

P.G SEM II
CC-6



GOBLIN MARKET
C.G ROSSETTI

PROF. M.A HAQUE
P.G DEPT. OF ENGLISH
MAHARAJA COLLEGE, ARA

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI :THE POETESS

2



BIOGRAPHY

English poet

Sister of Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

Born in London

She suffered ill-health in her youth

educated privately

• already writing poetry in her teens.

- Many of her poems were aimed at children.

- She produced her first published verse under the pseudonym Ellen Alleyne.

• engaged to a painter, James Collinson

• broken off because of religious differences

- she was High Church Anglican.

• tended to be a bit solitary

• 1874 illness left her an invalid

• *rejected the social world of her brother's "Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood"*

GOBLIN MARKET-AS SYMBOL

3



PRE-RAPHAELITES

4

- ❖ The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was founded in 1849 by William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), D.G. Rossetti, John Everett Millais (1829-1896), William Michael Rossetti, James Collinson Thomas Woolner and F.G Stephens to revitalize the arts. (Even though William and Michael's sister, Christina was never an official member of the Brotherhood, she was a crucial member of the inner circle. They hoped to create an art suitable for the modern age
- ❖ *Goblin Market* (composed in April 1859 and published in 1862) is a **narrative poem** by Christina Rossetti. The poem tells the story of Laura and Lizzie who are tempted with fruit by g
- ❖ It is one of the longest narrative poem and a literary piece with its unique themes of desire and temptation. Goblin merchants.
- ❖ Despite multiple interpretations, the poem illustrates the result of greediness and true love between sisters.

PLOT

5

- ❖ *Goblin Market* tells the adventures of two close sisters, Laura and Lizzie, with the river Goblins.
- ❖ Although the sisters seem to be quite young, they live by themselves in a house, and draw water every evening from a stream. As the poem begins, the sisters hear the calls of the goblin merchants selling their fantastic fruits in the twilight. On this evening, Laura, intrigued by their strangeness, lingers at the stream after her sister goes home. (Rossetti hints that the "goblin men" resemble animals with faces like wombats or cats, and with tails.) Longing for the goblin fruits but having no money, the impulsive Laura offers to pay a lock of her hair and "a tear more rare than pearl."
- ❖ Laura gorges on the delicious fruit in a sort of bacchic frenzy. Once finished, she returns home in an ecstatic trance, carrying one of the seeds. At home, Lizzie is "full of wise upbraiding," and admonish Laura for giving into temptation.

ANALYSIS

6

- Despite multiple interpretations, the poem illustrates the result of greediness and true love between sisters.
- “Goblin Market,” Rossetti’s most anthologized and discussed poem, is also, at 567 lines, one of her longest. A narrative poem (a rarity for Rossetti), it tells the story of two sisters, Laura and Lizzie, and their close brush with a sinister group of goblin merchants. The first of the twenty-nine irregular stanzas simply records the cries of the goblin men for someone to buy their magical fruits. Lizzie warns Laura not to succumb to their temptation, reminding her of the fate of their friend Jennie who, tasting the goblin fruit, wasted away and died. Laura ignores the warning and buys the enchanted fruit with a lock of her golden hair.
- The enchantment of the fruit is one of addiction: Having tasted it, the victim desires nothing but another taste, which the goblins refuse. Like Jennie, Laura pines away for the fruit, dwindling and turning gray.

IMAGERY

7

- ❖ The image of the dangers of temptation is typical of Rossetti's later religious poetry, though here the spiritual import is embedded in allegory.
- ❖ When Lizzie realizes her sister is dying, she goes to the goblins, wears them down with heroic resistance to their temptation, and returns to Laura, not having tasted the fruit, but having its juice and pulp smeared all over her face by the struggle. When Laura kisses her sister, she tastes the juice, which removes the curse of the goblin fruit and restores Laura's youth and health. Laura's devouring of the fruit, and later her sensuous sucking of the juices off her sister, is described in a lushness of physical imagery.
- ❖ While the poem is not overtly Christian in the way that Rossetti's later devotional verse is, the Christ-like nature of Lizzie's salvific sacrifice is unmistakable. The final stanza of "Goblin Market" is an epilogue in which the sisters, each having married and had children, use the story of the goblin market as a lesson to their children of the salvific virtue of sisterhood.

SYMBOLISM

8

- ❖ **Lizzie as a Christ-like figure** - When Lizzie tells her sister to: 'Eat me, drink me', (l.471) she echoes the words of Jesus at the Last Supper.

“Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters;
and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.”

Isaiah 55:1

However, unlike the freedom of the biblical offer, the goblins are seeking to entrap those who accept their food.

- ❖ **The Animalistic goblin men** - The poem describes the goblins in terms of animals.

“One had a cat's face,
One whisked a tail,
One tramped at a rat's pace,
One crawled like a snail,
One like a wombat prowled obtuse and furry,
One like a ratel tumbled hurry skurry.” (lines 71-6)

THEME

9

- ❖ **The theme of renunciation** central to this poem seems a traditional Christian attitude of rejecting the sensual, yet many critics have noted an ambiguity in the way sensuality, represented by the goblin fruit, is depicted in the poem.
- ❖ **The overt moral on the value of sisterhood**, found in the final six lines of “Goblin Market,” is often disparaged as an afterthought, unrelated to the rest of the poem. A close study of Lizzie’s sacrifice, however, reveals that the themes of renunciation and sisterhood are related. Lizzie’s resistance is merely temperance at first, but later, when it saves Laura, it takes on a sacrificial quality. Lizzie’s Christlike self-giving defines sisterhood, and makes her even more Christlike as Laura’s savior.
- ❖ The themes of **gender and sexuality** feature most prominently in “Goblin Market,” but also surface in some degree throughout Rossetti’s other work.

GENDER AND FEMINISM

10

- Although Rossetti did not fully identify with feminism, she recognized the injustice that women faced every day. “Goblin Market” confronts the subject of sexual desire, which was taboo in Victorian England. Laura craves the taste of the fruit, but Lizzie warns her that she will lose her youth and bloom, both euphemisms for her virginity. By the standards of Victorian society, women who engaged in premarital sex were considered “fallen” and therefore, no longer “marriageable.” Meanwhile, in the Victorian era, women were just beginning to explore their sexuality, which resulted in challenging society’s (read: men’s) expectations. Rossetti does not explicitly mention the sexual threats against Lizzie in “Goblin Market.” However, Rossetti would have understood the emotional toll of sexual abuse through her work with prostitutes, so the implication is there.

GOBLIN MARKET-CRITICS

11

- ❖ Critics in the late 1970's viewed the poem as an expression of Rossetti's feminist and homosexual politics. Some critics suggest the poem is about feminine sexuality and its relation to Victorian social mores. In addition to its clear allusions to Adam and Eve, Forbidden Fruit and temptation, there is much in the poem that seems overtly sexual, such as:

When Lizzie, going to buy fruit from the goblins, considers her dead friend Jeanie,

"Who should have been a bride; / But who for joys brides hope to have / Fell sick and died", and lines like, "She sucked their fruit globes fair or red"; and "Lizzie uttered not a word;/ Would not open lip from lip/ Lest they should cram a mouthful in;/ But laughed in heart to feel the drip/ Of juice that syruded all her face,/ And lodged in dimples of her chin,/ And streaked her neck which quaked like curd."

- ❖ The poem's attitude toward this temptation seems ambiguous, since the happy ending offers the possibility of redemption for Laura, while typical Victorian portrayals of the "fallen woman" ended in the fallen woman's death. Rossetti volunteered at High Gate Penitentiary for fallen women shortly after composing *Goblin Market* in the spring of 1859.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC EFFECTS

12

- ❖ Some critics believe that the feminist interpretations of the work leave out an anti-semitic nature within the poem. The critic Cynthia Scheinberg believes the Goblins to be "Hebraic," anti-semitic and anti-Judaic characters that the tested Christian sisters Laura and Lizzie must face in order to transition into wholesome and complete young women.
- ❖ Other critics focus not on gender but on the Victorian consciousness of a capitalist critique of the growing Victorian economic market, whether in relation to sisters' Lizzie and Laura's interaction with the market as gendered beings, the agricultural market, or in the rapid increase in advertising the "Market."
- ❖ When *Goblin Market* was released in April 1859, most Victorians weren't able to purchase fresh fruit, a historical note of importance when reading the poem for Victorian agriculture and tone.

ANALYSIS OF LITERARY DEVICES

13

- ❖ **Stanza:** A stanza is a poetic form of some lines. It is a long narrative poem having twenty-nine stanzas each comprising of a different number of verses.
- ❖ **Rhyme Scheme:** The poem mostly contains couplets and follows the abab rhyme scheme throughout the poem.
- ❖ **End Rhyme:** End Rhyme is used to make the stanza melodious. Eg. 'way/astray', 'good/stood', 'rain/pain' and 'tongue/sung'.
- ❖ **Alliteration:** repetition of consonant sounds in the same line in quick succession such as the sound of /p/ in 'Pleasure past and anguish past' and the sound of /b/ in 'Borne by a racer at full speed'.

Cont.

LITERARY DEVICES

14

- ❖ **Symbolism:** ‘Fruits’ are the symbols of temptations, ‘Goblin market’ symbolizes the evil place.
- ❖ **Simile:** E.g, ‘Like two blossoms on one stem, Like two flakes of new-fall’n snow, Like two wands of ivory’. Here, the poet compared tempting fruits with a snowflake that melts and wands of very delicate ivory.
- ❖ **Imagery :** Imagery is used to make readers perceive things involving their five senses.

E.g ‘But when the first birds chirp’d about their eaves’; ‘Her gleaming locks show’d not one thread of grey’ and ‘Kiss’d and kiss’d and kiss’d her’.

- ❖ **Consonance:** Repetition of consonant sounds /n/ in
‘Then joining hands to little hands’ and the sounds of /s/ ‘Days, weeks, months, years’.

Cont.

LITERARY DEVICES

15

Cont.

- ❖ **Enjambment** It is defined as a thought or clause that does not come to an end at a line break ; rather, it moves over the next line. For example,

“Her breath was sweet as May
And light danced in her eyes.

- ❖ **Anaphora:** It refers to the repetition of a word or expression in the first part of some verses. For example, “half their” in the 20th stanza is repeated to emphasize the point.

‘No man can carry; Half their bloom would fly,
Half their dew would dry, Half their flavour would pass by’.

QUESTIONS

16

❑ **How does Rossetti treat the matter of free will in "Goblin Market"?**

Rossetti's version of the fall of man embodies the standard Christian beliefs about human free will. Laura knows that she should not eat the goblins' fruit, but she chooses to do so anyway. Lizzie warns her sister not to take the risk, but ultimately knows that the decision belongs to Laura. After Laura exerts her powers of agency, she is subsequently trapped by her choice. She can no longer live a normal life after tasting the goblins' fruit. At the end of the poem, Lizzie jumps into action and saves Laura. This trajectory corresponds to Christian notions of choice, slavery to sin, and the freedom to act.

QUESTIONS

17

- ❑ **Choose a classic interpretation of "Goblin Market" - either from a feminist, Christian, or moral/social perspective, and discuss the merits and/or flaws of that interpretation.**
- ❖ The feminist interpretation of "Goblin Market" focuses on the charged imagery of ripe fruit, the threats of male sexuality and Rossetti's frank inclusion of female desire. This interpretation, however, is problematic because in Victorian times, Laura would have never been able to return to her youth and beauty after losing her virtue. Additionally, Lizzie is the victim of sexual violence when she goes to save Laura, but somehow, Lizzie's virtue is not tainted. In the Christian interpretation, Laura represents Eve, the goblin men are the equivalent of Satan, their fruit is the temptation to sin, and Lizzie is the Christ figure.

STRUCTURE AND VERSIFICATION

□ Metre

- ❖ For the most part, the poem is written in **loose iambic tetrameters** since they give way to numerous variations throughout the poem. The iambic foot is a rising metre and often speeds up the pace at which a poem is read.
- ❖ Much of the language associated with the goblins is written in **rhythmic dactylic di-meter**, which adds to the effect of incantation by which they attract the girls
- ❖ In the description of Laura's recovery, **spondees** are used to give emphasis to the power of the antidote that Lizzie brings her. The repetition of the same initial letters in the phrases
 'Swift fire' and 'Sense failed' (lines 507-513)
further increases the sense of the rush of life that overcomes Laura as she recovers.

RHYME

19

- The **irregular yet insistent** rhyme carries the poem forward. The poem contains numerous couplets which occur especially in its lists. This increases the speed at which the poem is read and creates a rushed and breathless feel. For instance, by framing the goblin's cry using couplets and triplets, Rossetti emphasises its speed and draws attention to its overwhelming nature as it overpowers listeners with variety and quantity of description.
- Throughout the poem, **rhyme is used consistently** to determine the pace and to link certain words together. For instance, the alternate repetition of the words 'brother' and 'other' (lines 93-96) draws attention to the otherness of the goblins. Their brotherhood shares little in common to the sisterhood that Lizzie and Laura enjoy. It is 'other' in the sense that it is not based in any kind of love but in mutual distrust and competition.

Cont.

REPETITION

20

- ❖ Certain phrases, such as the merchants' cry '**Come buy, come buy**', are repeated throughout the poem. This highlights their insistence and the force of the temptation they offer.
- ❖ Throughout the poem, instances of repetition occur when a passionate declaration is made. For instance, Laura repeats the phrase
 'I have no' three times to emphasise her haste in tasting the goblin fruits and to present a defence to the goblins themselves
- ❖ In contrast, Lizzie's speech to the goblins is measured and determined. The phrase '**Or like**' is repeated four times in the depiction of Laura's recovery (lines 502-506).
This repetition emphasises the difficulty in finding words to describe the effects of the antidote and the inadequacy of the similes that are offered. The speaker suggests that the recovery is so sudden and powerful that it is almost impossible to put into words.

Text Link: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44996/goblin-market>

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCo22wYXYm0>

REFERENCES

22

- ❖ **Goblin Market and Other Poems by Christina Rossetti: 2nd edition Macmillan & Co.**
- ❖ **Gradesaver.com**
- ❖ **Spark Notes**
- ❖ **Cliff Notes**
- ❖ **Images: Google.co.in**