**SEMESTER-IV SUMMARIES**

**UNIT-1**

**OZYMANDIAS**

**About the Author:**

Percy Bysshe Shelley, a prominent figure in the Romantic movement, penned "Ozymandias," a poem that delves into the ephemeral nature of power and the inevitable decline of human achievements. Shelley himself was known for his radical views on politics, society, and religion, often reflected in his literary works. Married to Mary Shelley, the author of "Frankenstein," he left an indelible mark on English literature.

**Background:**

Set against a stark desert backdrop, "Ozymandias" unfolds through the eyes of a traveler who chances upon the remnants of a once-great empire. The poem's setting highlights the desolation and vastness of the landscape, underscoring the insignificance of human endeavors in the face of time's relentless march. Through the traveler's perspective, Shelley invites readers to contemplate the transient nature of power and glory.

**Summary:**

"Ozymandias" by Percy Bysshe Shelley is a sonnet that explores themes of time, power, and the inevitable decline of empires. The poem is narrated by a traveler who encounters a colossal statue in the desert, depicting the ancient Egyptian pharaoh Ozymandias. Through vivid imagery and evocative language, Shelley conveys the transient nature of human achievements and the futility of pursuing power and glory.

The poem begins with the traveler describing the ruins of a massive statue lying in the desert, its fragmented visage half-buried in the sand. The inscription on the pedestal reads, "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings: / Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!" This grandiose declaration highlights Ozymandias's arrogance and hubris, as he proclaims his supremacy over all others.

However, as the traveler observes, the surrounding landscape is barren and desolate, devoid of any signs of Ozymandias's once-mighty empire. The juxtaposition between the ruins of the statue and the vast emptiness of the desert serves as a powerful metaphor for the transience of human achievement and the impermanence of power.

Through the decaying statue, Shelley reflects on the fleeting nature of glory and the inevitable passage of time. Despite Ozymandias's efforts to immortalize himself through monumental structures and inscriptions, his legacy has crumbled into obscurity, leaving only a shattered monument to his former greatness.

The poem's central message is encapsulated in the final lines, spoken by the traveler: "Nothing beside remains. Round the decay / Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare / The lone and level sands stretch far away." Here, Shelley emphasizes the ultimate insignificance of human endeavors in the face of eternity. Despite Ozymandias's aspirations for immortality, all that remains of his empire are ruins swallowed by the sands of time.

"Ozymandias" serves as a cautionary tale against the pursuit of power and the folly of pride. Through the character of Ozymandias, Shelley critiques the hubris of rulers who seek to assert their dominance over others, warning of the inevitable downfall that awaits those who overreach.

In conclusion, "Ozymandias" is a timeless exploration of the transient nature of human achievement and the inexorable march of time. Through vivid imagery and poignant language, Shelley invites readers to contemplate the fragility of power and the fleetingness of glory, reminding us of the impermanence of all things in the grand scheme of history.

**A LOTTERY TICKET**

**About the Author: Anton Chekhov**

Anton Pavlovich Chekhov (1860-1904) is one of Russia's most celebrated writers, renowned for his contributions to both literature and theatre. Born in Taganrog, Russia, Chekhov initially pursued a career in medicine and graduated from the Moscow State Medical University. Despite his medical profession, he is best known for his prolific output of short stories and plays.

- Literary Contributions: Chekhov's works are noted for their exploration of the human condition, characterized by a deep psychological insight and a minimalist style. His plays, such as "The Cherry Orchard," "Three Sisters," and "Uncle Vanya," are cornerstones of modern drama.

- Style: Chekhov's writing often eschews traditional plot structures, focusing instead on the nuances of character and everyday life. His stories and plays frequently highlight the banality and triviality of human existence while subtly probing profound emotional depths.

- Legacy: Chekhov's influence extends far beyond Russian literature. His techniques in character development and narrative style have significantly impacted modernist and contemporary writers globally.

**About the Lesson**

"The Lottery Ticket" is a short story by Anton Chekhov, a prominent Russian playwright and short story writer. This story, like many of Chekhov's works, explores human nature and the complexities of emotions and relationships. "The Lottery Ticket" serves as a profound lesson on the nature of human desires, illusions, and the often painful reality of unfulfilled dreams. It offers insights into the psychological effects of anticipation and the fleeting nature of happiness based on material gain.

- Human Nature and Greed: The story illustrates how sudden prospects of wealth can drastically alter people's perceptions and attitudes. Ivan Dmitritch and his wife Masha's initial excitement and subsequent descent into disillusionment reveal the corrosive effects of greed and materialism.

- Illusions vs. Reality: Chekhov delves into the theme of illusion versus reality. The characters' imaginations run wild with dreams of a better life, but the harsh reality brings them back to their mundane existence, highlighting the gap between aspiration and reality.

- Relationships: The story subtly critiques the superficial nature of relationships based on material considerations. Ivan and Masha's relationship is momentarily strained by their fantasies of wealth, exposing underlying discontent and mistrust.

**Summary:**

"A Lottery Ticket" by Anton Chekhov is a captivating short story that explores the themes of hope, disappointment, and the allure of wealth. The narrative follows Ivan Dmitritch and his wife Masha, a modest couple living in Russia, who purchase a lottery ticket that holds the potential to change their lives.

The story begins with Ivan Dmitritch examining the newspaper, where he comes across the announcement of a lottery drawing. Intrigued by the prospect of winning, Ivan purchases a ticket, initially treating it as a mere indulgence. However, as the conversation between Ivan and Masha unfolds, the lottery ticket becomes the focal point of their hopes and dreams.

Masha, in particular, becomes increasingly consumed by fantasies of wealth and luxury, envisioning all the ways their lives would improve if they were to win the grand prize. Her excitement is palpable as she indulges in elaborate plans for travel, home renovations, and charitable donations. In contrast, Ivan remains more grounded, expressing cautious optimism tempered by a sense of skepticism.

As the story progresses, the tension builds as Ivan checks the newspaper for the lottery results. Their anticipation reaches its peak when they discover that their ticket indeed holds a winning number. However, their elation quickly turns to disappointment when they realize that their prize is a mere sum of twenty-three rubles—hardly enough to fulfill their extravagant dreams.

The abrupt shift from anticipation to disappointment underscores the ephemeral nature of hope and the unpredictable whims of fate. Despite their initial excitement, Ivan and Masha are left feeling disillusioned and somewhat deflated by the anticlimactic outcome. Chekhov masterfully captures the rollercoaster of emotions that accompanies the pursuit of fortune, highlighting the fleeting nature of material aspirations.

In the aftermath of their disappointment, Ivan reflects on the nature of happiness and the futility of chasing after wealth. He acknowledges that their lives were content and meaningful before the lottery ticket, and that true happiness cannot be bought with money alone. This realization serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of appreciating life's simple pleasures and finding fulfillment in everyday moments.

In conclusion, "A Lottery Ticket" is a poignant exploration of hope, disappointment, and the human tendency to yearn for more. Through the experiences of Ivan and Masha, Chekhov delves into the complexities of human desire and the fleeting nature of material wealth. The story serves as a timeless reminder that true happiness lies not in the pursuit of fortune, but in the appreciation of life's inherent beauty and richness.

**UNIT-2**

**MY LAST DUCHESS**

**About the Author:**

Robert Browning (1812-1889) was an eminent English poet and playwright, known for his mastery of dramatic monologue and his psychological insight into characters. My Last Duchess" is a dramatic monologue by Robert Browning, first published in 1842 in his collection "Dramatic Lyrics." The poem is written from the perspective of a Duke who is showing a portrait of his late wife, the Duchess, to an emissary.

**Background of the Poem**

- Historical Context: The poem is set in Renaissance Italy, reflecting the time's aristocratic culture and the power dynamics in noble families. The Duke's character is thought to be based on Alfonso II d'Este, the Duke of Ferrara, and his marriage to Lucrezia de' Medici, who died under mysterious circumstances.

- Themes: The poem explores themes of power, control, jealousy, and art. It delves into the Duke's possessive and authoritarian nature, revealing his sinister character through his casual description of the Duchess's fate.

- Structure and Style: The poem is written in iambic pentameter and follows a rhyming couplet scheme. Its conversational tone and enjambment reflect the Duke's persuasive and manipulative speech.

- Interpretation:The Duke's narration gradually exposes his tyrannical and jealous nature. He criticizes the Duchess for her friendly and courteous behavior towards others, implying that he may have had a role in her demise to maintain his control and superiority.

**Summary:**

"My Last Duchess" is a powerful exploration of the darker aspects of human nature, using the Duke's monologue to peel back the layers of a seemingly sophisticated exterior to reveal the underlying brutality.The poem begins with a subtitle announcing the setting: “FERRARA.” In the first line, the speaker gestures to a portrait on the wall of “my last Duchess,” who looks “as if she were alive.” These details, along with the subtitle, indicate that the speaker is the duke of Ferrara and that he is discussing his deceased wife. The duke admires the artistry of the portrait, which was rendered by a painter named Fra Pandolf, and invites his addressee to take a seat.

The duke says that strangers, such as his addressee, who look upon the duchess’s portrait always seem to want to ask the duke about the “depth and passion” of her expression, just as the addressee does now. In saying this, the duke remarks that he keeps the portrait behind a curtain that only he may draw aside.

The duke then begins to answer the question. Pointing out the “spot of joy” on the duchess’s cheek, he suggests that his presence was not the only cause of this blush. As he worked on the painting, Fra Pandolf requested that she draw back the cloak covering her wrist and later noted that his painting should not hope to depict the “half-blush” on her neck. The duke suspects that the duchess falsely interpreted these comments as compliments, provoking the depicted blush.

The duke expands on this last observation, noting that the duchess had a heart “too soon made glad.” In his view, she lacked discernment, reacting to everything she encountered with equal appreciation and enjoyment. The duke lists several examples of things she reacted to favorably: his compliments on her breast, a view of a sunset, a cherry branch presented to her by “some officious fool,” and the mule she would ride. These various objects or events elicited the same appreciative response from the duchess, usually a word of approval or a blush. The duke brings up a final example, one he found particularly maddening. The duchess would thank many men for the various gifts they offered her, but she viewed these gifts as being equal in value to the duke’s greatest gift to her, his “nine-hundred-years-old name.” Apparently, her very title as duchess meant no more to her than anything else.

In response to the duchess’s lack of discernment, the duke felt that he could not raise the issue with her. It was such a minor matter that the duke would have embarrassed himself to criticize her for it. Even if he had the eloquence to make such a complaint, which claims to lack, he would have debased himself in trying to correct her behavior, whether she would have taken the advice to heart or retorted with a justification or excuse. The duke finishes this point by saying, “I choose / Never to stoop.”

The duke adds that the duchess always smiled when he passed by her, but he reiterates his criticism, noting that everyone who passed by her received the same smile. He then enigmatically remarks that this trend continued until he issued some commands, at which point her smiles ceased altogether. Now, the duchess only exists in this portrait.

**Analysis of Key Elements**

- The Portrait: The Duchess's portrait symbolizes the Duke's desire to control and possess her, reducing her to an object he can display.

- The Duke's Monologue: Through his speech, the Duke unintentionally reveals his cruelty and insecurity, making the reader question his morality and the true cause of the Duchess's death.

- Irony: The Duke's attempt to present himself as a cultured and refined nobleman is undercut by his own words, which reveal his ruthless and egotistical nature.

**A DOLL’S HOUSE**

**About the Author**

Katherine Mansfield Beauchamp Murry (1888–1923) was born in Wellington, New Zealand. She moved to London in her teens and became an integral part of the modernist movement, mingling with notable figures such as D.H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf. Mansfield's writing is characterized by its psychological depth, innovative narrative techniques, and focus on the inner lives of her characters. Her own life was marked by illness, including tuberculosis, which influenced her poignant and sometimes melancholic storytelling. Despite her brief life, her work remains influential, offering incisive commentary on social issues and human nature.

**About the Prose:**

"The Doll's House," written by Katherine Mansfield, is a short story that delves into themes of class disparity, innocence, and cruelty through the experiences of young children. Mansfield, a prominent modernist writer from New Zealand, is known for her keen observation of human behavior and social structures, often highlighting the subtleties of everyday life and the complexities of personal relationships.

**Summary:**

A doll’s house arrives at the Burnell home as a gift. The dollhouse smells so strongly of paint that Aunt Beryl thinks it could make someone sick. Isabel, Lottie, and Kezia, the Burnell’s three daughters, do not mind the smell, however, and couldn’t be more delighted by the house. Kezia, the youngest sister, notices a small lamp, which she thinks it the best part of it.

The next morning, the Burnells are excited to boast to the other girls at school. Isabel, the oldest, forbids her sisters from saying anything before she’s had a chance to describe the doll’s house to the others. She also reminds Lottie and Kezia that she is allowed to choose which two girls will visit first to see the house.

At playtime, all the little girls gather around to hear Isabel’s talk about the house except for Lil and Else Kelvey—the daughters of the village washerwoman and the poorest girls at school. Everyone in the village gossips about the Kelveys, saying that their father is in prison, and many children, the Burnells included, aren’t allowed to talk to them. As such, the Kelveys can only eavesdrop as Isabel proudly describes the doll’s house. Kezia reminds her sister to mention the lamp, though no one else seems to care about it. Isabel chooses Emmie Cole and Lena Logan as the first two girls to come see the house.

Kezia asks her mother if she can invite the Kelveys to see the doll’s house, but Mrs. Burnell refuses and tells Kezia she knows why. More days pass, and by now everyone has seen the house except the Kelveys. At school the other girls cruelly taunt the sisters, who react only with silence. Later that afternoon, Kezia is at home swinging on the big white gates of her family’s courtyard. When she spots the Kelveys walking down the road, she decides to swing the gates open and invite them inside. Lil shakes her head and reminds Kezia that they aren’t supposed to talk to one another. Kezia assures Lil that it doesn’t matter. Lil still doesn’t want to go, but Else, standing behind her, tugs on her dress and looks at her pleadingly.

Kezia leads the Kelveys inside. While she is showing the Kelveys the doll’s house, Aunt Beryl spots them and shouts furiously at Kezia. She shoos the Kelveys away and slams the doll’s house shut.

It is revealed that earlier that afternoon Aunt Beryl had received a letter from Willie Brent. In the note, Willie had threatened to come knock on the door if Aunt Beryl didn’t meet him that night in Pullman’s Bush. Aunt Beryl is terrified by the idea of Willie coming to the door. After yelling at the girls, however, she feels better, and hums as she walks back into the house.

The Kelveys, meanwhile, run off and sit by the side of the road. Else inches closer to her sister and smiles. She speaks for the first time in the story, saying, “I seen the lamp.”

"The Doll's House" by Katherine Mansfield portrays social class tensions through the gift of a doll's house to the wealthy Burnell sisters. Their joy turns sour when they realize their lower-class classmates, the Kelvey sisters, are excluded. Young Kezia Burnell defies societal norms by inviting the Kelveys to see the doll's house, exposing the arbitrary cruelty of class divisions. Mansfield's story highlights the innocence of childhood and challenges adult prejudices, emphasizing the transformative power of empathy in bridging societal divides.

**Lessons and Themes**

"The Doll's House" provides a profound critique of the class system and the inherent cruelty that often accompanies it. The story highlights how social hierarchies are ingrained from a young age, perpetuating divisions and prejudices. Mansfield illustrates the innocence of children, juxtaposing their innate kindness with the learned behaviors of exclusion and discrimination.

**Key lessons from the story include:**

1. Empathy vs. Prejudice: Through Kezia's innocent act of kindness, Mansfield suggests that empathy can challenge and disrupt social barriers. Kezia's behavior contrasts with the learned prejudices exhibited by her peers and authority figures, underscoring the potential for change through individual actions.

2. Innocence and Corruption: The children's interactions reflect the broader societal norms and the way innocence can be tainted by societal expectations and biases. Kezia's pure-hearted gesture stands out against the backdrop of prejudice taught by adults.

3. Impact of Small Acts: Else's joy at seeing the lamp symbolizes the significant impact that small acts of kindness can have on those marginalized by society. It serves as a reminder of the human need for beauty, acceptance, and dignity, regardless of social standing.

**Conclusion:**

In conclusion, "The Doll's House" by Katherine Mansfield is a powerful narrative that explores the dynamics of class, the innocence of childhood, and the impact of empathy. Through its nuanced characters and poignant moments, the story offers a timeless reflection on human nature and social justice.

**UNIT-3**

**HOPE IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS**

**About the Author**

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) was an American poet whose innovative and poignant works have solidified her as one of the most significant figures in American literature. Born in Amherst, Massachusetts, Dickinson lived much of her life in reclusive seclusion, producing nearly 1,800 poems, most of which were published posthumously. Her poetry is known for its unconventional punctuation, capitalization, and slant rhyme, along with deep themes exploring life, death, nature, and the human spirit.

Dickinson's reclusive nature did not diminish her observational acuity; instead, it seemed to enhance her introspective and reflective qualities, allowing her to craft poems that resonate with emotional and philosophical depth. Her work was not widely recognized during her lifetime, but her posthumous publication revealed a unique voice that challenged and expanded the boundaries of 19th-century poetry.

**About the Poem**

"Hope is the thing with feathers" is one of Emily Dickinson's most famous and frequently anthologized poems. Written around 1861, this short but powerful piece explores the abstract concept of hope, using an extended metaphor of a bird. The poem consists of three quatrains, each contributing to a vivid and enduring image of hope as a resilient and persistent force in the human spirit.

The poem employs simple language and structure but delves deeply into the universal experience of hope, making it accessible and relatable. Dickinson’s use of metaphor and imagery provides a tangible representation of an otherwise intangible concept, allowing readers to grasp the essence of hope in a profound way.

**Summary and Analysis**

The poem opens with the lines:

**"Hope" is the thing with feathers -**

**That perches in the soul -**

**And sings the tune without the words -**

**And never stops - at all -**

Here, Dickinson introduces hope as a bird with feathers, a symbol of lightness and freedom, suggesting that hope is an intrinsic part of the human soul. The bird’s perpetual song, “without the words,” implies that hope is an ever-present, indefinable feeling that exists beyond explicit expression.

The second stanza continues:

**And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -**

**And sore must be the storm -**

**That could abash the little Bird**

**That kept so many warm** -

In this stanza, Dickinson emphasizes the resilience of hope. The bird's song is “sweetest” during challenging times, symbolized by a gale, indicating that hope is most valuable and comforting in adversity. The phrase “sore must be the storm” suggests that only the most severe hardships can dampen hope, highlighting its enduring strength and capacity to provide warmth and solace.

The final stanza reads:

**I've heard it in the chillest land -**

**And on the strangest Sea -**

**Yet - never - in Extremity,**

**It asked a crumb - of me.**

Here, the speaker reflects on their personal experience with hope, noting that they have felt its presence even in the harshest and most unfamiliar conditions. Despite being a constant companion through difficult times, hope is depicted as selfless and unassuming, never demanding anything in return from the individual it supports.

**Themes and Interpretation**

"Hope is the thing with feathers" explores several key themes:

1. Resilience and Endurance: The poem portrays hope as an unyielding force that persists through the toughest of circumstances. This depiction encourages the reader to recognize and cherish the resilience of their own hope.

2. Comfort and Solace: Hope is presented as a comforting presence, offering warmth and support even in the most trying situations. This universal quality of hope underscores its importance in the human experience.

3. Selflessness of Hope: The poem highlights the altruistic nature of hope, which provides strength and comfort without asking for anything in return. This selflessness makes hope an even more precious and admirable trait.

**Conclusion:**

In conclusion, Emily Dickinson's "Hope is the thing with feathers" uses the metaphor of a bird to encapsulate the essence of hope as a resilient, comforting, and selfless force within the human soul. The poem’s simplicity and profound message continue to resonate, offering a timeless reflection on the enduring nature of hope.

**PACKING**

**About the Author:**

Jerome K. Jerome : Jerome Klapka Jerome was an English writer and humorist, best known for his comic travelogue "Three Men in a Boat" (1889). Born on May 2, 1859, in Walsall, England, Jerome's early life was marked by financial difficulties. Despite these challenges, he pursued a career in writing, initially finding work as an actor and journalist. His breakthrough came with "Three Men in a Boat," which was inspired by a boating holiday he took with two friends. The book's humorous take on the misadventures of three companions and a dog has made it a timeless classic, beloved for its wit and insight into human nature. Jerome continued to write novels, plays, and essays throughout his life, leaving a lasting legacy in the world of English literature. He passed away on June 14, 1927.

**About the Lesson:**

PackingThe lesson on packing from "Three Men in a Boat" highlights the humorous and often chaotic nature of preparing for a trip. Jerome K. Jerome uses this scenario to explore themes of friendship, human nature, and the absurdity of everyday life. The packing episode serves as a microcosm of the broader narrative, showcasing the characters' quirks and the dynamics of their relationships.In the story, the three friends, J., George, and Harris, along with their dog Montmorency, decide to go on a boating trip along the River Thames. As they prepare for their journey, the task of packing becomes a comedic ordeal, revealing each character's personality and the inevitable chaos that ensues when people try to work together.

**Summary:**

The lesson begins with J., the narrator, taking charge of the packing. He prides himself on his ability to pack efficiently, but this confidence quickly proves to be misplaced. His meticulous approach leads to a series of blunders, starting with the misplacement of items he thought he had packed correctly. This sets the stage for a sequence of humorous incidents, as each attempt to pack or repack leads to more confusion and frustration. J.'s friends, George and Harris, initially sit back and watch his struggles, enjoying his self-inflicted predicament. However, when they finally decide to help, their involvement only adds to the chaos. Harris manages to break a cup, and George packs and unpacks the same items repeatedly, unable to remember if he has included them or not. The scene culminates in a farcical display of inefficiency, with the dog Montmorency also joining in, causing further disruptions by getting in the way and even attempting to pack himself. The packing episode serves as a comedic exploration of human nature. Jerome's humor lies in the relatability of the situation—many readers can identify with the frustrations of packing for a trip and the inevitable mishaps that occur. Through the characters' interactions, the lesson also touches on themes of cooperation, the value of patience, and the tendency of people to complicate simple tasks. Overall, the packing lesson in "Three Men in a Boat" offers a delightful blend of humor and insight. Jerome K. Jerome's keen observation of human behavior and his ability to find comedy in everyday situations make this episode a memorable and enduring piece of literature. The characters' antics remind readers that sometimes, the journey itself, with all its imperfections and mishaps, is just as significant and enjoyable as the destination.

As Jerome, Harris, and George are ready to set out on a journey, they start packing for it. Being the narrator, Jerome describes how the packing experience went. We can see that Jerome is quite confident with his packing skills as he handles it all alone. While in reality, he wishes to simply supervise the packing session while making his friends do the work under him. However, they listen to him and let him handle it all by himself, while they sit and relax. This does not impress Jerome; nonetheless, he gets to it.

Finally, after a long packing session, he packs the bag up while his friends watch him quietly do all the work. Soon, Harris tells him about the shoes that he did not pack and Jerome will have to reopen the bag to make space for them. Thus, after learning about the shoes, Jerome remembers his toothbrush which he did not pack. In order to find it, he empties the whole just for one toothbrush. Alas, he finds it inside a boot and packs the bag again.

After that, we see that one more query arises for the soap by George. Consequently, this irritates Jerome so much that he does not pay heed to it and packs the bag anyway. However, to his mistake, he has to reopen it again due to his spectacles being locked inside the bag. This packing session finally concludes at 10 o’clock.

So, we see that after taking such a long time to pack, Jerome’s other two friends pack the hampers themselves to show him how it’s actually done. However, they are also similarly gawky and break many things including a cup into pieces. Further, they squash tomatoes and tread on butter while also smashing the pies. In addition, there is salt flying here and there during this process. Thus, after much chaos, they try to put things back in order.

However, it is not as successful as their pet dog, Montmorency, worsen things. He sits on things meant to be packed and climbs into the jam as well as crushes lemons as if they were rats. But, finally, the final packing ends at around 12:50 in the night. After a tiring packing session, they decide the time to get up for the next morning and George dozes off before engaging in this conversation. In the end, Jerome and Harris mark 6:30 as the wake-up time and go off to sleep.