clothes. So, different writers, different styles and different kinds of poems.

I will read you another poem, which is written by one of our more contemporary writers; that is, Adrienne Rich. She is an American poet, and heavily influenced by poets like, W H Auden and W B Yeats. So, you know, not just a feminist poet, just because she is a female, but the way she projects herself, is more like a universal poet, who expresses common emotions and universal thoughts and ideas. So, one poem, that is extremely striking and which I have always enjoyed, is called Amnesia. So, I am going to read that out to you.

I almost trust myself to know

When we're getting to that scene
Call it the snow-scene in Citizen Kane
The mother handing over her son
The earliest American dream
Shot in a black-and-white
Where every flake of snow
in incandescent
with its own burden, adding-
up, always adding-up to the
cold blur of the past
But first there is the picture of the past
simple and pitiless as the deed
truly was
the putting-away of a childish thing
Becoming a man means leaving
Someone, or something—
still, why
must the snow scene blot itself out
the flakes come down so fast
so heavy, so unrevealing
over the something that gets left behind?

Now, she, the point of reference is Orson Welles' movie Citizen Kane, regarded by many, as one of the best American films ever made. And, Citizen Kane has a famous scene, where a mother hands over her child to a banker, because the, **the** child has come into a great deal of wealth, and the child's father is a no good. So, she fears that, he will squander away the son's inheritance and therefore, she gives the son to a banker, who is

going to manage his wealth for the child, till he grows up; till he comes of an age. So, Amnesia. This is, you know, related to memory, forgetfulness, but she begins so.

I almost trust myself to know

when we are getting to that scene

call it the snow scene in Citizen Kane

Since the handing over of the child to the banker happens when it is snowing very heavily in the film, the, therefore, the snow scene in Citizen Kane. But then, what is snow? **Snow** also symbolizes, coldness. So, perhaps, you know, sheer cold bloodedness on the part of the mother, by which she handle, hands over the kid, to a total stranger. So, it creates a very chilly effect; it is a chilling effect. So,

the mother handing over her son,

the earliest American dreams

American dream, it could also refer to the famous American dream, everyone has the chance, or opportunity, to get rich, or to become successful in America. So, that theme is also integral to Citizen Kane. And also, movies are, play up to our ideas, and ideals of American dream and Citizen Kane is one of the examples, one of the films where, **where**, you know, American dream is interrogated. So, the movie is shot in black and white, and that is what she says,

Shot in a black-and-white

Where every flake of snow

in incandescent

with its own burden, adding-

up, always adding-up to the

cold blur of the past

But first there is the picture of the past

simple and pitiless as the deed

truly was

the putting-away of a childish thing

And, what is that thing? The childish thing which is put away, rosebud. Citizen Kane is famous for those opening shots of Orson Welles as he lies, as he is about to die, on his deathbed. And, what are his famous last words? Rosebud. So, what is that rosebud?

Rosebud, for this boy, Charles Foster Kane, it symbolizes everything that was pure, innocent and joyous; related to his childhood. So, memories of his childhood are related to this object; his skating board, which he named rosebud. And, rosebud forms like, you know, a key to the entire movie. Who was the Citizen Kane? Who was this person called Charles Foster Kane? And, what, how do we understand him? And, what do these mysterious words mean? Rosebud, which were on his lips, as he was dying and that is the mystery all about. So, so,

the putting away of a childish thing

becoming a man means leaving

someone or something

So, this is important. You come of age, when you are willing to let go of someone; when you are willing to forget something, which is so important to you; that means, you have finally, come into your own.

Someone, or something—

still, why

must the snow scene blot itself out

the flakes come down so fast

so heavy, so unrevealing

over the something that gets left behind?

So, why, **why** do the, why does the director do that? That is the question. Why, **why** does the skateboard get covered with thick snow, with snowflakes and so fast and furiously.

So, what is the need? So, just blot out, perhaps, it is the construct of memory that is being talked about that, is being discussed here. That, in order to get away from one life, from someone, from something, one has to completely learn to obliterate, whatever we are leaving, whoever we are leaving behind. So, amnesia, is an important part of

becoming a man; to be able to forget, to be able to completely obliterate something, is a very significant part of becoming successful, and perhaps, that, that forms a crux of American dream.

Adrienne Rich's another poem and it is very provocatively titled rape. So,

There is a cop who is both prowler and father:

He comes from your block, grew up with your brothers,

Had certain ideals.

You hardly know him in his boots and silver badge,

on horseback, one hand touching his gun.

You hardly know him but you have to get to know him;

He has access to machinery that could kill you.

He and his stallion clop like warlords among the trash,

his ideals stand in the air, a frozen cloud

From between his unsmiling lips.

And so, when the time comes, you have to turn to him,

The maniac's sperm still greasing your thighs,

Your mind whirling like crazy. You have to confess

To him, you are guilty of the crime

Of having been forced.

And you see his blue eyes, the blue eyes of all the family

Whom you used to know, grow narrow and glisten,

His hand types out the details

And he wants them all

But the hysteria in your voice pleases him best.

You hardly know him but now he thinks he knows you;

He has taken down your worst moment

On a machine and filed it in a file.

He knows, or thinks he knows, how much you imagined;

He knows, or thinks he knows, what you secretly wanted.

He has access to machinery that could get you put away;

And if, in the sickening light of the precinct,

And if, in the sickening light of the precinct,

Your details sound like a portrait of your confessor,

Will you swallow, will you deny them, will you lie your way home?

So, Rape is acknowledged, as one of the most terrifying poems by, in, you know, in the corpora of decent poetry. And here, I am not going to go much into the explanation of the poem. But, it is a very direct poem, that you must have understood, and how she uses such a powerful word, to convey, such, **such** a crime, and such, and the subsequent emotions, that a woman goes through, having been raped. So, not just being raped, but also, is the, it is not just the humiliation of being raped, but also the humiliation of confessing to a cop, who is supposed to be the enforcer of, **of** the law; but here, he, **he** is a man of (()); what he does, he humiliates you further, with his questions, and then, there is a hint in his eye now, that perhaps, in he knows you, but and how does he know you and what does he know about you now; that, you know, you are not such a good, **good** woman after all; perhaps, you asked for this crime, to happen against you. Therefore, he is not very, he is not, the cop in the poem is not a sympathetic listener and that is Adrienne's very feministic stand, when a woman is raped. So, she is blamed for the act and she does not have any sympathy, even among those who have known her all her life.

So, the entire society condemns her and stands against her. It is her word against the, **the** criminal, but it is usually the woman, who gets blamed for this. So, and of course, you know, it is deliberately written, in a very free verse kind of a manner. We do not have words which rhyme here, and (()) is the subject matter of the poem, of the poem. It does not ask for a definite meter or a rhyme. So, here I conclude, this talk about contemporary poems and the different kinds of poems, the different styles of poems, that are written in, you know, during the last few decades.

Another important poet of this age, Ted Hughes, 1930 to 98, British poet, a contemporary of Philip Larkin. So, he has written a very famous, gem of a poem, there I say, The Thought-Fox. I will read you the poem and then, let us have some discussion over this.

I imagine this midnight's moment, sorry.

I imagine this midnight moment's forest;

Something else is alive

Beside the clock's loneliness

And this blank page where my fingers move.

Through the window I see no star:

Something more near

though deeper within darkness

Is entering the loneliness;

Cold, delicately as the dark snow

A fox's nose touches twig, leaf;

Two eyes serve a movement, that now

And again now, and now, and now

Sets neat prints into the snow

Between trees, and warily a lame

Shadow lags by stump and in hollow

Of a body that is bold to come

Across clearings, an eye,

A widening deepening greenness,

Brilliantly, concentratedly,

Coming about its own business

Till, with a sudden sharp hot stink of fox,

It enters the dark hole of the head.

The window is starless still; the clock ticks,

The page is printed.

Now, this is The Thought-fox. What Ted Hughes is doing here, is comparing the process of creativity, you know, a writer's thought; the way a poet thinks, and creates a work of art, in this case a poem. So, what he goes through, while creating, or writing a poem, while creating a work of art, it is the thought fox. Now, I imagine this midnight moment's forest; night is a metaphor.

So, let us look at the key concepts for the class today, Introduction to poetry. So, we have talked, already talked about different kinds of poems, sonnets, ballads, idylls, elegy, etcetera. We have also discussed certain influential movements, poetic movements, in the history of English literature. And then, there are certain stylistic devices. So, metaphor, simile, personification, allusion, these are stylistic devices; we have a host of linguistic devices as well. But, we will have it in some other class; for some other discussion. So, here, midnight, or night is a metaphor, for darkness of mind. So, the poet is going through certain kind of, a block; not exactly a longish period of creative block, by, or writer's block, but some, you know, he is not able to write the next line. So, therefore, that, **that, that** moment is compared to the darkness of a night, midnight.

And, forest; mind is compared to a forest, you know; too many thoughts, too thick with ideas; too thick with, you know, concepts, which he is unable to put to paper; something else is alive; there is a thought, which is alive, which he is not able to express, to execute.

Beside the clock's loneliness

And this blank page where my fingers move

So, these words give you the clue; it is not exactly the arrival, or not literally, the arrival of a fox, in the middle of a forest that he is talking about; it is in the middle of a night, perhaps, while the writer is stuck with writers block; the poets block and the clock is ticking away; the page is still blank; he has not been able to do what he has set out to do.

Through the window I see no star

Again, star of creativity; star, which, you know, mean something to the poet; is a, some kind of an indication, that creativity is at its full.

Something more near

though deeper within darkness

Is entering the loneliness

And then, observe the sensual images. We also talk about, the tone, the images, as included in poem. So,

Cold, delicately as the dark snow

A fox's nose touches twig, leaf;

Two eyes serve a movement, that now

And again now, and now, and now

So, it is not literally, as I was telling you, a fox's arrival; it is the thought. So, therefore, the title, The Thought-fox. So, the fox arrives in the middle of the forest. So, it is while everything is blank, the mind is blank, and the thought arrives; pressing its nose against the mind's window. And, then look at the repetition; writers use such repetitions.

And again now, and now, and now

Perhaps, to suggest a kind of emphasis, or to suggest the significance of these lines; how you know, the arrival of this thought fox is so important.

And sets neat prints into the snow

So, while the mind is getting cold, in the middle of, the midnight, the thought fox presses its nose against the mind, and sets its print, foot prints on this, so, leaves some mark.

Between trees, and warily a lame

Shadow lags by stump and in hollow

Of a body that is bold to come

Across clearings, an eye,

A widening deepening greenness,

Brilliantly, concentratedly,

Coming about its own business

Till, with a sudden sharp hot stink of fox,

It enters the dark hole of the head.

The window is starless still; the clock ticks,

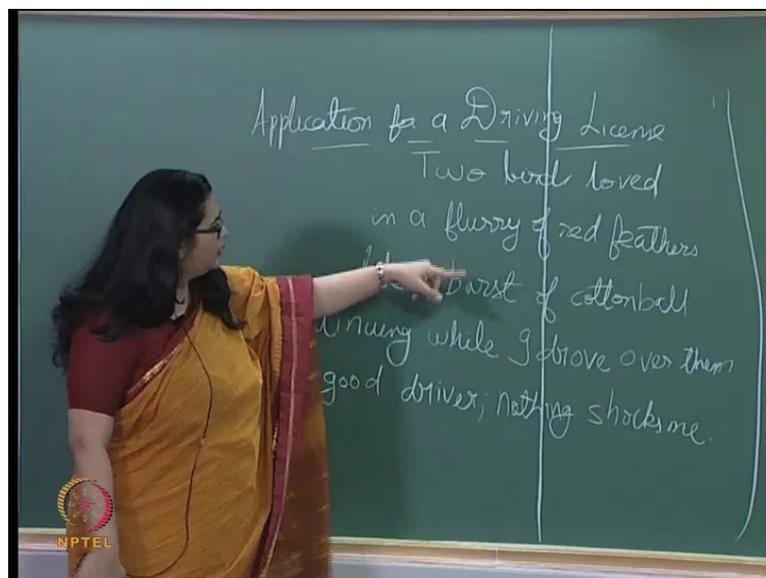
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Finally, the writer is able to get over his writers block and the thought, the thought, the illusive thought, the thought that was troubling him so much, suddenly gets crystal clear, and he is able to write what he wanted to; the page is printed. So, these beautiful poems, I mean, people have written essays and scholarly articles on this particular poem. So, it engenders a writers' creative process; it is a very deep poem. So, it is one of, while, what we were talking about at the beginning of the class, different kinds of poem; embodying different concepts, different stylistic devices. So, we are no longer living in those times, where poetry set to some fixed meters and rhymes and articulate something, you know,

very clear, something very easily comprehensible. Postmodernist poetry needs plenty of reading between the lines and textual analysis. So, **yes**.

So, coming to the next assignment, is, I would like you to read a host of poems written by couple of contemporary poets, dealing with animals. Ted Hughes has also written a poem called The Crow. So, perhaps you would like to look at, how the so called animal poems, encapsulate, what writers are trying to say. They include beautiful imagery, beautiful use of metaphors and similes. I would like you to focus on that assignments. So, I will, you know, write it out for you and send it to you soon.

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So, from here, let us move on to the last poem that I wanted to discuss with you today, and it is called Application for a Driving License. And, it is a poem written by Michael Ondaatje, who is the English patient, we have done in this course. So, Michael Ondaatje's very short poem, Application for a Driving License.

Two birds loved

in a flurry of red feathers

like a burst cottonball,

continuing while I drove over them

I am a good driver, nothing shocks me.

Now see, again, what is happening here? This is a supreme example of postmodern poetry. The writer begins somewhere in the middle; the poet begins somewhere in the middle; he is not getting in into, too much of, you know, setting the tone, or establishing the background of the poem.

It is very clear, but is still, a extremely loaded with meaning.

Two birds loved

It is, I mean, if you look at it, on, **on** its surface, very textually, then, two birds are making love in the middle of a road.

in a flurry of red feathers

like a burst of cotton ball

continuing while I drove over them

So, all these three lines, in a flurry of red feathers, you know, birds and then, suddenly their feathers turned red; why, because the narrator, the writer, the speaker drove over them, and the feathers turn red; and they burst, like a burst of cotton ball. You know, that life is so, the tiny lives are, so ephemeral; **so** soft, they just burst.

continuing while I drove over them.

So, I am a good driver, nothing shocks me.

And, the title of the poem is, the poem is, Application for a Driving License. This, I am, perhaps, it suggests the apathy people have for human life, or for any kind of life. I am a good driver; it is not my fault; they came in my way and I just drove over them. So, it does not really matter. So, poems like these, poems like Ted Hughes' The Thought-fox, poems like Sylvia Plath's Daddy, so, all these are the poems, that I would recommend that you read, understand and follow very clearly; and then, we will be discussing more about how to write a paper or an assignment on these very modern contemporary poems. So, after, in the next class, I will be talking about certain American poems, special, with special reference to the inaugural poems; inaugural, the Presidential inaugural poems;

those poems, which are written at, you know, the event of the inauguration of the US President. So, we, we will be discussing that, in the next class. Thank you very much.