ULYSSES

*Ulysses* was written soon after Arthur Hallam’s death and it expresses his courageous instincts. It is modelled on Dante’s *Ulysses*. Through the technique of dramatic monologue, Tennyson made a beautiful sketch of Ulysses’ character, thought and feeling. The eponymous Greek warrior is remarkable for his driving quest for knowledge and desire for full enjoyment of life. Tennyson aptly expresses sentiments and ideals of Ullysses in a beautiful metaphorical language- “*I will drink life to the lees*.” Ulysses is vibrant with the spirit of active life. Cessation of work will bring his mental death, if not physical death. Ulysses is not accustomed to an ordinary life. He has experienced life’s joys and sorrows to the extreme level. His heroic acceptance of life’s troubles and turbulences has made him famous. He is remarkably marked with an unsatisfying soul. He proudly tells that he is blessed with life’s bounties. Unlike Shakespeare’s Hamlet Tennyson’s Ulysses is marked by determination and promptness in action.

Ulysses voices Victorian sentiments and scientific temper of the age. He takes life as it is- stoically and heroically with a joyous attitude. Battle with his heroic enemies is a source of delight to his heart. With his heroic demeanor he has left indelible imprint on all he takes part. He detests a life of indolence, inactivity. He emphatically advocates full application of life’s forces for its own good. Human Endeavour should always extend itself to the unexplored, unknown, unachieved and unconquered. From this initiative springs forth life’s essence-

*“How dull it is to pause, to make an end ,*

*To rust unburnish’d, not to shine in use!*

Ulysses hands over his responsibility as a king to his son Telemachus, who successfully carries out them and he himself leaves for a life of adventure. Ulysses adores people marked with energetic and active spirit. Even old age cannot withhold him from realizing his life’s will. His speech is expressive of his pent-up feelings of enervation and desiccation of spirit. He is determined to go on voyage to seek newer worlds. His energy is unparalled-

*“To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths*

*Of all the western stars, until I die.”*

Though old age has acted upon his physical strength, his willpower is untouched even by the all ravaging power of time and fate. His unyielding will is marked by ever-striving enterprise-

“*To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield*”.

Thus Tennyson’s Ulysses is like Milton’s Archangel with unconquerable will-

*“What though the field be lost?*

*All is not lost; the unconquerable will,*

*And study of revenge, immortal hate,*

*And the courage never to submit or yield.”*

Autobiographical elements are inherent in the poem It springs from powerful feelings prompted by Hallam’s death. The poem is deeply personal in its expression of a sensibility the claims of retreat and involvement, its note of courage, its elegiac melancholy, its restless dissatisfaction with the present and wish for fuller life.