

## **The Lotos-Eaters: A Study in the Perspective of Victorian Society**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This paper illustrates and essays the uncertainty of the time of Victorian era as presented by Alfred Lord Tennyson in his poem "the lotus-eaters" the researcher will decipher the main components and characteristics of life in then Victorian period like Victorian consciousness, advancement of science, lack of responsibility, fragile concept of faith and the treatment of nature .The arena which Tennyson portrayed in his poem is brimful of uncertainty, gullibility and unpredictability- albeit scholastically and with a with an astute pen of artist pictured in the poem. In addition, the despondency vested in the heart of people of the time. Moreover, the covetous desire of withdrawal from the mayhem and chaos of world either to realm of death or, more often, to an ideal dream. Subtlety, the paper will elucidate the contrast of lethargic and surreal state of mariners with the Victorian people as presented in poem.*

**KEYWORDS:** uncertainty, gullibility, Tennyson, Victorian times, loss of faith

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The Lotos eaters by Alfred Lord Tennyson a poet laureate, is a magnum opus of literary piece, which is true picture of Victorian age. Victorian age is marked with the doctrine of pessimism and despondent milieu. People of that age were in search of vested life of stability and peacefulness. They were unprecedentedly exhausted by the repetitive and never ending cycle of chaos and uncertainty. Tennyson reflects this approximate tendency of the time in his poem 'the lotus eaters'

The Victorian age was an age of mammoth problems, conflicts and disagreements which could not be comfortably resolved. In lotus eaters mariners, mirrors the society of that time after reaching the lotus island and consuming lotus fruit they are drawn to state of dipsomaniac where they exhibit their loathing and detestation for life of toilsome and laborious which so far they have lived. Tennyson being a representative of his times inoculates all its happenings and elements in his poem. Edmund Blunder aptly said of Tennyson "**the spokesman of the intellectual life of his time as pope was of the Augustan age** "

“we can note’- the words are from Mr. John Collier, not Tennyson’s most bouquet –minded critic – “in the first years of Victoria’s reign, the way in which modern thought became coincident with poetical feeling, and how it was Tennyson who first became conscious of it”

Victorian consciousness in this poem of Tennyson, explores a typical of the Victorian age. It appraises the Victorian consciousness. Thus poem foregrounds the rookie experiences and questions arose that time, existential crisis and the futile struggle of humanity. Though the poem in echo of choric song reflects philosophy and scholastic questions and utilizes the doubts of people in the poem. Tennyson expressed an approach of elocution, to highlight the intrigue, smokescreen concept of the age. He plunged the depth of his poetical mastery to give sonorous to the national consciousness of Victorian poetry. Carlyle defines “the ideal poet’s sensibility not as a twisted, poor, convex, concave mirror, reflecting all objects with its own convexities and concavities but a perfectly level mirror. (Carlyle, p, 96)

Tennyson is both a poet of his time and poet of the people. In order to escape from time and shun onuses, the poem gives two voices which is retrogressive self-analysis reflecting the age and its rudimentary crisis of existence.

**‘A land where all things always seemed the same**

**And round about the keel with faces pale” (3<sup>rd</sup> Stanza)**

In Victorian age there was sudden and certain advancement of science. He appeared to his contemporaries as the umpire of thought, the champion of science. What Tennyson’s, invaluable son Hallam had told us “scientific leaders like Herschel, Owen, Sedgwick and Tyndall regarded him as a champion of science” However, the impinge of science did, more quiver the belief and credence of the Victorians in theology, god and soul. They essayed to reconcile science and theology this is precisely what his poems are navigable in Tennyson

“Let what is broken so remain

The Gods are hard to reconcile” (VI)

The poem is marked with direct indication of trait that was prevailing in that time ‘lack of responsibilities’. The element of individualism, selfishness, is portrayed, materialistic and self-centered approach is being imbued in them. They are left with the sense that life has been unfair to them, thus they are willing to let go of everything, though they have found retrogressive memories of their wives “ **Dear is the memory of our wedded lives**” indeed, they have decided not to go back, albeit the reminiscence of their family and past life they had. The life, devoid of

toil, dreamful ease, as depicted in the lotus eaters has been the grandiose of dream and object of longing of many in the Victorian age. The poem peeps into the human condition and mundane interest, and lack of responsibilities of people of Victorian age. The lethargy of the modern lunacy of that time had bankrupted the Victorian consciousness. A poem that celebrated an ultimate place of lethargic rest and forgetfulness, whose voice abandoned responsibility for family and country, and abandoned forever striving to attain an unknown future, although it has been sweet to dream of their homes in Ithaca, the lotus makes them weary of wandering, preferring to linger here. One who has eaten lotus fruit proclaims that he will return no more, and all of the mariners begin to sing their resolution to remain in the land of lotus eaters.

## CONCLUSION

The Victorian crisis is aptly presented in the poem. Mariners, reflect the collective and holistic approach of the people of Victorian society. The way faith in god was elapsing away from the heart of mariners, is the same trait that was seen in the people then. They coveted to become incautious and careless akin to god. They dreamt of life of heavenly abode, life of being absolve of any fret and vex.

### **In the hollow lotus land to live and lie reclined**

### **On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.**

As a result, people started questioning, since beginning of time man is the only creature that suffers the ruthless arrows of life, and toilsome chores are destined in the freak of fate. However, everything else in nature is given rest and respite but man is, tossed from topsy-turvy/ of sorrow and misery/ from one sorrow to another. Thus, they begin to wonder and inspect on the purpose of their existence.

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