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SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

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CONTENTS

Section - A - Poetry (Detailed Study)

1. Geoffrey Chaucer
2. The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales
3. John Donne
4. The Canonization
5. A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning
6. William Wordsworth
7. Intimations of immortality
   from Recollections of Early Childhood
8. S.T. Coleridge
9. Kubla Khan
10. P.B.Shelley: Ode to the west wind
11. Edmund Spenser: Prothalamion
12. John Milton
13. Milton's Paradise Lost
14. Book IX
15. Milton's Sonnets
16. John Dryden: Mac Flecknoe
17. Thomas Gray - (1721-59)
18. The Elegy
19. William Blake
20. Songs of innocence and Songs of Experience
21. The Lamb
22. Holy Thursday
23. The Tiger
24. The General Prologue to the
    Canterbury Tales (Geoffrey Chaucer)

25. On His Blindness (John Milton)
26. Milton's Sonnets
27. Andrew Marvell: An Horatian ode Upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland
28. John Donne - Holy Sonnet XTV
29. John Keats: Ode to the Nightingale

Section B - Drama

30. William Shakespeare: HAMLET
31. BEN JONSON - VOLPONE
32. John Web ser: The Duches of Malfi
33. Richard B. Seridan The School for Scandal

Section - C Prose And Fiction

34. Francis Bacon Of Discourse
35. Of Studies
36. Henry Fielding
37. Tom Jones
38. Jane Austien: Pride and Prejudice
39. Daniel Defoe: Moll Flanders
40. Sir Walter Scot: the Heart of Midlothian
41. George Herbert: The Collar
42. Alexander Pope: Epilstle to Dr. Arbuthnot
43. William Blake: Nurse's Song
44. Christopher Marlowe: Edward II
45. Addison
46. The Spectator's Account of Himself
47. Syllabus

SECTION - A - POETRY (DETAILED STUDY)

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

ENGLISH LITERATURE IN A NUTSHELL BEFORE GEOFFREY CHAUCER

Before we begin our study of Chaucer, we should develop some acquaintance with what preceded him in English literature. The following account is more of an apology than anything else and does not claim any depth or breadth. We attempt this indiscretion just to establish some continuity as we reach the Age of Chaucer.

The Middle Ages

The Middle Ages span approximately a thousand years, say, from 600 A.D. to 1500 A.D. When the Classical world of Greece and Rome died, man tried to bring some order- and stability into human life. The result was seen in the emergence of two institutions, namely, the Church in religion and feudalism in society. The Church, the spiritual realm, had the Pope as its head and feudalism, the temporal realm, had the King at the top. The hierarchies in each were well-defined. As the Middle Ages advanced, there appeared the freeman, the commoner and the yeoman-those who had special skill in agriculture, trade and the like (there wasn't any middle class as such as we have now). There were occasional confrontations between the Pope and the King, and almost always the Pope had the final say. But a day came when the King grew above interdict and excommunication by the Vatican and with that the Middle Ages came to an end.

The core factor of all literature of the Middle Ages

The core of the literatures of the Middle Ages may be said to be its emphasis on the world to come. i.e. the world where we are to go on our death. In other words, people forgot to love their life (as, perhaps, we try to do these days) in the Middle Ages. This is the general characteristic of all European literature of the period.

Old English Literature

Unfortunately, we have no records of any writing in English dated before 500 A.D. English medieval literature is, therefore, Old English Literature.

Old English or Anglo-Saxon is basically medieval, is said to start from around 600 AJD and is quite primitive in its appeal and range. The Anglo-Saxons and the Jutes were Germanic invaders. The former came from the north western shores of Europe and Scandinavia around 450A.D. and the Jutes came from Jutland. By 550 A.D. they occupied most of the present day England. With them came Anglo-Saxon Literature;

We may list the most important features of Old English Literature as follows.

1. It is English literature in its most basic, rudimentary from produced by medieval Christian Church. However, the subject matter could be either Christian or pagan.
2. It was static and did not change with the times.
3. Both heroic epics of non-Christian origins and those of Christian ones can be found.
4. The form and the style had to conform to certain fixed standards, using formulas, appositional forms and compounds.
5. The verse was alliterative.

6. As far as we know, there was no dramatic literature or prose writing during the period.

Extant Literature:

The few surviving poems of epic qualities are

1. Widsith
2. Beowulf
3. The Fight at Finnsburgh
4. Waldere.

And, we may safely assume that there had been quite a few others, now irretrievably lost. The Caedmonian (Caedmon was a cowherd.) poems and the Cynewulfian (identity is unknown) poems on Biblical characters like Daniel, Christ, Satan, Juliana. Elence etc. are worth mentioning. Mention is made of contemporary writing or pieces like Andreas, Guthlac, The Dream of the Rood, The Phoenix, The Harrowing of Hell, and The Besitary etc.

Elegies were written, too: like Deor's Lament, The Wanderer, The Seafarer, The Ruin, The Wife's Lament and so on.

In the eighth century Venerable Bede wrote, among others, his Ecclesiastical History in Latin. In the ninth century Alfred the Great be-came responsible for five translations of the most important works of period-Boethius' Consolation of Philosophy, Bede's Ecclesiastical History, Orsino's Compendious History of the World, Blostman based on St. Augustine's soliloquies and Pastoral Care by Gregory the Great. Alfred is responsible for the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and the Proverbs of Alfred.

These were followed by the Catholic homilies (80 in number written between 990 and 994 A.D.) and a few translations of the Gospels as well as some didactic writing and prose fiction of a very rudimentary kind.

We are now entering the Middle English period. In fact both the Old English and the Middle English periods, are part of the Middle Ages.

The period may be said to begin with the Norman Conquest in 1066, with the arrival of a new aristocracy and nobility and French be-coming the 'official' language, the vernacular getting displaced. In 1265 Henry III condescended to give a decree in English. In 1362 English came to be used in the courts of law. In 1385 French was no longer compulsorily taught in schools-which might have placed English children at a disadvantage as the knowledge of French was considered highbrow.

The Hundred Years War, which began in 1338 and continued till 1453 was a disaster arresting societal advancement in England. In 1348 the bubonic plague reached England and was responsible for the deaths of nearly half the population of England in just two years time. In 1381 the Peasants' Revolt shook England. By the middle of he fifteenth century the Wars of the Roses broke out. But we need not go beyond 1490. Chaucer died that year and we have to keep in mind that Chaucer lived and died during the fourteenth century.

Self Check Exercises:

1. Name the two Institutions of the Middle Ages.
2. What were the themes of the Caedmonian and Cynewulfian poems?
3. What was the result of the Norman Conquest?
4. Write fifteen sentences on the birth of Anglo-Saxon literature?
5. What was the most important characteristic of Middle English Literature?
6. What were the events that destabilized English society in the 14th c?

Literary Landmarks of the fourteenth century

As French became the official language (of government) after the Norman Conquest of England, no significant English literature emerged until the Age of Chaucer. Of course, there were imitations of French and Latin works - either adaptations or translations. The writers remained anonymous. But after 1300 the authors began to assert themselves,, e have, therefore, some information on the major writers of the 14th century-their number is quite small -like, Richard Roll, John Wycliffe, John Gower, Geoffrey Chaucer, the Pearl poet, William Langland (or the Piers Plowman poet) and a few others. Besides, there were writers of Anglo-French and Anglo-Latin products, of romances (like Arthurian, Charlemagnian, classical and/or historical), bestiary ballads, chronicles, fabliaux, allegories, proverbs, precepts, Bible translations, Bible paraphrases, dialogues, debates, catechisms, science and general information lyrics, hymns, rudimentary type plays etc. etc. We need not spend any more of our time on tracing the evolution of English literature through the Middle Ages. Any good book on the history of English literature can give all the need information in thorough detail. Such a book is strongly recommended for background reading.

We shall now turn to Geoffrey Chaucer and his place in English literature, his literary output and the like and focus on his Canterbury Tales with special emphasis on the General Prologue an extra special emphasis on the first one hundred lines of General Prologue and an extra special emphasis on the first one hundred lines of General Prologue in Middle English. But before we do that, let us have a look at Chaucer, the man, and his literary products.

Self Check Exercises:

1. Find out with the help of a good reference book what we mean by words like fabliaux, romances, allegories, ballads, bestiary and-the like.
2. Read a few stories from the medieval romances.
3. Name the most important writers of the 14th century.
4. List the literary output of the above writers.

Geoffrey Chaucer: an outline of his biography:

Circa 1340-Geoffrey Chaucer was born in London as the son of John Chaucer and Agens Northwell. John was a wealthy wine merchant, man of affairs and connected with the court. We know precious little about the members of his family, his childhood and the like. He went to one of the three schools, which were in London in those days:

1. St. Paul's (a Grammar School).
2. The Arches (at St. Mary le Bow)
3. St. Martin's le Grand.

He must have studied Latin and some English besides the tradi-tional subjects taught in all schools.

Circa 1356 - Out of school. Joined as page the household of Countess Elizabeth, daughter of the Earl of Ulster and wife of Lionel, the third son of King Edward III. Elizabeth must have taken Chaucer with her as part of her train all over London, Southampton, Reading, Hatfield, Windsor, Hertfourd Castle, Anglesey, Liverpool and many other places. Chaucer must have attended state weddings, funerals of many members of the aristocracy and the nobility and participated in feasts in the palace. He must have been thoroughly trained in the duties of a page at Elizabeth's palace-to be polite, well-mannered, noble like an ideal courtier and so on.

1359-60 Chaucer was a soldier in the army of Edward III, which, invaded France. Chaucer was a soldier in the army of Edward III which, invaded France.. Chaucer was

taken prisoner and ransomed (£16)- and released on -the First of March, 1360. Returned to London in Miyand was in Lionel's service later.

1366-Married Philippa, Lady-in-waiting to Queen Philippa. His sister-in-law, Catherine, became John of Gaunt's mistress and later his third wife (John of Gaunt was the Duke of Lancaster) Meanwhile, Chaucer must have been reading scientific, religious and philosophical matters and 'Le Roman de la Rose' and the French poets of his day like, Machaut, Deschamps and Froissart.

1368 - Diplomatic missions abroad.

1369 - Perhaps in France and met Froissart.

1372 - Official business in Italy, probably met-Petrarch and Boccaccio.

1373 - Controller of Customs & Subsidy of Wools skins & hides

1377 -1378 - Official visits to the Low countries & France 1386 -Left his position as Controller 1389 - Clerk of the King's Works

1391 - Deputy Forester at North Potherton, Somersetshire. 1400 -Died, October; buried at Westminster Abbey (St. Benedict Chapel, later known as Poet's Corner)

The above account has too many gaps and we do not know what Chaucer was busy with during those periods. However, we learn about his extensive travels and visits to France, Italy and other European countries and his contacts with important people of these countries. He must have observed their customs, manners traditions, rites, rituals, practices, costumes and manner of speech, the knowledge of which helped him in sketching the character of his pilgrims in his Canterbury Tales.

Chaucer's Literary Output: a calendar of activities.

Now we will have a look at the calendar of his literary activities. It has been the practice of students of Chaucer to divide his literary career into three periods:

(1) the French Period (upto 1372)

(2) the Italian Period (upto 1385)

(3) the English period (upto 1400)

We need not adhere to this kind of division, as we do not know very accurately the dates of Composition of his works.

The following imitations and translations belong to the <u>French period:</u>

(1) <u>Courtly Lyrics</u>

(2) Complaints - unto Pity
of Mars
of Venus

(3) The A.B.C. Poem

(4) Roman de la Rose

(5) The Book of the Duchess

The following belong to the <u>Italian period:</u>

(1) The Life of St. Cecilia

(2) Anelida and Arcite

The following belong to the <u>English period:</u>

(1) The House of Fame

(2) The Parliament of Fowls

(3) The Legend of Good Women

(4) Troilus and Criseyde

(5) Consolation of Philosophy-Translation of Boethius.

(6) The Canterbury Tales

Besides the above, Chaucer had written many other minor products, which we may ignore for the time being.

We shall now make an attempt to familiarize ourselves with Chaucer's works taking them one by one. No in-depth study is at-tempted-just a few sentences on his early works which might help us have a better acquaintance with the most representative poet of the 14th century.

Self Check Exercises

1. Write an essay on the life and works of Geoffrey Chaucer.
2. List the major European influences on Chaucer.
3. Comment on Chaucer, the courtier and the official.

COMMENTARY OF INDIVIDUAL WORKS

Courtly Lyrics:

The lyrics that Chaucer wrote in the beginning of his writing career amount to practically nothing. They are just curiosities and imitative of his contemporaries in France-poets like Froissart, Machaut and Deschamps. They present us with the familiar lover figure 'sighing like a furnace', complaining of the heartlessness of his beloved and pining away in lovesickness. Their metrical form is that of the *Balade.

*Balade: (spelt 'ballade' too) The most important of Old French FIXED FORMS containing three eight line stanzas rhyming ababbcbc with a four line ENVOY (envoi. too=concluding stanza; rhyming bcbc), the metre being iambic or anapaestic tetrameter with variable syllable count.

Complaints:

The Complaints are also imitative of French love poetry of his times. The Complaint unto Pity' has, its theme, the conceit of the lover addressing a bill of complaint to Pity (who, regrettably, is dead on her bier); the 'Complaint of Mars' is an allegory of clandestine love; the 'Complaint of Venus' is companion piece to the above.

The A.B.C. Poem*

The ABC Poem is hymn to the Virgin and translation of a part of Deguilleville's poem in French. It is a religious poem typical of the Middle Ages.

* ABC *Poem: Abecedarius (= alphabetical): A type of acrostic inwhich each line or stanza with the letters of the alphabet in their normal order. Chaucer's An ABC begins with Almighty, Bountee, Confort.....(stanzas) etc.*

Roman de la Rose:

It is now believed that Chaucer was responsible, for the translation of only the first 1705 lines of the French poem of more than 7500 lines authored in parts by two French, poets-Guillaume de Lorris about 1225 and Jean de Meung about 1275. It is one of the first allegories of the Middle Ages and encyclopaedic in its range and reach. The poem tells the reader how the narrator falls asleep and dreams that it is the sweetest of the May mornings. He wanders by a clear river, arrives at a beautiful garden from which all sorrows fly far away, and whose lord is Mirth. The garden has no place for anything old, ugly, poor or vicious, it is full of youthful delights. He eventually, sees the Rose, and as he keeps looking at

it, Cupid's arrows strike him one after another. But thorns protect the Rose and, its guardians are Modesty and Rebuff (the Rose is a Lady's love.) Moreover, the lady Reason (God's creation in Paradise itself) tries to talk him out of winning the Rose.

The above account is by Guillaume. Jean de Meung brings in medieval philosophy; science, nature poetry, controversy, satire (espe-cially of women), in short, every conceivable branch of medieval knowledge. The result is formlessness and inconsistency.

However, it was very influential as a poem and justified the incorporation of rambling philosophy into poetry.

The Book of the Duchess:

The' Book of the Duchess' was written on the death of John of Gaunt's first wife, Blance, in 1369-70 and so it is an elegy. The poem aims at praising the deceased and consoling the bereaved. Chaucer uses the dream allegory conventions here.

The poet, while reading the story of Ceyx and Alcine', falls asleep. Alcine sees Ceyx in a dream and learn from his own lips how he was drowned at sea. The poet dreams. It is a beautiful morning, he is wandering in the woods, and he hears the sounds of a hunt from far away. After some time he comes upon a man in black. He converses with this man and learns from him that Fortune played chess with him and won his queen. In other words, she is no more. She was remarkably beautiful. She was wooed and won by him, but now he has lost her forever.

The poem has grace, charm and sincere feeling, but it is too long, too rhetorical and too heavy with Chaucer's parading of his learning. Nevertheless, it is the first true-Chaucerian poem.

Life of St. Cecilia:

It is a close translation from Latin, having no remarkable qualities. However, it shows genuine warmth of devotion and piety, a little freshness and prettiness of detail.

Anelida and Arcite:

It is the story of a forsaken lady. The story is borrowed from Boccaccio. The initial magnificence soon dwindles to a mere complaint. Despite its metrical skill, this poem too, is just an occasional piece.

We are now coming to the significant poetic achievement of Chaucer. We begin with The Parliament of Fowls'.

The Parliament of Fowls:

This poem is written in the Valentine tradition. Probably it is a political allegory.

Here again Chaucer uses the dream vision. The narrator is led to a dream garden. He sees the voluptuous goddess in the Temple of Venus. The wall paintings show victims of tragic love. He comes out into the out door world of Nature. All the birds have gathered there to choose their respective mates. The star is the female eagle eagerly sought after by three male eagles. A debate ensues. The matter-whom to choose as mate-is left to he female eagle and she postpones her decision to the following year, as she has to think about her choice of mate.

The poem is noted for the bickering of the birds. The birds are arranged in a way suggestive of the divisions in the 14h c. English Par-liament. It is a powerful, appealing satire, too.

The House of Fame:

This poem, which is in three parts, begins this way. The poet in a dream finds himself within the Temple of Venus. There on the walls are shown the various details of the Aeneid'. He goes out and is now on a great plain. An eagle suddenly appears, swoops down and seizes him. The eagle and the poet, in the course of their aerial journey, enter into a

conversation. It is a pedantic talk about the nature of sound and the place they are heading towards, the House of Fame. The House is an imposing structure exquisitely made, full of magic. The Lady of the House is lady Fame. She holds court and dispenses her favours and disfavours. She is capricious and whimsical. He leaves the house and arrives at an unusual place-a rumour factory where every sort of report is constantly coming out of the curious wicker edifice. Soon a person of some authority comes out. The identity of the person is not given. The poem comes to an abrupt end.

This poem is a learned treatise and a powerful satire.

The Legend of Good Women:

This troublesome book is a collection of secular saints' lives. Possibly, it imitates Boccaccio's 'De Claris Mulieribus'. The protagonists, as a matter of fact, are not sainted ladies; they are martyrs of love. We do admire the choice of women like this be it Dido, Atra tedea, Ariadne, Lucrece etc. What disturbs us is that Cleopatra finds a place in the book as a martyr to love.

The prologue to the 'Legend' tells us about Chaucer's dream. The God of Love, not Cupid but Chaucer's own creation, charges Chaucer with false accusations of Criseyde leading to casting aspirations on all women and the ideal of constancy. He is also accused of translating the heretical work-Roman de la Rose. Alceste defends him saying he had translated Boethius and written on St. Cecilia, and they are holy compositions. Chaucer denies the charges. However, he has to do pen-ance by writing about good women, writing good things about women. Hence the Legend of Good Women.

There are excellent descriptions in many of the tales, nine in number, of various, and activities. Chaucer shows his contempt for pagan heroes and vices in the tales, shows his severe rationalism, too. Yet, the 'Legends' betray a thinness, which we do not find in the 'Canterbury Tales' or 'Troilus and Criseyde.'

The poem is said to have been composed on the order of Queen Anne. Its non-completion is attributed to the death of Queen Anne.

Troilus and Criseyede:

Boccaccio supplied Chaucer with the story. Chaucer's work is a chivalric romance and considered the first psychological novel in English. It is noted for the remarkable probing and motive and insight into character as well as the interplay of character and incident. It is also the one great completed poem of Chaucer consisting of 1177 stanzas of rhyme royal.

Consolation of Philosophy:

Chaucer translated Boethius's Consolation of Philosophy into English prose; the only significant prose work of Chaucer.

Activities:

Get a copy of the history of-English literature and study the evolution of Anglo-Saxon literature.

Collect as much information as you can on Geoffrey Chaucer the man and the poet.

If possible, get copies of Classical Mythology and read some stories from them. A working knowledge of classical mythology is essential to read, understand, appreciate and critically evaluate English literature.

Self-Check exercises

1. Give the synopsis of

(a) The Legend of Good Women.

(b) The Hall of Fame.

(c) Troilus and Criseyde.

(d) The Book of the Duchess, in your own words.

2. What do we mean by dream vision?

3. What sort of poems are "The Hall of Fame' and The Book of the Duchess'?

4. Study the structural characteristics of the early and later poems of Chaucer. How do the differ?

THE PROLOGUE TO THE CANTERBURY TALES

General Introduction

The English of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales' is now 500 years old and so it appears quite strange to the modern readers. Still, we can understand a good deal of the text. Reading aloud the 'text as it is the only way of enjoying the musical quality of the lines.

Let s keep in mind the fact that we have to learn that first 100 lines of the 'General Prologue' to the Canterbury Tales in thorough detail. This calls for a word-by-word examination of the whole one hundred lines, and then an in-depth study, a critical analysis, of the section. A word-by-word translation ruins the music of the text. But we cannot help it.

I believe you have a translation before you. Any translation will', do, as all translations will have broad agreement on the rendering. We shall attempt one, ignoring metre and rhyme, but as far as possible retaining the original words and substituting the nearest modern English word equivalent to that of Chaucer. I strongly suggest that you do the same using the glossary given along with the text.

Translation of the First 100 Lines:

When that April with his showers sweet

The drought of March has pierced to the root

And bathed every vein in such liquor

Of which virtue engendered is the flower

When Zephirus also with his sweet breath

Inspired has in every wood and health

The tender shoots, and the young sun .

Has in the Ram his half course' run

And small birds make melody

That sleep all night with open eye

So excited them Nature in their hearts

Then long people to go on pilgrimages

And palmers to seek strange lands

And specially from every shires end

Of England to Canterbury they go

The holy blissful martyr to seek

That them has helped when that they were sick.
It so happened in that season on a day
In Southwark at the Tabard as I lay
Ready to go on my pilgrimage
To Canterbury, with full devout heart,
At night was come into the hostel
Well nine and twenty in a company
Of sundry folk by chance gathered
In fellowship, and pilgrims were they all
That toward Canterbury would ride
The chambers and the stables were wide
And well L were cased at the best.
And, in short, when the sun was to rest

So had I spoken with them everyone.
That I was of their fellowship at once
And arranged early to rise
To take our way to the place I tell you about.
But nevertheless while I have time and chance
Before that I further in this tale proceed
I think it in accordance with reason and in order
To tell you about all the characteristics
Of each of them such as it appeared to me
And who they were, and of what social rank
And also in which dress they were in
And at a knight then will I first begin. ,
A knight there was and that a worthy man
That from the time that he first began
To ride out, he loved chivalry,
Loyalty, honour, liberality and courtesy
Full worthy was he in his Lord's wars
And moreover had he ridden, no man farther
As well in Christendom as in heathendom

And ever honoured for his worthiness
At Alexandria he was when it was won;
Full often was he at the head of the table
Above all nations in Prussia.
In Lithunia and Russia had he led military expeditions,
No Christian man so often of his rank.
In Granada at the seize also had he been
Of Algiciras and ridden in Benmarin.
At Ayas was he and at Ada lia
When they were won and in the Mediterranean
At many noble armada had he been.
At mortal battles had he been fifteen
And fought for our faith at Tremessen,
In lists thrice and always slain his foe.
This same worthy knight had been also
Some time with the Lord of Palathia
Again another heathen in Turkey.
And ever more be had a supreme renown
And though that he was worthy he was prudent
And of his bearing as mild as is a maiden.
He never ever no churlish word did say
An all his life to any kind of person
he was a true and perfect gentleman knight La
But to tell you about his dress
His horses were good but he was not gaudily dressed.
Of thick cotton cloth he wore a jacket
All spotted and stained with his coat of mail
For he had just arrived from his expedition
And went to do his pilgrimage.
With time there was his son, a young squire,
A lover and L lusty bachelor La
With locks curled as if they were laid; in press
Of twenty years of age he was I guess.

Of his stature he was of middle height
And wonderfully agile and of great strength
And he had been sometime in cavalry raid
In Flanders, in Artoys and Picardy
And had borne himself well considering his short career
In hope to stand in his lady's favour.
Embroidered he was if he were a meadow
All full afresh flowers white and red,
Singing he was and fluting all the day;
He was as fresh as is the month of May,
Short was his gown with sleeves long and wide
He knew very well how to sit on horse and ride
He would make tunes and write words for them.
Joust and also dance and draw well and write.
So hot he loved that by night time
He slept no more than does the nightingale.
Courteous he was, modest and willing to serve
And carved before his father at the dinner table.
I do not claim that I have done a perfect translation.
But this will do for our purpose....

Glossary:

	Line Word	Meaning in modern English
1.	his	its/his : The context suggests an element of personification
2	.droghtedrought/dryness	March is traditionally held to be dry and windy.
	Perced	pierced
3	.veyne	vein/vessels of sap; sap-bearing vessel
	swichlicour	such liquid/moisture i.e. sap
4.	of which vertu-	by the power of which. 'Vertu' might mean power or vital energy.
5.	Zephirus	the west wind of Spring
6.	Inspired holt	breathed upon with life giving breath; animated woodland
7.	croppes	new young shoots (not in the modern sense of crops)

young sonne — young sun the The sun was said to just emerge from Aries, the first sign of he zodiac, and so was in the early part of its annual course i.e. around 12 March.

8. Ram — Aries in the Zodiac

half course — During April the sun passed through the latter half of Aries before entering the first half of Taurus (the Bull). As Chaucer states that the half course in the Ram is complete, the date must be after April 11th

9. Foweles — birds

l0. This line either means 'Birds are light sleepers' or is a reference to nightingales who sing all night in the Spring. See the last few lines of The Squire'.

11. For Nature so spurs them on in their hearts or inner dispositions.

priketh — inspires, excites, incites, rouses

corages — hearts

12 thanne — then

longer — long; desire

13 partners — palmers; pilgrims or professional pilgrims.

The term was originally applied to those pilgrims who went to Pal-estine and brought back with them palm branches as tokens. Later it came to mean pilgrims generally.

straunge stronders — : foreign, strands or shores.

14 feme — far; distant

halwes — literally, saints, but here used to mean'shrines' or 'holy places'

kouthe — known

15 ende — end

16/17 Caunterbury — The shrine of St. Thomas a Becket was in Can-terbury Cathedral

wende — make their way.

blisful — blessed

18. Who had helped them when they were sick

19 Bifel — It so happened

20 lay — stayed/lodged

21 wenden — go

22. full deyout corage: very pious heart/very devout disposition

25 aventure — chance

yfalle — fallen

27 wolden ryde — were intending to ride

28 wyde — roomy, wide, spacious. The Tabard was famous for its luxury and comfort.

29 esed — made comfortable

atte beste — in the best manner

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30 shortly — in short

31 hem — them everichon

everichon — everyone

32 hir — their

33 Made the arrangement to get up early

34 To take our way to the place I tell you of : Canterbury

35 qathelees — nevertheless

36 Er — before

pace — proceed

37 acordant to resoun- in accordance with reason/order/suitable setting.

38 condicioun outward circumstances as well as inward character

40 whiche — who

degree — rank in society

41 eek — also

array — clothes; dress; costume along with equippage.

inne — in

42. wol — will

Knyght: — Knights were obliged to serve the King in his wars, but it was also common for those so inclined to seek service in wars overseas against the heathen.

45. chivalrye — the elaborate code of knightly manners, the ideal of knighthood.

46. Loyalty, a sense of honour, liberality and courteous behaviour -these were the four main virtues of the chivalric code; the words are loaded with a greater richness of meaning than can be indicated by mere translation.

47. his lordes werre- the king's wars. Perhaps, the crusades as well

48 therto — moreover

ferre — farther

51. AlisaundreAlexandria, captured by King Peter of Cyprus in 1365.

52 . Very many .times he was placed at the head of the table as a mark of honour

53. nacions — representatives of other nations.

53-54 Pruce — Prussia

Lettow — Lithuania

Ruce — Russia

The Teutonic knights of Russia were in a constant state of warfare with the neighbouring heathen and this frontier of Christianity became a common hunting ground for knights unemployed in other chivalric exercises. Somewhat like the modern mercenaries.

reysed — made an expedition (quite different from 'raised')

56-57 Gernade the Kingdom of Granada, held by the Moors,from whom Algeciras was captured in 1344

Belmarye — Benmarin, a Moorish kingdom corresponding to modern Morocco.

58 Lyeys — Ayas Armenia, captured from the Truks in 1367/

Satalye — Ancient Attalia, now Adalia, captured in about1361.

59 Grete See — the Mediterranean Sea.

60 Armee — armada, rather then army.

62	Trairyssene	Tremessen, noe Tlemcen, then in Moorish,North Africa..
63.	Iystes ay	lists; in this case direct combat with heathen always
65.	Palatye	Palathia, probably the modern Balant in Turkey. The Lord of Palatye was a heathen but bound in treaty to the chivalric King Pere of Cyprus.
67	a sovereyn prys-	a supreme renown
68-69,	wys	prudent (rather then 'wise')
	port	manner, bearing
		The two lines mean that, thought he was an excellent man of war, he was courteously unaggressive in behaviour, as the chivalric code enjoined.
70	vileynye	coarseness of speech; speech appropriate to a vilein or churl
71	maner wight	kind of man
72	verray	true
	parfit	perfect, complete
	gentile	refined
74	hors	horses

gay gaudy referring to his clothing.

It is only human beings who think of going on pilgrimages (and for obvious reasons, too), of the living things they alone are supposed to have souls and spiritual inclination.

I believe that the above account is enough to illuminate the poetic stature of Geoffrey, Chaucer. See how economically, but effectively, he has represented the complex idea of the interrelatedness of everything in this world (and, also the world beyond).

The rest of the lines (82) are self-explanatory. Chaucer tells us, how the pilgrims came together at the Tabard Inn in Southwark, how the expedition was organized, about the host, Harry Bailley and the nine and twenty pilgrims representing almost all the walks of life of the 14th c. England. He describes everyone in detail, highlighting the general characteristics of each and at the same time 'pinpointing some peculiari-ties of each so that each character is both a type, and an individual. Your translated version will be quite adequate for the purpose. However, we will have a critical commentary-which, follows:

Critical Commentary, on the General Prologue to the Cantebury Tales:

Geoffrey Chaucer is one of the best observant of English writers. The General Prologue bears testimony to this statement. The Prologue give, a realistic reports on human nature and society of his century 'a gallery of portraits'. In this Chaucer was not original; before him was Boccaccio in his 'Decameron', the Arabian Nights and many others; have a similar pattern. The type was quite popular in the literature of the Classical and the Medieval periods.

If we take the pilgrims in their value, we lose a good deal of information. Instead we have to see, them as representatives of a large number of various but related nations, judgment and typical patterns of behaviour. The result is that we find such persons amongst our relatives friends and acquaintances in the present day world.

Chaucer is not just an observer of mankind; he is a gifted story teller too besides being an excellent poet. We have already seen a major chunk of his poetry in the earlier sections.

Chaucer began his work on the Tales in 1387. He was in his late forties then. He was already familiar with all the kinds of literary modes, conventions and the, like. He was rather fond of the allegoric temper of the Middle Ages. Many of his pilgrims are allegoric images. We shall elaborate upon, this later if necessary.

	purtreye	draw; portray
	write	(an uncommon ability at that time.)
97	hoote	fervently
	nyghtertale	night time
99	Lowely	humble, modest
	servysable	willing to serve
100	carf	carve
	biforn	before

Activities :

I strongly recommend that each of you attempt a paraphrase yourself using the glossary given above. Then compare your version with the one given by me and then the text before you.

Your will find that the differences are few, and far between.

Now we shall attempt an interpretation of the 100 lines prescribed for your detailed study.

Interpretation:

The first eighteen lines are just one syntactic unit i.e. one sentence beginning with April and ending with sick. Stylistically speaking therefore, the ideas presented therein must be closely linked. Let us see how.

We begin with taking an inventory of the key lexical items and group them according to common semantic features. At this stage we need not be very punctilious.

April March Ram.

Sweet "showers drought such liquor

root vein flower tender crops (shoots)

"Zephirus sweet breath inspired

young sun bolt health
small birds
pricks long
folk palmers pilgrimages
corages
shire's end of England distant shrines Canterbury
holy blissful martyr.

The list above may tell you nothing at all as it is haphazard. We will now rearrange the words in order to bring some order and sense.

April, March Ram : The temporal cycle

Zephirus, sweet breath,

I young sun, sweet showers, : The Elemental Forces and
drought, liquor Parts of Nature
holt, health, shire'§ end, : Geographical units
Canterbury

A Nature

III root, vein, flower, tender shots :- Vegetable Kingdom

B Small birds,
folk, paimers, holy blissful martyr : The Animal Kingdom
Inspired, pricks, long
III heart, mind : Effects on the human mind.
Pilgrimages

Let us look at the groups now.

The items in group I represent inanimate things i.e. the world of the non living.

The items in group II represent animate things i.e. the world of the living.

At once the picture changes. The animate world and the inanimate world inextricably entangled. Any change that comes over the inanimate world strongly and surely affects the animate world. A chain reaction sets in.

Now let us look at group II closely. It represents he world of the living, i.e. the animate world.

Here A stands for the vegetable kingdom.

B stands for the animal kingdom.

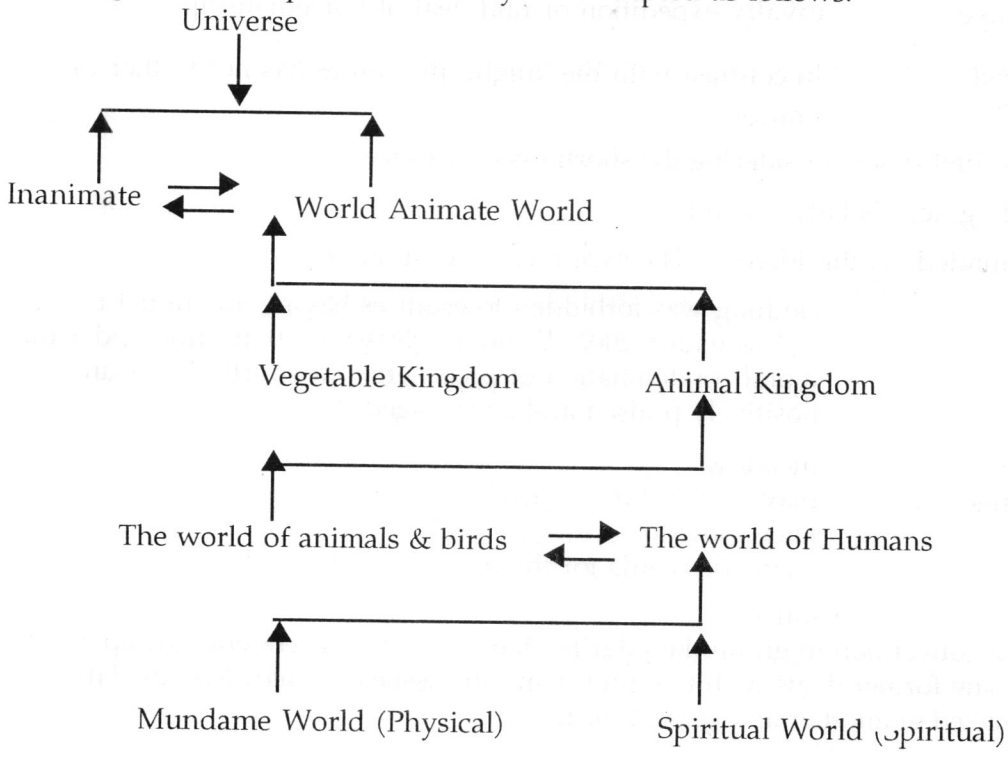
On looking at B closely again we find that, 'small birds' represents the world of animals and, birds where 'folk ..... ' represents the world of the humans. From the above it follows that vegetable kingdom and the animal kingdom are inseparably bound. In the animal kingdom animals and birds and humans coexist, they are bound together by the laws of Nature. Any change that comes over the animal world affects the world of the human and any change that happens in the vegetable world affects the animal world.

Now let us look at II B. We have 'folk, palmers and martyrs in that order, i.e. men-pilgrims-martyrs. This sequence suggests the transition from the mundane world to the spiritual world, leading ordinary man to martyrdom and sainthood, the noblest stage one can aspire for in this world.

Let us now look at III.

As a result of the changes in the world, outside people get excited and inspired and consequently they strongly desire to leave behind them their mundane existence and go to seek spiritual solace at the shrine of St. Thomas Becket at Canterbury.

A diagrammatic representation may be attempted as follows:



This is an instance of the way in which the Great Chain of Being operates. One leads on to another and the process goes on and on and on. It explains how people think in terms of going on pilgrimages in the month of April, the month of the rebirth of life, Good Friday and Easter Sunday after a protracted period of winter which is the season of non action, hibernation and death. People get inspired. This is a cyclic process forever going on about us, in us.

75	fustian	thick cotton cloth
	gypoun	tunic worn under the chain mail
76.	bismotered	stained, spotted, smeared with rust
	habergeoun	hauberk, coat of mail
77	viage	voyage, expedition
78.	his pilgrimage :	The world 'his' implies that it was the usual pilgrimage offered to a saint in return for safety or honour in battle.
79.	Squire	Attendant and arms bearer for a knight. He would usually have been of aristocratic birth; his duties would include carving at table.
80	lusty	a word used by many writers to describe such bachelors and conveying such qualities as high spirits and exuberance as well as amorousness.
81.	bachelor	a man training for knighthood (compare the degree Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science etc.)
82.	crulle	curled
	layd in presse	pressed in a curling iron of some kind
83.	evene lengthe	middle height, average height
84.	delyvere	agile, active.
85.	chivachye	cavalry expedition or raid: feat of horsemanship
86.	ventured	In contrast with the knight, the squire has not farther than France
87.	as of so litel space	considering the shortness of his service
88.	his lady grace	his lady's favour
89.	Embrounded	embroidered. The excessive decoration of clothing was forbidden to esquires having an annual income of less than $ 2007- Elaborate dressing often came under the moral condemnation of preachers, but courtly literature positively praised and encouraged it
90.	meede	meadow
91.	floytynge	playing the flute; whistling
92	koude	knew how to
93	endite	write the words for the songs he composed
94	juste	joust

It is now a convention to group the pilgrims-the marriage (dis-cussion) group and the quarrel group. The former deals with the 'prob-lems and issues' of marriage, the latter one tells a story directed at another and gets tit for tat.

The number of pilgrims is not 'nine and twenty'. To this number we have to add the host and the poet; and the Canon and his Yeoman who join the team at Boughton-under-Blean-which raises the number to thirty three.

Even though each pilgrim promised to tell two stories each either way in which case the number of stories would have been about

120, we have just twenty four, twenty three by the pilgrims and one by Chaucer himself. Some tales are unfinished.

Chaucer is totally detached and nowhere do we find him speaking his mind. He achieves the unity we find in the tales by cross references and interlocking layers of ideas, besides forming group within groups with a good amount of overlapping interests. The very fact that all the participants are pilgrims itself shows the unity in diversity. But let us wait before giving a value judgment.

The first 42 lines of the General Prologue prepares us to listen to what follows by holding our interest, after kindling and fanning it. When we come to the Squire, the son of the knight and on the threshold of youth, we realize that some of the account will relate to passion and romantic love-Let us recall April with the sweet showers, the soft, ca-ressing Zephirus, the young sun, the birds making melody. The young shoots and flowers: they are all accompaniments of romantic love. And we read on. We soon begin to suspect that there is some mockery behind the pilgrimage-an assortment of persons from all known walks of life coming together journeying together, agreeing to tell stories to while away their time and bring down the tedium (for, a true pilgrimage can hardly be boring as the pilgrim's mind will be filled with piety and devotion) especially when afterwards, some of the stories turn out to be totally unfit during a pilgrimage. Remember it is the season of Easter-Crucifixion, Resurrection,' Penance, Discipline and Piety. We will now examine the pilgrims one by one. This is no in-depth study and so we will stress only the most significant points.

The Pilgrims: Very brief remarks:

The Knight:

He is sort of idealized-perfectly chivalric, successful Christians if he is straight come form the Medieval Romances. However, he is an ironic misfit. Look at the numerous battles he has fought. He is fit for commerce, civil disturbances, political chaos. A man like him is an anachronism.

The Squire:

His appearance and accomplishments are highlighted. We need not look elsewhere for a romantic lover-we have the prototype in the squire. How he spends his sleepless nights!

The Yeoman:

The yeoman, the servant of the knight (and his son, the squire) is naturally vigorous, alert and efficient, skilled in woodcraft and forestry. He keeps his gear in perfect condition. Contrast his natural ac-complishments with the cultivated artificial sophistication of the squire.

The above three, a group, act as a foil to one another.

The Prioress:

Chaucer, the observant commentator, is at his best when he de-scribes the Prioress. We may, however, find some delicate satire under-neath the glowing picture. Note her attributes: how she looks, talks, eats, mingles with fellow pilgrims, treats pets and the like; how she weeps over dead mice; above all, the letter 'A' on her gold brooch, which stood for 'Amor vincit omnia' (Love conquers all) Here love' could be holy love or profane love. Her description fits a lady in the court rather than a prioress.

The Monk:

The monk embodies what we never expect from a true Christian. He is well-fed, richly attired, with expensive tastes and pleasures, guilty of profane indulgences. He does everything that a true Christian shies away from. He enjoys life to the hilt. While describing the monk, Chaucer does not mince his words. Condemnation is writing large.

The Friar:

Chaucer is too critical of the friar too. He is somewhat a blot on the mendicant order. He is what a true follower of Christ should never be.

The Prioress, the Monk and the Friar together form a group and represent the clergy.

The Merchant:

The policy of the Friar is the policy of the merchant too: PROFIT. Mention is made of his cunning and shady business deals involving money lending.

The Clerk:

The lean and sober-looking clerk is contrasted with the worldly merchant and the Sergeant of Law. He is morally earnest and a serious student. He does not care for his clothes (compare him with the squire), or his appearance. But should one be like that? Should a scholar be to-tally oblivious of what goes around him?

The Sergeant of Law:

After the knight, the Sergeant of Law occupies the highest rung of the social ladder. His position is privileged ceremonial and exceedingly powerful. After describing him as dignified, competent, admirably just etc. etc., Chaucer deftly, shyly casts a side glance at him-'And yet he seemed busier that he was' - insinuating a professional mask that he wears. He is a pretender, perhaps? How does he manage to be 'so great a purchaser? He exploits to his advantage, his knowledge: of the law.

The Franklin:

The wealthy landowner is both the son of Epicurus and the patron saint of hospitality. St. Juliah. Chaucer seems to be full of admiration for he Franklin. Perhaps Chaucer identifies, the Franklin with the member of his own clan-the landed gentry who led a comfortable life-to justify it.

The Five Guildsmen

The newly rich Guildsmen are pompous, comic characters petty and proud. It is their wives' vanity, that has inflated them, Chaucer has total contempt for the fellows, their vanity is visible in the form of their bringing their own cook to serve them during the pilgrimage'.

The Cook:

The Cook portrays his ignorance and inferiority. He has stinking breathe, drinks too much and has a disgusting running sore on his shin. He is a sham.

The Shipman:

The self-confident, expert shipman is a good fellow' (a pregnantly ambiguous-phrase). He is described as cheerful and confident. We are left with our suspicions with respect to the character of the shipman.

The Doctor of Physic:

The first half of the description leads us to take the doctor as the best we can have. But when Chaucer mentions his love of gold we begin to look upon him as another member of the age-old racket-practicing medicine to make money. The picture becomes worse when his lack of familiarity with the Bible is mentioned. Is he an atheist?

The Wife of Bath:

Medieval Christian antifeminism can be seen in the description of the Woman of Bath. She is represented as the carnal temptress (the fatal woman of the medieval romances) misleading man, thereby causing his destruction. She is promiscuous, gossiping, immodest, luxurious i. e. the eternal Eve, the prototypical temptress. Nevertheless, she is pulsating with life force, is self confident, accomplished, colourful and the best representative of the beast in man (and woman), as is evident in her frequent marriages.

The Parson:

The parson and his brother, the ploughman are the only two pilgrims who are free from any ridicule or criticism Even the Franklin is mildly criticised for his luxurious, unchristian life style. The parson is more type than individual. He embodies Christian charity. He is the con-trast to, the corrupt clergy -the summoner and the pardoner. He is the perfect, ideal priest.

The Ploughman:

Ploughman, too, is the idealized Christian, symbolizing charity. Remember the curse on man when he first disobeyed God's decree-to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. He does that, besides feeding fellow beings. He is the ideal lay Christian.

The Miller:

The Miller is gross, rough, strong as an ox, having too much hair, violent, sensual, stupid and shameless. His coarseness suggests total ignorance of a spiritual life. He readily contrasts with the pardoner and the other honest labourer, the ploughman.

TheManciple, (the buyer of provisions)

He is something like a manager in - an inns of court. Shrewd and cunning, he makes money by cheating his employers, the lawyer masters in the inns of court. The irony is very subtly camouflaged till the very end of his description.

The Reeve:

He manages a manorial estate. He stands out in his environment it more like a scarecrow than anything else. He is of the same rank as the other workers in the manor; he is cunning, dishonest, vindictive, selfish and profiteering. He is rusty just like the sword he carries.

The Summoner:

The Summoner is a diseased moral wreck. He is guilty of gluttony (one of the seven Deadly Sins) and lechery. He is one of the most reprehensible characters' in the Tales. The irony is that he is the repre-sentative of the Christian church, whose office is to oversee the moral discipline of his diocese. His ignorance and corruption are severely criti-cized by Chaucer.

The Pardoner:

The Pardoner is an aggravated version of the Summoner and personifies avarice (one of the seven Deadly Sins). He is another revolting member of the corrupt clergy stooping to the lowest level for personal gain.

The Host:

He is the Master of Ceremonies, the conductor of the huge opera of the pilgrimage. Chaucer spares no pains to draw his character in minute detail - a very clever business man who leaves no stone unturned to make some profit: that is the host.

Summing Up:

These pilgrims give us a cross sectional view of Chaucer's society in and around London in the 14th century. The descriptions are social history in excellent detail.

Needless to say, Chaucer gives us more information on the 14th century London than any book on the history of he place. AS THE TRANSLATION IS QUITE EASY TO READ AND UNDERSTAND, TEXT NO DIFICULTY TO COMPREHEND IS EXPECTED. THE NOTES ARE NEVER A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE TEXT.

Self Check Exercises:

(1) Take a few of the pilgrims at random, one at a time, and list the characteristics under type features and individuating ones.

(2) Bring out in your own words the subtle satire and irony in Chaucer's description of the pilgrims.

(3) Group the pilgrims and comment on the groups.

(4) Discuss Chaucer's attitude towards the elegy, the trade guilds women, the upper class men and the labourers.

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There are scores of books on Geoffrey Chaucer and his poetry. Any good books will do for supplementary reading.

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JOHN DONNE
INTRODUCTION TO METAPHYSICAL POETRY

Metaphysical poetry in the full sense of the term is Poetry, which like the Devine Comedy, or De Nature Rerum, has been inspired by a philosophical conception of the Universe and the role assigned to the human spirit in the great drama of existence. It expounds a coherent system of philosophy.

Donne, as well as the poets who followed his technique and style, expounds no such system of philosophy. His primary concern is feeling. The central theme of his poems is intense personal moods. His philosophy cannot unify these experiences. The reaction of the moment is illuminated to the reader. Truly metaphysical poetry deals with meta-physical subjects such as the nature of the universe, movements of plan-ets and stars and the relationship of man to God. So Donne is not meta-physical in the sense as Dante, Lecretius or Epicurus. He is not meta-physical in the strict philosophical sense.

Donne is metaphysical in the literary sense. It denotes a specific style rather than philosophy. When John Dryden, Dr. Johnson and Dowden called Donne a metaphysical poet they had his style in mind. When De Quiney disagreed with them he had Donne's subject matter in his mind.

By a natural transition we come to analyse the characteristics of this style.

1. The Metaphysical poets were opposed to the current sensi-bility.

It revolted against Spenserian, Petrarchman and Platonic ideals in poetry. It is anti-idealising, possibly because such ideas were impossible (Eliot and Donne are Modern in any aspects.) Its treatment of love is unconventional. The age was noted for poets like Petrarch who adored and sentimentalised. To the metaphysicals Dante's love for Beatrice, Petrarch's love of Laura, and gallant adoration of Sidney for Stella were all figments of the mind. Donne refused to deal in smooth melodies, in morals parables, in translated passions or in poor, Petrarch's woes. He is, one man with some diffident, anti-romantic and anti-Petrarchan. He rejects the lofty cult of women. Instead he mocks looking at the ladylove as a goddess. In him we find an urge to express new thoughts in new manner, though lyrically, yet intellectually and dramatically. In diction he reacted against the cloying sweetness and harmony of the Elizabethan poetry He proclaimed his revolt with a resounding trumpet sound. "I sing not siren-like to tempt, for I am harsh".

2. Mixing of emotions:

To the romantic emotion is pure, but the metaphysicals are down to the earth realists. All emotions in Donne are mixed. If there is love there is hatred too. We find fascination and scornful anger inextricably blended in:

"When by them scorn. O murderess I am dead". We find in Donne a psychological realism, a record of passion not ideal or conventional, not recollected in tranquillity but immediate experience.

3. Tranquillity:

The metaphysicals, as a whole, have an appeal to the elite. The world of knowledge is not anathema to them. It was necessary to think and read. No one could be born a metaphysical poet. It is not poetry 'felt in the blood and felt along the heart', but felt In the

heart and brewed in the head. In Donne we find reference to astronomy, alchemy and expanding universe of exploration. He is familiar with the definitions and destinations of medieval scholasticism. He is aware of the clash between the older physics and metaphysics, on the one hand and the new science of Copernicus, Galileo and Bacon on the other.

"And new philosophy calls all in doubt. The element of fire is quite put out. The sun is lost and the earth, "and no man's wit can well direct him where to look for it."

Metaphysics, cosmology, natural science medicine and alchemy are employed in their medieval conceptions. In 'Good Friday' he uses scholastic doctrine of the spheres, each governed by an intelligence or angel and Ptolemaic doctrine of cycles and epicycles:

"Let man's soul be a sphere and then in this the intelligence that moves, devotions is."

4. Use of conceits and far-fetched images.

Conceit is a comparison whose ingenuity is more striking or at least is more immediately striking than its justness. A comparison becomes a conceit when we are made to concede likeness while being strongly conscious of unlikeness. There are extended conceits like the comparison of lovers to a pair of compasses, or like Cowley's comparison of making love to different women to travelling through different lands and condensed conceits like Cartwright -comparing motion of blood to a mill or the "evening time spread out against the sky like a patient etherised upon a table". Donne is an immortal image-maker. We have the phoenix, the spider love, the flea, lovers lying like sepulchral statues, sick body becoming a map and physician a cosmographer. No wonder Dr. Johnson was horrified. "The most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together."

5. Wit:

The occult resemblances, which Dr. Johnson used in a derogatory sense (for he was a slave of certain definite ideas about poetic creation), are the very essence of metaphysical wit, which are fully exploited by Donne. Wit is the effect of conceit. Donne leaves "To nature all that I in rhyme have writ/and to my company my wit." Carew called him 'the-universal Monarch of wit". The Wit of Donne is characterised by the intenseness, vigour, wonder and peculiarity of thought; exercised on subjects unexpectedly. This flea is You and Young beauties force our love and that is a rape; love is a growing or full constant light and his first minute afternoon is night, a naked thinking heart that, makes no show is to a woman a kind of ghost-realistic and straightforward wit.

6. Unified sensibility:

A distinctive note of the metaphysical poetry is the blend of passionate feeling and paradoxical r[illegible]ination unification of feeling and thinking. They possessed a mechanism of sensibility, [illegible]h could favour any kind of experience. Eliot attributed the obscurity in metaphysical poetry to this unification of sensibility. In Donne we find the amalgamation of disparate experiences, he connects the abstract with the concrete, physical with spiritual, remote with near, sublime with commonplace:

"Contraries meet in one/Inconstancy materially hath begot/ A constant habit"

7. Argumentativeness:

Metaphysical poem's quintessence is the vivid imagining of a moment of experience out of which the need to argue arises. In 'Loves Deitie".

"Falsehood is worse than hate and that must be

If she whom I love, should love me"

Therefore the speaker feels: "I must love' her that love not me".

Apart from these important ones, one can easily point out many other characteristics like the use of hyperbole. [Like lightning or taper's light my eye and not thy nose waked me].

Catechrists or a deliberate abuse of words for starting and effective communication like green thought and 'vegetable growth' and the use of a harsh tone to approximate the language of poetry to direct, unconventional, colloquial speech. When the thought and feeling tend to break through the pre-scribed pattern the lines become almost rhythmical prose bending and cracking the metrical pattern to the rhetoric of direct and vehement ut-terances. So his poetry becomes a hard nut to crack; hard surfaced, it seems to be' striving to find a rhythm that will express the passionate fullness of his mind, the fluxes and influxes of his mind. Their fondness for analysis which broke an image in bits, led them to the dissection ofemotion. They were always analytic. Rapid association of thought, tele-scoping of images and multiplied association and elaboration of a figure to the farthest stage to which ingenuity can carry it make the poems dif-ficult to read.

Donne is fond of abrupt personal openings in which man speak to-his mistress, or God or calls us to mark-this or see that or set a scene. A element of anti-Heroism or unheroism too is visible in him.

In short, Metaphysical poetry is a direct sensuous appreciation of thought or recreation of thought into feeling-an emotional apprehension of thought expressed in a 'grotesque' style.

Unit II

Donne's Love Poetry

Donne's love poems are to a large extent the uninhibited record of many love affairs and life long friendship he had with women like Anna More, Lucy, Bedford, Magdelon Herbert, Elizabeth Huntingdon etc. It seems he has experienced all phases of love, platonic or sensuous, serene or cynical, conjugal or illicit. His temperament and learning gives a depth and range of feeling to his love poems, which are a revolutionary breakaway with the prevailing notions of love. His songs are the expression of all the moods of a lover that experiences and imagination have taught him to understand.

(1) Simple lyrical expression is given to love in.

"Sweetest love I do not go,

For Weariness of thee..."

Temporary separation here is just a feigned death or just 'turned aside to sleep."

(2) Exaltation of physical love is seen in "The Canonisation" and"The Good Morrow". Secular love here is spiritualised; the lovers andcanonised, 'for they prove mysterious' by their love, and futuregenerations shall pray to them and beg for a pattern of their love. In "the good morrow physical love and the perfection of their love make the lovers immortal

"Whatever dies, was not mixed equally, if our two loves be one

Or thou and I love so alike, that none to slacken or none can die."

(3). Fascination and scronful anger inextricably blended:

"When by thy scorn, O murderess, I am dead."

Then shall my ghost come to thy bed." (The apparition)

The lover visualises his love "in worse arms" and feels that he also would give her up and flee making her a poor neglected wretch.

4. The passionate joy of mutual contented love as in "only our love hath no decay"

5. The sorrow of parting which is the shadow of such joy as in the Expiration."So, so, break off last lamenting kiss"

6. The Gentler pathos of temporary separation in married life;

"But think that we

Are but turned aside to sleep", for eventually he is so return as in A Valediction; Forbidding mourning:"

"Thy firmness makes my circle just, And makes me end, where I begun".

7. The mythical heights and mystical depths of love:

"For I am every dead tiling

I am whom love wrought new Alchemy"

8. Sexual aspect of love is not deprecated but accommodatedby the poet as an inalienable path of love:

"But since my soul, whose child love is, Take limbs of flesh, and else could nothing do More subtle than the parent is The love must not be but take a body too" (Air and Angles)

9. An attitude of indifference too is discernible in Donne. In the 'Indifferent' he says: "I can love both fair and brown"

.....I can love

her, and her, and you and you

I can love any, so he be not true"

Grierson finds three different strains in Donne's love poetry-cynical, platonic, and conjugal

10. There is occasional disparagement of women as in:

"At their best, sweetness and wit

they are but mummy possessed."

11. Downright cynicism as in:

"And when he hath the kernal eater who doth not fling away the shell?"

Women's constancy. The different. Air and Angles. The Dream. The Apparition etc. find the women false and unfaithful. It is almost impossible to find a woman true and fair. Ref: Go and catch a falling star".

12.Ecstasy of physical charm:

"Her pure and eloquent blood

spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought

That one might almost say, her body thought."

13. Intricacies of love and hate relationship between man and woman: a given person may be loved and hated by the different aspects of that person's personality as in

"Where the heart loves not the body"

14.Love as true paradise : In "The legacy" love never dies and lovers are eternity. Twicknam Garden. The blossom. The primrose and The Canonization are in the same spirit

15.Finally, secular love seen as the spring board to spiritual or divine love. Through secular love one may love, one may move to wards spiritual love In Holy sonnet No. 17:

"And her soul early into heaven ravished.

Wholly in heavenly tilings my mind is set.

Here The admiring her my mind did whet

To seek thee God

In short we have love poetry totally different. The cynicism of Byron, the sensuousness of Keats, the grotesqueness of Browning, all are here combined with his own spiritualism and metaphysicim: Therefore we have a poetry, erudite, subtle and fantastic with the play of argu-ments and wit on the one hand: and a strain of vivid realism, the record of passion, which is not ideal or conventional, neither recollected in tranquility nor a pure product of literary fashion, but love as an imme-diate experience in all its moods, gay and angry. Scornful and rapturous with joy touched with tenderness and darkened with sorrow.

THE CANONIZATION

The poem was written after 1601. Love's martyrs, after their self ruin for love are made saints and the rest of the world pray to them to give them a pattern of their love.

Stanza I

The abrupt and dramatic opening is very characteristic of Donne. The poem seems to be addressed to the critics of his life. He wishes to he permitted to go on with his love. Loving, for him is not everything as in the earlier writers; it is not the only aspiration, it is one of the activities of living, and he will be happy to be left undisturbed. 1.2-3: Donne anticipates the usual objections to an imprudent love.

1.6. Pay court to some lord or Bishop.

1.7.-8: The king's actual face or his image on coins, ie prestige or wealth. He and his love have abandoned the world of courts and coins for love.

Stanza II

The speaker affirms that nothing has been changed in the world by their love. It has rninirnum effect of affecting just two individuals. The outside disharmony is no result of our love. These lovers are anti-romantic. They create no tempests: it's a private matter.

1:11-14: Petrarchan lovers conceitedly worked out the external effects of their sufferings. This ironic parody argues that the world should be content to leave the lovers alone since its unedifying traffic goes on unaffected by their love.

1:15:1601 was the year of the plague: Did any one die to infection form my veins? Our love was inconsequential to the world.

Stanza III

Visualises the lovers as files, tapers and the phoenix.

1:20-21 They are at once the mouths which destroy themselves in the flame of the candle, and the candle itself which consumes its own substance.

Die can have several meaning in Donne. It may mean physical consummation.

Ref: Farwell to Love : 24-5: ...since each such act. they say,

Diminisheth the length of life a day.

It may also mean the experience of being rebuilt? Or the lovers dying to the outside world by concentrating on each other? Or dying by being consumed by the power of love or the new person that is born to them-the phoenix born out of the ashes of the two now made one 1:22: eagle-symbol of strength.

Dove- symbol of strength

The victor - victim relation may be noted.

The dove permits to be killed; the fly files to the taper and dies; it loves to be killed.

1:23: A mythical bird which at the end of the 500 years cycle was supposed to go the temple of Sun at Helipolis, jump into the funeral pyre there and reassured. Only one of the kind exists so it: is both male and female: say it is neutral: The oneness of sexual communication is suggested through this unique bird: The uniqueness of their relationship too is suggested.

1: 26: Their claim to canonization rests: They are unaffected by the outside world. They have just one passion.

1:27 They are mysterious, beyond the common run of human conduct and the grasp of reason, like saints.

Stanza IV:

Affirms that their love lyrics shall make the future generations approve them as canonized for love.

33: Ref: Cleanth Brooks : "The well wrought Urn"

33:34: Well -decorated Urns we're once on vogue, and they befitted the ashes of the most important people.

Stanza V:

It is a prayer to the canonized lovers: You who did contract into yourselves the soul of the whole world, and throw it on the mirror or your eyes, making them such mirrors, such spices, that they have you everything in epitomey, countries, towns and courts, we your worship-pers pray you to petition heaven for us to give us a pattern, that is copy-ing of your love.

1:38: Hermitage-pilgrimage

1:39: rage-the bliss of love's saints in heaven the highest ecstasy.

1:40: The lovers gaze into each other's eyes and see there in epitome all they thought they had lost.

1:41-44: and drove countries, town and courts into the glasses of your eyes.

1: 44-45: Intercede on behalf of later lovers for the blessings of a love patterned on this one, love's highest condition.

JOHN DONNE

A VALEDICTION: FORBIDDING MOURNING

Jacobean And Caroline Poetry

General Background

The poetical tradition of the Renaissance, partly Italian, partly classical, and partly native did not come to an end with the high tide of the Renaissance. Indeed, poetry was merely reformed "by two poets: Johnson increased its classical quality, and Donne revolted against its Petrarchan exuberance; most of the poets of the early seventeenth cen-tury continued in the tradition of Spenser arid the Elizabethans. Under-standing that the lyricism of Queen Elizabeth's reign was continuing all the while, we have three main groups of poets to consider. Johnson and his circle, the followers of Spenser, and Donne, who with his followers constituted a group known as "metaphysical" poets, so named by Dr. Samuel Johnson.

Since our area is John Donne and George Herbert we will confine our study to the metaphysical school.

Origin of the title 'metaphysical': Discussion.

The selection of the word 'metaphysical' as a critical one in the first place was arbitrary. Dryden implied it in ' A Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire' where he says of Donne:

"He affects the metaphysics, not only in his satires, but in his amorous verses, where nature only should reign; and perplexes the minds of the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy when he should engage their hearts and entertain them with the softness of love."

But Dryden was not suggesting it as a definitive description of a style of writing or of a school of poets. It was Dr. Samuel Johnson who did that in his "Life of Cowley".

"About the beginning of the seventeenth century appeared a race of writers., that may be termed 'metaphysical poets".

Helen Gardner discuses the term in her "The Metaphysical Poets' as strong-lined as used by Donne's contemporaries to refer to the poems of the school whereas Sir Herbert Grierson submits 'fantastic' as a possible substitute for 'metaphysical'. T.S. Eliot remarks that the term has long done duty as a term of abuse, or as a label of quaint and pleas-ant taste. John Bennet in her 'Five Metaphysical Poets' concludes that 'he is expressing a state of mind by referring to a background of ideas rather than describing the ideas themselves for their own sake" and adds that" the metaphysics occur in his poetry as a vehicle; but never as the thing conveyed".

Sir Herbert Grierson discusses "authentic metaphysical poetry" (that of Lucretius, Dante and Goethe) and then concludes that the word 'metaphysical' is apt when applied to the school of Donne:

"It lays stress on the right things-the survival, one might say, the reaccentuation of the metaphysical strain the more intellectual, less verbal character of their wit compared with the conceits of the Elizabethans; the finer psychology of which their conceits are often the expression; their learned imagery; the argumentative, subtle evolution o! their lyrics above all, the peculiar blend of passion and thought, feeling and ratiocination which is their highest achievement."

Professor James Smith in his essay "On Metaphysical Poetry' claims that Donne's poems deal with subjects of a truly metaphysical nature, for example, the stability and self -sufficiency of love contrasted with the mutability and dependence of human beings and the short comings of this life, summarised by decay and death, contrasted with the divine to which it aspires. He continues to claim stating that the treatment t>f such subjects necessarily leads to the typical metaphysical style:

"For metaphysics, while highly abstract, is by the very reason

of its high degree of abstraction intimately concerned with the concrete." He justifies the term by maintaining that bewilderment and uncertainty in the fact of life's problems are in fact part of the essential metaphysical approach and there ought to be a note of tension or strain.

The Chief Characteristics of Metaphysical Poetry

(a) Metaphysical Poetry sounds like people actually talking.

(b) By rhythm and by diction metaphysical poetry achieved its new startling style. The rhythm is an astonishing freedom which is lacking in Elizabethan verse. (However, the irregular verse forms were strongly censured by the contemporaries, especially by Johnson.)

(c) In many poems the poets speak in their own persons: in many they aim at creating, dramatically, different characters with voices of their own.

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(d) the metaphysical poets aim at rhetorical effect through dra-matic, rigorous, complex and unlikely analogies. They use their brains and show that they are using their brains.

(e) The metaphysical poets argue and debate and persuade with the intention of revealing conflicts. In many of their poems we find a tone of pleading and persuasion and desire to convince readers using deliberately false logic.

(f) All poets use the technique of comparing one thing with another, by means of metaphor and simile, but the metaphysicals did it particularly well with unusual intelligence, wit and emotion. They boldly drew on the whole range of their experience to make comparisons that were so original as to bestarting. The comparisons were functional and organic rather than decorative. These are what we call "conceits".

Examples

1. Donne's likening of the souls of himself and his wife to a pair of compasses.
2. Henry King's simile of the pulse and the drum.
3. John Hall's reference to man as a tennis bal of error.
4. John Suckling's lines involving watches and winding.

   What in our watches that in us is found,

   so to the height and nick

   we up be wound.

   No matter by what hand or trick
5. John Cleveland's lines (from To the State of Love)

   Yet, that's but a preludous bliss;

   Two souls pickering in a kiss.

   (To picker was to skirrnish just ahead of the main body of an army.)

   Dr. Johnson says that in a conceit 'the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together'; Helen Gardner defines a conceit

   as 'a comparison whose ingenuity is more striking than its justness';

   Chambers' dictionary defines a conceit as a witty thought, especially farfetched, affected over-ingenious.

(g) Metaphysicals stood for the fusion of thought and feeling (i.e. unified sensibility in Eliotian terminology) and wit sometimes quite evident in puns.

(h) Metaphysical poetry dealt with both religious and secular themes with equal ease and with stunning results.

(i) The direct, dramatic opening is typically metaphysical.

(j) On most occasions conceits are odd or peculiar, drawing attention to themselves by their apparent incongruity or absurdity. Some times they are amusing, displaying mental gymnastic or ostentatious cleverness.

(k) Metaphysical poetry is the triumph of riddling ingenuity over common sense. Logic is simultaneously used and abused. All too often a metaphysical poem resembles a sequence of rapid riddles and even jests regardless of the gravity or nobility of the subject. Since the effect of wit is often achieved by the extraction of somesense from the most preposterous analogies or by the deduction of preposterous conclusions from plausible premises, the effect is dottiness. The madly crazy metaphysical display misapplied intelligence.

(1) Metaphysical poetry is noted for its extreme fondness of paradox.

Examples

John Cleveland:

I am not poet here: my penne 's the spout
Where the rainwater of my eyes run out
In pity of that name, whose fate we see
Thus copi'd out in griefs hydrographie,

John Dryden: 'Elegy Upon the Death of the Lord Hastings'

(Hastings dies of smallpox)

was there no milder way but the small pox,
the very filth'ness of Pandora's Box?
So many spots, like neaves, our Venus soil?
One jewel set off with so many a Foil?
Blisters with pride swell'd , which th'row's lesh did spout
Like rosebuds, stuck i'th Lilly-skin about.
Each little pimple had a tear in it,
To wail the fault its rising did commit:
Who, rebel-like, with their own Lord at strife,
thus made an insurrection 'gainst his life.

The Metaphysical Poets: The school of Donne:

The metaphysical poets include John Donne. George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, Thomas Carew, Richard Crashaw, Henry Vaughan, Thomas Traherne, Henry King, Abraham Cowley, William Habington, Sidney Godolphin and John Hall. Tehy were active for nearly ninety years from 1592 to 1678. Occasionally, a few others too borrowed the metaphysical traits and wrote verse.

John Donne

John Donne was born in London in 1572. His father was pros-perous iron-monger, but* with connections and ancestry that justified his claims to gentility. His mother-, Elizabeth Hey wood, was the daughter of John Heywood, the dramatist and poet and the grand daughter (of SirThomas More who, you may remember, was executed by Henry VIII for his adherence to papal Supremacy), and sister of Jasper Heywood, a Je-suit missionary priest. His parents were Roman Catholics and they brought him up in that faith, fully aware of its attendant dangers and difficulties those times. (The Church of England was fantastically Protes-tant.) John Donne adhered to the Catholic Faith throughout the earlier part of his life. " I had my first breeding and conversation," he wrote later, "with men of afflicted and suppressed religion, accustomed to the despite of death, and hungry of an imagination's Martyrdom."

Donne was just four when he lost his father in 1576. (Donne was one of at least six children but by the time he reached maturity only one of them, Anne, his sister, was still alive.) His mother married twice after his father's death. Fortunately, Domae's stepfathers, both, loved him. The first, particularly, a distinguished professional man, made excellent arrangements for Donne's education, beginning with private tuition at home. He entered Oxford at twelve and studied there until he was seventeen. Being a Catholic he was not able to take a degree. Izaac Walton, who in Donne's later years was his friend and parishioner and to whose biography of Donne we are chiefly indebted for our knowledge of Donne's

life, mentions that after Oxford Donne entered Cambridge (There is little evidence to prove this). It is probable that Donne spent the next few years travelling abroad in Italy and Spain.

We next hear of Donne as a student of law at the Inns of Court of London. He entered Thavie's Inn in 1591 and transferred to Lincoln's Inn in May 1592. Here he made friends with influential men, read widely in subjects other than law, wrote poetry and examined his own religious standpoint because he had seen much religious per section. Members of his own family were not spared. His uncle, Jasper Heywood, a Jesuit and head of the Jesuit Mission in England was arrested in 1583, tried and found guilty and sentenced to death, though the sentence was later commuted to. permanent exile. Even more painful was the story of Donne's brother. Henry, who was put into prison in 1593 at the age of twenty for harbouring a priest; under cross examination he betrayed the priest and himself and died of jail fever in New gate prison soon after. (Recall that Donn'e was denied a degree y the Oxford University because he was a Catholic.) During 1593 Donne came of age and received his own and his brother's share of their father's estate.

From 1592 to 1596, the years of his residence at Lincoln's Inn, Donne lived the life of a brilliant young man about town. An acquaintance recalled him as 'not dissolute but very neat; a great visitor of ladies, a great frequenter of plays, a great writer of conceited verses. During this period many of the 'Songs and Sonnets' must have been written and the love affairs they deal with must have taken place. This is where we find two Donnes. One appears to be indulging himself in the most scandalous and tumultuous womanising, writing with the bawdy cynicism of a libertine, verse notorious for their cleverness, ingenuity, wit and extraordinary, obscure imagery; the other seems to be earnest, passionate and devout addressing the Most High with an unfathomableintensity of feeling. These verses were not printed and published, but circulated in manuscript. As a result Donne gained veiy fast reputation as poet in the circles he moved in or frequented.

However, we must not think of Donne as an idle debauchee. No doubt, he was a seeker of pleasure. But he was also avid of learning and ideas. Walton says that Donne studied every morning from 4.a.m. till lO.a.m., though he admits that 'he (Donne) took great liberty after it.' The nature of his studies is significant. According to Walton, 'he (Donne) being then resolved what religion to adhere to....did....presently lay aside all study of law....' and begin seriously to survey and consider the Body of Divinity as it was then controverted betwixt the reformed and the Roman Church... and Donne confirms this in his preface to his "Pseudo-Martyr"(1610). This study of divinity was no doubt motivated by Donne's life-long passion for truth; it was also prompted by the difficulties of his own position and prospects. His brother had died as a result of his faith; and Donne, a man of great ability and corresponding ambition, coula hope for rio public preferment in England if he remained a Catholic. He was too honest simply to abandon his faith for worldly reasons; so that more natural than that he should examine its basis critically? Eventually, after several years he conformed to the Anglican Faith; but his conversion was not sudden or spectacular and certain doubts remained with him for a long time.

In 1596 Donne became a member of the Earl of Essex's expedition to Cadiz and 1597 he sailed with it to the Azores and participated in the unsuccessful foray against it. Soon after his return in 1598 he became secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal and Lord High Chancellor (the speaker of the House of Lords, persisting judge of the chancery Division-the Highest court). By this time Donne must have made his final decision to embrace the Anglican Faith. As Egerton's secretary he was very successful. Egerton later described him as 'such a secretary as was fitter of serve a king than a subject; a distinguished career in public life seemed open before him. After five years however, he took a step which utterly ruined his prospects of secular advancement and changed the whole course of his life. In 1601 he secretly married the seventeen year old niece of Lady Egerton, Anne More, for whom some of his finer love poems were written.

When the news was broken to Sir George More (Anne's father), Sir George was furious. He compelled Egerton to dismiss Donne took Anne away to his home in Suivey and got Done imprisoned. After is release Donne had to engage in an expensive lawsuit to obtain possession of his wife, using up his meagre financial resources . Thereafter, a partial reconciliation with Sir George followed; he requested Egerton to reinstate Donne, but Egerton, though he had reluctantly dismissed refused do it. For several years, Donne refused to do it. For several years, Donne lived a life of anxiety, comparative poverty and uncertain employment to maintain his rapidly growing family (In sixteen years the Donnes had twelve children.) On his wife's allowance from her father, the generosity of relatives and the patronage of eminent people, hoping through their influence to obtain at last some worthy employment in the State, but without success. Sometimes, his efforts were not very creditable.

From what we know about Donne's marriage it seems to have been an emotional success but a real catastrophe.

Indeed, John Donne seemed to have unwittingly frustrated his own designs. For years he assisted Thomas Morton (who later became Bishop of Durham), one of king James I's favourite chaplains, in religious controversy designed to convert the Roman Catholics, an activity for which Donne's study of religious differences equipped him admirably. Both Morton and the King were so impressed by his ability that they pressed him to enter the church. Walton says that it was at the King's command that Donne wrote his 'Pseudo-Martyr' (1610), in which he castigated the recusants as sham martyrs. Though Donne continued to press for a secular post, the King made up his mind, despite Donne's protests o£ unworthiness, that divinity was his destined profession, and eventually said, when the Earl of Somerset requested Donne's appointment to a Clerkship to the Council: I know Mr.Donne has the abilities of a learned Divine; and will prove a powerful preacher, and my desire is to prefer him that way, and in that way, I will deny you nothing for him.' Soon afterwards, Donne bowed to the inevitable. He was ordinated in January 1615, gained rapid preferment, and became Dean ofSt.Paul'sin 1621.

A great deal of Donne's behaviour between his marriage and his entry into holy orders seems extremely worldly, and one is tempted to conclude that the way in which he used his learning and skill in con-troversy to impress James was a hypocritical device to gain secular em-ployment - that he cared little for theology save as a means to and end. But such a conclusion is far from the truth. Donne was always a para-doxical character, and his motives may have been mixed; but from about 1606 onwards he began to write religious poems of deep sincerity though at the same time he was writing adulatory verse- epistles to various noble ladies. Moreover, both his temperament and his difficulties subjected him to fits of depression and melancholy; and he thought and wrote profoundly of the vanity of the worldly and temporal in contrast to the eternal and divine.

Devious though the paths were that led Donne to the church, there is no doubt of his devotion to it from the time he took holy orders. His wife's death in child birth in 1617 almost overwhelmed him with grief, and thereafter his ministry was his sole remaining passion. During the remaining ten years of his life after his appointment as Dean of St.Pauls's he became the most famous preacher in England of his day. Not only his religious poems but also his sermons are among the glories of English literature; and he bought to both all the intelligence and passion, all the magnificent intensity and subtlety of expression, that had earlier characterized his "Songs and Sorinets". Nearly everything he wrote and said during these years was sombre and austere. He deeply repented the excesses of his youth and was much preoccupied by death.

He died on 31 March, 1631. Knowing he was dying, he had a statue made of himself dressed in his shroud, which he kept by his bed-side so that he might meditate on it, having put all his affairs in order. Walton says, 'as his soul ascended, and his last breath departed from him he closed his own eyes, and then disposed of his hands and body into such a posture as required not the least alteration by those that came to shroud him.'

The Text of "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning."

Note: Spelling has been modernized.

As virtuous men pass mildly away, And whisper to
their souls, to go Whilst some of their sad friends do
say, the breath goes now, and some say, no:

So let us melt, and make no noise,
No tea-floods, nor sigh- tempests move,
Twere prophanation of our joys
To tell the laity our love.
Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears,
men reckon what it did and meant.
But trepidation of the spheres,
Though greater farm is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers love (Whose soul is sense)
cannot admit Absence, because it both remove
Those things which elemented it.

But we by a love, so much refin'd, That our selves
know not what it is, Inter-assured of the mind,
Careless, eyes, lips, and hands to miss.

Our two souls therefore, which are one,
Though I Must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are tow so
As stiff twin compasses are two,
thy soul the fixed foot,
makes no show to move, but doth, if the other do.

And though it in the centre sit,
Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans, and hearkness after it,
And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must
Like th'other foot, obliquely run;
Thy firmness makes my circles just,
And makes me end, where I begun.

Notes:

valediciton	= saying farewell
prophanation	= profanation = treating with irreverence (sacred from 'profane' place or thing), pollute, violate
moving of the earth	= earthquake which is a premonition of great disas-ters
laity	= laymen; common people
reckon	= interpret astrologically the meaning of seismological phenomena
soul	= essence sense = sexual/sensual love
elemented	= composed
sublunary	= below the moon and so of earth
just	= exact; perfect

Additional Notes:

1. trepidation of the spheres = literally shuddering' or deviation from true circularity of the heavenly spheres. This was not ominous or portentous, but perfectly harmless. Ptolemaic astronomy uses the notionof an arbitrary motion of the eight spheres to explain certain phenomena resulting from the wobbly motion of the earth on its axis.

Prof. Helen Gardner says the trepidation or vibration of the ninth, the crystalline, sphere, invented to explain the procession of the. equinoxes, affected the spheres.

2. This poem, like "Sweetest Love, I do not Go" was written for his wife and given to her when Donne was leaving for France in November, 1611 with Sir Robert Drury.

3. end, where I begun = the motto of Mary, Queen of Scots: in my end is my beginning.

Now we will attempt a paraphrase of the poem stanza by stanza.

Stanza 1:

As good men peacefully approach death and whisper to their souls to depart some of their friends say the good men are breathing their last, while some say- no, it is not so, they are still breathing.

Stanza 2:

Similarly let us dissolve, without making any noise, without any floods of tears, without any tempestu[illegible] sighs. There is no need for the exaggerated display of the pangs of separation. Let us not violate the [illegible]tity of our love and joy by exhibiting before vulgar

people our sublime love for each other. We are not lay [illegible]ple and so let us behave accordingly.

Stanza 3:

Earthquakes portend harms and fears as they are evil omen. Meninterpret earthquakes as boding harm to life and as instrumental todestruction of property. However, the shuddering of heavenly bodies isperfectly harmless. For laymen death is like destructive earthquakes. For sublime lovers like us death is like the trepidation of the spheres' (which does not cause any harm).

Stanza 4:

Only stupid earthly lovers, whose essence is sexual/sensual at-traction (physical craving) are unable to tolerate separation because separation results in the removal of the things which make/ compose their attraction. In other words, when they are removed from each other their sexual union cannot take place. For them togetherness is sexual/ physical.

Stanza 5:

We are bound by a love so much refined that we ourselves do not know what it is made of; we are so assured of each other mentally and spiritually (as opposed to the physical/ sexual love of sublunary lovers) that we are not affected by senses or worries. We need not look at each other, kiss each other or caress (fondle)-each other in order to be lovers.

Stanza 6:

Our two souls, therefore, are just "one". Even though 1 have to go away (and thus 'specially' separated from you) our souls do not suffer a breach. Instead, they undergo an expansion like gold which is beaten to the thinnest possible dimension.

Stanza 7:

Well, if they are indeed two, they are two just like a pair of compasses (even though a pair of compasses is made of 'two limbs'; It is always considered one- like pliers, scissors, tongs and the like). Your soul is the fixed foot and it does not move at all. It does slightly, though, if my soul does, the movement of one causes the other to move.

Stanza 8:

Your soul is always at the centre, though my soul moves farther and farther away from you. You are the fixed limb of our compasses; I am the revolving limb. I always lean towards you and reach for you, but never sever our connection. When my soul/limb returns to you (the fixed limb) your soul/limb grows erect to receive and embrace me to be together again as one

Stanza 9:

You will be such to me. I may have to 'obliquely run,' though I have to always return to you. Your firmness (strength, fixity of purpose, steadfastness) makes me exact/perfect. If you are shaky my orbit around you will be irregular. In other words, my circularity is determined by your firmness. It is your strength/commitment that makes me return to you. I always end up where I begin.

Special note on the conceit of the pair of compasses:

A pair of compasses is a mathematical/engineering instrument. To use it as a simile to refer to a pair of lovers is both ingenious and audacious. The two limbs may be looked upon as the two lovers' bodies. They are two. But they are riveted at the top to make the two one. They fused at the 'head' i.e. at the mental and spiritual level. Even if they are separated physically they will remain knitted spiritually. One always revolves around the other, the circular motion of the moving limb is always determined and controlled by the fixed foot which never lets go of the other. Hence the observation by Dr. Johnson about a conceit as 'apparently' irreconcilable ideas yoked together by violence.

Regrettably, this conceit has become a cliche through overuse.

Note the following

1. In the second stanza Donne condemns the Elizabethan/Petrarchan practice of extravagant display of emotions especially those associated with pangs of separation, platonic love etc.

2. The use of anti-romantic imagery- a pair of compasses.

3. Metallurgical images like 'melt', elemented', gold to airy thinness beat', 'refined.'

4. Astronomical images like 'trepidation of the spheres', 'sublunary'
5. Geometrical images relating to the compasses.

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WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

His Life and Works

William Wordsworth, the great poet, who revolutionised poetry and who is considered to be a central poet of the modern tradition', was born at Cockermouth in the Lake District of Cumberland on 7th April, 1770. Son of a lawyer, he lost his parents at a very early age. Dependent of his uncle for his education. Wordsworth developed an independence of spirit right from his younger days. The influence of his early surrounds was as he afterward acknowledged, profound and lasting. He spent his days in the company of Nature and among simple peasant folk, uncorrupted by the industrial and urban civilization. He learnt to love nature and through Nature the humble and the most simple men and women, and gained faith in humanity and reverence for the elemental things of life. He was a naked savage five years old' then: and as he recalls later

> Fair seed time had my soul, I grew up
> Fostered alike by beauty and fear.

His younger sister Dorothy was very close to him throughout his life. When he was nine, he was sent to Hawkshead School near Esthwait Lake: but continued to live in close contact with nature. At 19, he was sent to St. John College, Cambridge, where he found the restrictions of academic life irksome. In 1970- he-undertook *a* tour of Switzerland, France and Italy. He was irresistibly drawn towards the French Revolution, whose political and social ideologies appealed to him. He returned to France in 1791. Although his ostensible purpose was to learn language, his real interest lay in the Revolution, which stirred to the depths his im[illegible]nation. Referring to those days, he writes.

> Bli[illegible]s it in that dawn to be alive.
> Bu[illegible]e young was the very heaven.

Whil[illegible]n France, he had a passionate love affair with a girl named Annette Vallon and even had a daughter by her. The newborn revolution was at its most hopeful phase when all things seemed possible:

> France standing on the top of golden hours.
> And human nature seeming born again.

But disillusionment and despair soon followed. The aftermath of the French Revolution belied his high hopes for man. The excesses, of the reign of terror, the sensational rise of Napoleon, the establishment of a military dictatorship, the outbreak of war between England and France, the attempts by the European powers to destroy democracy and popular government-all these were naturally painful to the sensitive poet. Besides, he was forced to part with his beloved. Financial difficulties also plagued him. He returned to England and his psychological crisis deepened until he yielded up all moral questions in despair. It was in this mood of despair, that Wordsworth undertook a tour of Salisbury Plain and later arrived at Tintern Abbey from where he even proceeded North Wales. His love of Nature and his faith in the elemental simplicities of life of the common man, however enabled him to regain his mental equilibrium. The influence of Dorothy and later his friendship with Coleridge were also significant factors in bringing him back to his poetic career.

Although Wordsworth began writing early in his life and some of his works include. An Evening Walk' and Descriptive Sketches' his great poetry really began with his friendship with Coleridge. The fruitful partnership with Coleridge who shared many of Wordsworth's ideals, saw the publication of 'Lyrical ballads' in 1798. A landmark in English Romantic poetry, Lyrical Ballads challenged every aspect of the neo-classical poetry. It revolutionised the nature of poetry and the role of the poet. Radical and far- reaching changes were made both in subject matter and style of poetry. As on critic has pointed out "Lyrical Ballads" has become the symbol and instrument *of* the romantic revolt in English literature. "It was decided that Wordsworth would attempt to make the common uncommon ('to give the charm of novelty to things of everyday') through simple but meticulous description of every day things. Coleridge was to direct his attention to make the uncommon credible. Wordsworth contributed 19 poems. The last of which was Tintern Abbey'. Coleridge's contribution was The Rhyme of Ancient Mariner'. In the Preface to the second edition of 'Lyrical Ballads' Wordsworth emphasises that 'the principal object, then, proposed in these poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible, in a selection of language really used by men, and at the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary, things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect.' 'Humble and rustic life' firms the basis of these poems, because, says Wordsworth, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain maturity and speak a plainer and more emphatic language. 'Poems in this collection like 'Lucy Gray'. 'Michael' 'Goody Blake and Harry Gill and 'Resolution and Independence' illustrate these aspects.

'He defined poetry as 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions.' It is at the same time 'emotions re-collected in tranquillity.' The poet for him is a teacher and must strive to reveal truth, not through scientific analysis and abstraction, but through an imaginative awareness of person and things.

Although Wordsworth advocated a simple diction (a selection of language really used by men'), he was also a master of elevated diction with telling effect when the occasion demanded, as can be seen in Tintern Abby' and 'Immortality Ode'.

His -major poems include 'The Prelude', an autobiographical poem, dealing with the growth of the poet's mind and one of the greatest reflective poems In the language. It is the poet's search for his self and a voyage of self- discovery He also wrote a number of sonnets and The Excursion.' His later poems did not, however, have the same imaginative vigour and revolutionary fervour as were his poems written upto say 1823. He settled down with his sister at Grasmere, Westmoreland in 1799. He married Mary Huchinson in 1802. He was made poet Laureate in 1848" and died in 1850.

His concept of Nature and calling of a poet

Words worth is generally called a poet of nature. But he is much more a poet of experience... 'the mind of man /My hunt, and the main region of my 'song'. This known dominance of the mind dated from his adolescence with its 'fallings from us, vanishings of the outside world. 'To him Nature is something to be worshipped, so that even the meanest flower that bloomed could inspire 'thoughts too deep for tears. 'Tintern Abbey sums up the gradual development in his attitude towards nature. The mature Wordsworth was convinced of the embodiment of the divine spirit in nature and considered it "the guardian of my moral being and the greatest of all teachers. For him, Nature is not a dead, lifeless thing, but a living presence, with a soul of its own. Between the indwelling soul of the universe and the soul of man, spiritual communion is possible through which we may attain power, peace and happiness. Man and Nature; Mind and the external world are geared together and in unison complete the native principle of the universe. They act and react upon each other so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure. He is always known as the poet of Nature he comes to the understanding of man. When Wordsworth writes about nature, he

is doing so in the context of his own beliefs and experience and of his consciousness of the prophetic role. The central doctrine of his philosophy was the belief in an intelligent life in Nature. Our emotions are affected by it. Nature is intelligent, meaningful and profound. He identifies God and Nature as one. Hence he is a pantheist. No wonder Coleridge calls him a philosophic poet. What is so special about Wordsworth is not merely his evocation of Nature, but his insight into the nature of man, both individually and in society of all the earlier poets, it was Wordsworth who had foreseen many of the problems man faces in the modern, urbanised, mass society. The transition from an agricultural to an industrial society had begun during his lifetime, and so, being endowed with the foresight, he could visualise the shape of things to come. The problems he touched upon like, for instance, the loneliness of the individual in cities, the re-lationship between money and the individual personality, the relation-ship between citizen and the threat of the individual being reduced to a machine all these and such more engaged the attention of the poet. He reacted passionately against any forces that would hinder the full ex-pression of individual personality. His ability to see these matters clearly and to devise a poetry which expresses his beliefs about men in society is one of the reasons why he is a central poet of the modern tradition. His preoccupations are those which lie at the heart of the human reaction to a technological , urbanized and industrialized society."

Wordsworth considered himself a teacher and a prophet. He makes it quite clear that he is to be remembered as a teacher and noth-ing else. But his teachings and prophecies were based on his own experience, and that experience was central not only to modern man but to men of all times. He makes us aware through his poems of the mechani cal, diseased ways of life that man pursues, and its dangerous conse-quences. "The world is too much with us' he laments, and in the Tintern Abbey' he talks of ' greetings where no kindness is.' As against this demoralising and degraded life, there exists ways of life which allow fuller development of the mind and heart.' Nature never did betray the heart that loved her.' He advises us and exhorts us to submit ourselves to the power and beauty, and with 'lofty thoughts' and to give strength against the drabness and evil of the world. In fact, Nature will so influence our minds that we see everything full of blessings.

Like other Romantics, Wordsworth also celebrates the God like imagination of the creative mind. In fact, it is this which sees into the life of things' and perceives the harmony that exists between the outer Nature and the inner mind. It is this aspect, which is touched upon by Matthew Arnold when he says, that Wordsworth's superiority arises from his powerful application to his subject of ideas on man, on nature and on human life. In short his poems answer the questions: How to live?'

It does not however, imply that Wordsworth is a perfect poet and that all his poems are uniformly good. In fact, most of the poem that he wrote after 1823 are uninspired and unpoetic, and there is much prolixity, and dull moralising, (e.g. 'Ode of Duty'). It is pathetic to note that the revolutionary poet in course of time became a didactic poet! There is no sense of humour and he is also deficient in dramatic power. But these drawbacks do not in any way belittle the sterling worth of poems like the 'Immortality Ode' or some sections of 'The Prelude' and many poems in the 'Lyrical Ballads including Tintern Abby', and sonnets like The world is too much with us'. and 'Upon Westminister Bridge.'

Intimations of Immortality from Recollections ofEarly Childhood

Introduction

This poem, which is popularly known as The Immortality Ode' is perhaps the most famous poem on the Wordworthian canon and is undoubtedly, one of the great poems in English Language. The first four sections were written in 1802; then he discontinued it for sometime and finally completed it in 1804. Originally, the poem was without any title, being simply designated as 'Ode'. The present title 'Ode on Intimations of immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood' was given in 1815, The full title shows what the poet thought to be the essential meaning of the poem.

The poem is in the form irregular Ode. The Ode as a poetic from is an elaborate lyric, expressed in language that is both dignified and sincere; its tone is imaginative and intellectual. Both the subject matter and style are lofty and serious. Being an irregular ode, the stanzas vary in number, length and tone. The poem, as Graham Hough has noted has a sustained lyric splendour,' besides establishing the authentic combination of feeling and thought.

Wordsworth makes abundant use of the ideas of Pythagoras and Plato. Pythagoras believed in the immortality of the soul. Knowledge for him was the recollection of experience gained in pre-existence. When a child is born, the soul is exiled for a time from its divine home, but the child retains its memory of the divine light. But, as he grows up, he gradually loses the vision and the world narrows down into a prison. Plato also propounded the theory of recollection, according to which the child has memories of his state before birth, which he gradually loses. It goes without saying that Wordsworth was indebted to Coleridge for many of his ideas. In fact, it is tempting to compare Coleridge's To Dejection' in which he laments the loss of his poetic power, with Wordsworth's Ode' in spite of its difference on many vital points.

Wordsworth wrote that he did not use the Platonic doctrine of pre-existence because he had a positive belief in its truth, bur rather because it suited well for his theme of human growth and all that it entailed.

The poem has been interpreted in many ways. While some call it purely autobiographical, many others consider it much wider than merely personal. Geoffery Durrani, for instance, suggests that the poem raises the question of the value of life itself by depicting how man lives in an existence which he feels to be foreign to his emotional being. While some consider the poem like Coleridge's To Dejection', a conscious farewell to his art, 'a dirge sung over his departing powers', others like Trilling argue that it is not about ways of seeing and about ways of knowing'. Ultimately, he says, it is concerned with ways of acting, and that in only a limited sense is the Ode a poem about immortality. Cleanth Brooks points out that besides paradoxes and symbols of the poem, he says a few of them, however, lead us to downright conjectures and occasional confusions, which make him conclude that the poet speaks not with one, but with two or even three voices. The principal defects of the ode, according to him, ' results from the fact that Wordsworth will not accept the full consequences of some of his ironical passages. 'Hence, the ode for all its fine passages is not entirely suc-cessful as a poem.'

Both formally and in the history of its composition, the poem is divided into two main parts. The first part consists of the first four stan-zas (written in 1802), which deal with a deal, with a sense of loss, the loss of childhood vision. The second part is divided into two movements, the first (Stanzas 5to 8) examines the nature of this glory and explains it in terms of the theory of reminiscence from a prenatal existence. This part ends on a note of despair. The second movement of the second part consists of the last three stanzas (9-11) wherein the poet takes comfort in the hope that though the childhood vision is no more, he has his comfort and recompense, and thus ends on a note of hope. The three parts of the Ode, in other words, deal in turn with the advance of age, the natural deity that binds our days each to each and the philosophicalcompensation of maturity. It also expresses the idea of pre existence and the hope of immortality- not an illusion, but as a master light.

The epigraph of the poem is taken from Wordsworth's shorter poem 'My Heart Leaps Up', which with its famous line. 'The child is father of the man,' embodies his idea of human growth the continuity of man.

Stanza 1:

The setting of the poem is May morning. Although Nature is at her best during this season, the poem opens with an immediately felt sense of loss. There was a time, says the poet, when the earth and every common sight seemed apparelled, in celestial light,' implying that the time has now passed.

He is no more able to perceive as he did in the past. As an adult he has lost something. Is the loss the result of a change in the external world or a change in himself? The second stanza makes it clear that the world outside remains as beautiful as ever. The change then has happened within him. What is it that he has lost? As a child, he had the glory and the freshness of a dream' and this enabled him to see every object of nature 'apparelled in celestial light': The radiance of the childhood vision enabled him to see the world in 'the glory and the freshness of the dream'. In other words, the child with his 'visionary gleam' puts the garments of light' upon everything. The quality of dream is its vividness and it makes everything strange and beautiful. What the speaker has lost, is not suggested it is not only something which is fleeting, shadowy and strange, but also something which possesses a quality of insight and wholeness- in short, it is visionary insight. By its nature, it is 'fugitive', i.e. transient and fleeting. Thus, while the child, who still retains the 'clouds of glory' sees the world in all its beauty, glory and mystery; as an adult, 'the things which I have seen I now can see no more'. It is difficult to agree with Trilling's opinion that the idea of immortality was not present in Wordsworth's mind at the time of writing the first part of the poem. The words 'celestial light' and 'the glory and the freshness of a dream" directly point to 'The soul that rises with us, our life's Star' in stanza 5 and 'Eye among the blind' and 'glorious in the might of heaven- born freedom' in stanza 6.

Critics have noted the delicate rhythm, meaningful pauses and the use of monosyllabic words in communicating the intensely felt loss of the poet. The sudden and deliberate use of unusual words 'apparelled ', celestial light' and 'the glory and the freshness of a dream' help in making the contrast between the present and the past. Once again, the rhythm slows down and the stanza ends with the monosyllabic alexan-drine, signifying the ordinariness of the present, adult vision.

Stanza 2:

This stanza further examines the nature of the thing lost. Does the poet consider that external nature has lost its beauty? Not at all Nature is as beautiful as ever. He continues to see the rainbow, the rose, the moon, the stars, the water and the sunshine. He sees them all vividly too. He not only confirms his senses, but alsoconfirms his ability to perceive beauty in them. He tells us how he responds to the loveliness of the rose and of the stars reflected in the water, he speaks of the sun-shine as glorious birth, Thus nature is still beautiful and he can continue to respond to its beauty. Nevertheless, 'there hath passed away glory from the earth'. What is the nature of this loss? Some special quality, which he had while a child, is no more. What exactly is it? Is it a diminishment of his imaginative power and consequent failure to write poetry as some critics affirm? It cannot be, for Wordsworth is at pains to tell us that his senses are all intact and that he can still see vividly the rainbow, the rose, the moon and the stars. Trilling does not agree •that the poem is like Coleridge's To Dejection' a lament over his declining poetic powers, consequent on the dramatic failure of his senses. (Wordsworth then was only, 32 and was at the height of his creative career.) Is then the 'glory' that he has lost, his ability to apprehend nature as a total 'unity and an organic whole? In other words, can the poet no longer experience the Divine spirit within, which once enabled him to see all creation as alive, dynamic and partake of the same divine glory? Brooks draws our attention to the images used in this stanza to help us know the special quality that has been lost. Unlike the images of the first stanza, we have here the rainbow, the moon, the stars and the sun. All these are examples of celestial light. 'These are the light bearers capable of trailing clouds of glory themselves, and they clothe the, heart in light of various sorts.' It is the child himself who clothes the world about him in light like the sun or the moon. "The sunshine is a glorious, birth. The word 'birth' indicates that the sun is in his childhood stage and that it is the dawn scene. (The implication is that the glory-will be lost as the sun advances in its course, and 'fades into the light of common 'day' as stated, in stanzas). The rising sun, the moon and the stars joyfully create their worlds. The child too is like the sun or moon, bringing with it radiance which lights up the world, making it 'glorious'. The first two lines of this stanza are 'one of the simplest conceptions ever to find expression

in English poetry,' There is a change of mood in the last two lines and the last line, which is similar to the last line of the first stanza, gives a sense of finality to the loss. The moon looking round her when the heavens are bare is, treated as if she were the speaker himself in his childhood; seeing the visionary gleam she looks round her with joy. The imagery of this stanza as a whole anticipates that of stanza 5.

Stanza 3:

The third stanza begins with the joys of nature and the gaiety of the season. The birds are singing and the young lambs are leaping joyfully to the accompaniment of the tabor's (a small drum) sound and the shepherd boy is dancing. Even the inanimate objects are sharing this universal mirth. However, the poet finds himself alienated from this cos-mic joy by 'a thought of grief. But this grief is not of a long duration. He overcomes his feeling of grief through 'a timely utterance': according to Garrod, it is 'My heart Leaps up', from which the epigraph was taken. It may even be this very 'Ode' itself. Both these poems were written before the Ode and in both the poet, though in different ways, tried to face the very problems and fears he is trying to grapple with in this Ode. Whatever be the reference, the poet though indifferent ways, tried to face the very problems and fears he is once again becomes 'strong', i.e. he succeeds in relieving his grief. The season with its joyous sound of the cataracts, winds and echoes makes the poet resolve not to wrong it withhis private grief. When the entire world land and sea) wholeheartedly -celebrates the season, it is criminal on his part to impose his own sorrow upon it. Hearing the sounds of joy all around him the poet tries to enter into the gaiety of the reason himself. He asks the shepherd boy to dance around him with shouts of joy, so that he might be able to feel the joy, which has remained external to him.

In this stanza the emphasis is shifted from sight to sound. Though he no longer can see the earth 'apparelled in celestial light', he can at least hear the mirth of the blessed creatures for -whom the earth still wears that glory which he once had. While one cannot see the bird's songs, the tabor's sound, the echoes, the cataracts and the winds, one can hear them. Critics have pointed out the subtle changes in the rhythmic pattern as the poet's mood undergoes changes. The line 'To me alone' is poignant; but is immediately followed by his resolve to participate in the universal joy and so the rhythm and diction combine to suggest jollity and movements though it is a little strained.

Stanza 4:

The ideas of "joy and innocence are further developed in the first part of his stanza. The universal harmony and divine bliss are emphasized by words like 'blessed', 'Jubilee[1], coronal' and 'festival'. The joy is infectious and even Heaven participates ('laugh with you') in it. The poet cannot but be touched by this cosmic mirth. 'My heart is at your festival/ My head has its c6ronal' suggest the poet's efforts to come closer to the joy of Nature in this spring morning. The poet seems resolved that he will not permit his own inner gloom to cast a pall over the animated universe that celebrates with such utter vitality. Although he makes a valiant and stoic attempt to restrain his sullenness and enter into the eternal spring festival of childhood' and not to inflict his internal darkness on the external light, it is doubtful whether he succeeds in it. Many critics find the tone strained and unpleasant and even of doubtful sincerity. "Twice there is a halting repetition of words to express a kind of painful intensity of response. 'Repetition of 'I feel' is a pathetic effort to convince himself that he still has the feeling of oneness with all and the consequent joy in participation. Despite the children, flowers and sunshine and even the baby leaping up on his mother's arm, all partaking of this joy, the poet cannot but be aware of the heavy loss he has suffered and the oppression which weighs him down. While he can hear the blessed creatures as they rejoice, he himself is shut out from it. Here again, the poet can at best only hear the joy,' he cannot see it. Hence, ' I hear, I hear with joy I hear'. No wonder, there is the sudden collapse from forced ecstasy to sadness followed by a change of rhythm in lines beginning with 'but there' s a Tree. The intrusion of harsh reality can no longer be held at bay. The single tree (does it

allude to the Tree of knowledge?) and the single field and even so small a thing in nature as a flower reminds him of 'something that is gone' from him, The deliberate vagueness of something' is acclaimed by many as very effective. Though it is difficult to describe what exactly he has lost the loss is clearly very heavy and terrible, which makes him ask the question 'Whither is 'fled the visionarygleam/where is it now the glory and the dream?' The 'Visionary gleam' recalls the 'celestial light' and the 'glory and the dream' recalls the glory and the freshness of a dream' of stanza I.

Each of the first four stanzas has its joy and its grief. There are recurrent heightening to ecstasy and sinking to depression. While the ecstasy is forced and strained, the grief is felt to be genuine.

At last, the poet gives up his pretensions and comes to the tragic realisation that the influence of the May morning will no longer work. The anguish and despair of the poet are fully expressed in the terrible question with which the first part ends.

Stanza 5:

The second part of the poem begins from stanza 5. The question 'whither is fled the visionary gleam? Where is it now, the glory' and the dream?' is answered in two different ways. The first answer is contained in stanzas 5 to 8 and ends in despair and a feeling of utter loss. These stanzas tell 'us where the glory and the dream came from and how it faded in course of time. The stanza begins with a poetic rendering of the theory of pre-existence. Human birth is 'but a sleep and forgetting'. We are not fully aware' of our divine existence when we are born. This life, which we mistakenly call real, is in fact a mere sleep. The human soul has a prior existence an integral part of the unity of Being, (in many of his poems, Wordsworth talks of the body as sleeping and the soul living. 'Our body laid asleep and we become a living soul'- Tintern Abbey.) from which it is 'divided' by being born. The human soul, 'Our life's start', comes from afar and this soul does not completely forget its previous divine existence ('not in entire forgetful-ness) although 'It can never participate in its glory. It is therefore not a blank to be worked upon, (as was believed by the neo-classicals). Being not in utter nakedness', it possess in fact a spiritual insight and value derived from its earlier existence, ('trailing clouds of glory do we come/ from God who is our home'). Because of this, 'Heaven lies about us in our infancy'. When our childhood is so close to our spiritual sources that 'the glory and freshness' of that realisation are almost more of a reality than our earthly existence. The epigraph 'The child is father of Man' becomes relevant here. Paradise was all about him "when he was a child. But this, stage, by its very nature cannot last long. The child's world is actually divine and true. Soon, shades of the prisons house' begin to close upon the growing boy. As the child grows, he progressively moves further and further away from his divine source. From being one with the universe, he acquires an individual ego or identity which in course of time imprisons and fetters him harder and harder. Consequently, the glory and the celestial light are gradually faded. The light or 'the vision splendid', is perceived even by a youth (who is still 'Nature's priest); but he is destined to move further from the East. At length, the mature man finds it die away and becomes the 'light of common day.'

According to C. Brooks, the basic metaphor from line 67 onwards has to do with the child's moving away from heaven, his home,and the 'shades' of prison house' closing about him. The youth's progress is further away from the dayspring in the East. The climax of the process, he points out, is not darkness, but full daylight. We have a contrast here between the prosaic daylight and dawn light and not, be-tween light and darkness. The sun's progress can be paralleled to that of the soul. The soul is like our life's star, the sun, which has had elsewhere its setting. It rises upon its world; at his glorious birth lights up a world with the glory and freshness of a dream as the child has done. The trailing clouds of glory suggest the sunrise. Yet the sum, like the soul, as it grows, becomes the destroyer of its earlier world and, becomes its own prisoner. The youth is like the Sun which, as it travels from the East, leaves the glory more and more behind it, and approaches the prosaic daylight, just as the man

projects the common day which surrounds him and upon which he now looks without joy. This, Brooks points out, is one' of the many paradoxes in the poem which makes it subtle and complex.

Although Wordsworth later said that he never meant to inculcate a belief in a prior state of existence; but used the idea for its poetic effectiveness, he does not totally deny belief in the Platonic theory of reminiscence. As the poet himself admits, there is nothing to contradict it in the Christian tradition and the Fall of man presents an analogy in its favour.

Stanza 6

This stanza develops the theme of the gradual loss of the 'visionary gleam' and the role played Earth in it. Paradoxically, the inevitable amnesia is partly brought about by the earth, who is personified as a foster mother and nurse. It fills up the mind and senses of man, its foster-child, with pleasures and, thereby makes him forget his past spiritual state, the imperial palace', from which he came'. The imagery of the Earth as a foster mother and nurse and the man her foster child is effective and. works at more than one level. The Earth in trying to make the child forget the glory and vision, does not act out of any malice. On the contrary, it is full of kindness (as foster mothers generally are) and the poet finds nothing blameworthy in her ('no unworthy aim). All that the maternal Earth wants is that the child should feel himself at home. 'Homely' suggests also 'unattractive' or 'plain'. Though sympathetic and kind, the common Earth is without the glory and the celestial light. (Some critics point out the difference between nature and earth as interpreted by Wordsworth. While nature has her glory and vision, the Earth is devoid of them. It is the common drudging earth without any supernatural implications.) But we also know that it is the child who himself confers the radiance on the world, and upon which he looks with delight. The irony is that as he grows up, he is more and more, involved in its beauties and pleasures of earth and, consequently, the celestial radiance itself disappears. 'Inmate man' suggests an inmate of the prison- house and connects it with the earlier stanza. It also implies a temporary abode. While the earth who yearns to involve the child with herself, and while she out of kindness wants the child to feel himself at home, she is at the same time trying to make that child forget supernatural glory, imperial palace' from which he came. The vision splendid', which enabled the child to see the 'Earth' apparelled in celestial light, is thus lost.

Critics like Trilling have pointed out that the words 'imperial' and 'Palace' to describe the divine state of pre-existence are inappropriate. The implication of 'imperial' (grandeur, dignity and splendour) and 'palace' they say, somehow do not integrate fully with the idea of pre-existence. At any rate the contrast is between the 'imperial man' and 'the foster child' of a homely nurse. The connection of the mind with the world outside is no longer what it was.

Stanza 7:

In this stanza the poet gives us an account of a visible childhood. Unlike in the earlier stanza, here he is withdrawing to a more objective and neutral position. The child referred to here is the six year old son of Coleridge, Hartley Colerdige. In a tender and patronising way, the poet traces the progress of the child as he deliberately imitates the elders and like a little actor practises his coming roles. The child becomes the representative man, both in this and the next stanzas. The child, who is adored by his parents and who is still near enough to the imperial palace', ironically is eager to grow up, and passes through the various stages 'as if his whole vocation were endless imitation.' In the early stanza, Wordsworth traced the course of man's growing up as from nature's preheat' to being an 'inmate man'. Here, he gives an explicit account of the degeneration brought about by the child form his new born blisses' to palsied age.' This stanza reminds us of Jaques' seven ages speech' in 'As You like It, and demonstrates the inevitability and consequents decline of the 'glory'. The paradox, however, lies in the fact that the child in his eagerness to grow up does not realise what he is losing.

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This stanza is weak as is seen from line 2, does not advance the theme, except in illustrating specifically that the poet has been talking about, It also prepares us for the exalted next stanza.

Stanza 8:

The address to the child is continued. But in completed contrast with the earlier stanza, it deals in a heightened and invisible childhood. The stanza is often criticized as containing highly/philosophical and mystical ideas. Paradoxes and ironies abound here too.

The pigmy size of the child's exterior resemblance does not give a true indication of the greatness of the soul within. Being so near to our true spiritual heritage and uncorrupted by the ways of the world, the child possess an immense soul. He is called the 'best philosopher', as this proximity to God gives him profound wisdom. In one sense, it is odd to call the child a philosopher, if by philosophy we mean conscious, rational and analytical enquiry.

The child's wisdom, as the poet takes pains to inform us, in-stinctive, unconscious and natural. Moreover, this contrasts with the philosophic mind of the adult, referred to by the poet himself at the end of the poem.

The child is also the 'Eye among the blind', Mighty prophet' and 'seer blest' .Coleridge and many others find fault with this stanza and especially with these unchildlike terms and call these 'an outrage on our understanding' , when we recall the visible child with all its weaknesses. What Wordsworth, however, implies is that the child can still see the glories which the blind, the adult, who are fated to live in the light of the common day, have lost. It is in constant communion with the 'divine home' and so can penetrate the mysteries concerning this life and immorality. The child is one who sees but - does not know that he sees and is not even aware that others are blind. The child is deaf and silent in the sense that he does not consciously recognise that pre-natal existence and, therefore, cannot impart the knowledge to others. Neither can he hear about the temptations of the world, as he is still close to the source of divine grace and blessing. Sublime truths are revealed to the child by intuition and without any conscious effort on his part. Truths rest' on the child, while the adults are toiling all their lives to find ;in darkness lost, the darkness of the grave'. While the child is passive, the truths are active in resting upon the child. The inevitability and the to-tality of the loss of the vision in adulthood is brought home to us by the highly pessimistic language. The 'darkness of the grave' is in sharp contrast to the 'celestial light', which is still remembered by the child.

Men as they grow up can never realise these truths, as they are lost in the world, which is something like a grave for 'the soul. The word 'toiling' suggests an enormous and unprofitable expenditure of effort. In other words, the child possesses spiritual knowledge which the adult spends the reminder of his life, seeking to regain, but since that the adult is blind and searching in 'the darkness of the grave', he has little chance of regaining that spiritual state, possessed with perfect ease by the child.

The child's immortality' broods like the day, a Master o'er a slave'. The child has still not dissociated itself from a state of complete unity with the universe. It has not yet developed into an, individual ego oriented person. Just as sunshine pervades the earth or as the master dominated his slave, the idea of the immortality of the soul pervades the whole being the child as a matter of course. This idea is constantly pre-sents and the child cannot for a moment forget it. The poet, therefore, wonders why the youth, who still is nature's priest', wishes to hasten the maturity and shrink his immense soul under the yoke of time con-sciousness and under the earthly freight of human misery, routine and habit. In other word why should the child be anxious to grow into man-hood and thus deprive itself of that heavenly bliss, which no adult, sur-rounded as he is by worldly cares and anxieties, can ever enjoy? It is a pity that the child should wish to be caught in the bondage of custom which is the inevitable lot of manhood, and thereby lose the spiritual insight. The tragedy is that we do not know the blessedness, we were born into, until we remember it after it has been lost.

The little child al-ways finds and never seeks, while the 'inmate man' always seeks and never finds.

In his letter to Mrs. Clarison (1814), the poet says, 'This poem rests mainly upon two recollections of childhood: one that of splendour the objects of sense which has passed away, and the other an indisposition to bend to the law of death as applying to our own particular case. A reader who has not a vivid recollection of these failings having existed in his mind, in childhood cannot understand the poem.

The use symbolism of light and darkness; heaviness and lightness, freedom and bondage has been remarkable. Nevertheless, the stanza is a little pretentious, its language unchildlike and its thoughts inflated, and at times obscure. Coleridge objects especially Wordsworth calling the child the best philosopher' and the 'seer blest'. All these have led many critics to suspect that the poet is losing his poetic genius and so some like Dean Sperry regard the Ode as "Wordsworth's conscious fare well to his art, a dirge sung over his departing powers.' Though there is a failing off in his poetic gift, it cannot be construed as his total loss of creative imagination. The ode of Wordsworth is quite unlike Colerdige's 'Ode to Dejection; in this matter. His natural joy is freezed up and is beautifully described as the thick chilling effect of the custom destroying the growth of the soul, and consequently his moments of vision too. Verily, the poet has sung:

The poets in our youth begin in gladness

But thereof come in the end despondency and madness.

Stanza 9:

Stanza 9 to 11 from the second movement in the second part of the Ode. Like the first movement (Stanzas 5 to 8), these stanzas also tell us what has happened to the visionary gleam. But while stanzas 5 to 8 end on a note of hopelessness and despair, these stanzas express a sense of hope and even joy.

The visionary gleam, the poet makes us aware, is not really lost 'Something;' of this supposedly lost past does in fact remain in adult life and, what is more, can be recollected, providing the much needed sustenance and meaning to life. Trilling says that the contradiction must be understood; but that it does not have to "be resolved. In fact, he holds that much of the power of the poem comes from this*tension.

This section is highly complex as the poet is trying to give ex-pression to what is an almost inexpressible mystical experience. Con-sequently, the language becomes loft, and abstract.

As against the sense of despair with which stanza 8 ends, stanza 9 opens on a optimistic note. He feels that all is not lost. Though the state of childhood is long past, it does leave behind traces of glory. 'Some thing that doth live', some blessedness, though invisible and beyond expression, remains a perpetual possibility, like the light which has gone out in a fire still stays to be reborn from the embers. Here the 'nature' that remembers is human nature. The poet turns to remembrance of what has been in the past life, when, as a child, he had con-tinual intimations of immortality, Though the 'fountain light' and the 'master light' have fled, he still has the memory of childhood glory, which brings him 'perpetual benediction'. But, Wordsworth hastens to add that his-songs of thanks and praises are raised not for the delight and liberty and even for the 'simple creed' of childhood; but for those 'obstinate questionings', 'Failings from us, vanishing' and shadowy recollection' the memory result in. The poet here is expressing his mystical experience. He thanks God because he remembers the moments in which he was conscious of things spiritual and for those persistent doubts about the reality of our sense perceptions and of the external objects seemed unreal, unsubstantial and for the vague fears of a man who 'seemed to live in a world of unreality' and, lastly for those -divinely inspired instincts. (High Instincts') in the 'presence of which the earthly part of our nature, not realising the immortality of the soul, trembled like a guilty

person caught red handed. The recollections are in part concerned with the clouds of glory and the 'master light' is related to the way in which our early visionary abilities provide the creative vision. These 'Obstinate questionings' which never quite depart, though we have lost the spiritual source, put into perspective ;our noisy years' (i.e our lives with all their turmoil and excitement) seem but' moments in the being of the eternal silence ' (i.e. a momentary interval in the midst of eternity.) In other words, our lives may be seen) as part of the total process of integration and separation with which the universe is perpetually engaged in. These 'Shadowy recollection are, says the poet, 'the fountain light of all our day' and have the power to sustain us in the world of darkness because they give us glimpses of another reality,-which even though we cannot attain it, offers a hope that lives, however pointless and aimless they may seem, have yet a relationship to a deeply hidden but permanent source of joy. He thanks God for those recollections of a previous existence which are prime sources of all our happiness and the chief guiding influence to direct our lives rightly. He is also grateful for all time, whether we engross ourselves completely in worldly pursuits or remain indifferent. Whether we are in boyhood or manhood, these truths about our previous existence can never be destroyed or belief in them ever be shaken. Because of these feelings when we are in a tranquil mood, even when he have left our childhood far behind and we have become men of the world, it is possible for our soul to catch glimpses of the ocean of immortality. Irrespective of age we can, like children, get glimpses of immortality and convince ourselves of the eternal existence of our soul. Under the influence of these recollections, we may yet at once retrace our steps and so recover and feel once more sympathy with those old "high instincts of childhood.

In a season of calm weather, our souls have sight of that immortal sea. Note here the metaphor from mature contemplative thought Though inland far we be inland here being a metaphor for the state of adulthood, having travelled far we be'- inland here being a metaphor for the state of adulthood, having travelled far from the 'shore' which is the equated with the link between the child and its spiritual origins ('deep'). This is to state that in the receptive state in adult life, we may still gain Insights and visions into the real unity of things, symbolised by 'that immortal sea', even though it is, naturally, children, who 'sport' upon the shore.

Wordsworth is sustained by the belief that this life has ultimately some relationship to the totality of the universe. Though far moved fromchildhood, we can still look back and see ourselves as children on the shores of immortality and be reminded that all men, however far they may travel from it, are still linked with an ultimate reality. What is stated here is not merely that we can remember our childhood condition. For the poet' the child is father of the man; and there is a child within each one of us. In a season of calm weather, when contemplation can do its work, the mind can conquer time and in a moment travel' to the condition of child hood, not to enter into it, but at least to observe it immediately before the eye of the mind, the recollection of children playing upon the sea shore is an imaginative return unity of being of the child is an act that can be deliberately achieved. Childhood, though left behind, is not lost. Its kingdom of heaven is always within may be recovered, and thus remains a perpetual possibility.

Stanza 10:

The fact that we can still have some intimations of immortality by recollecting childhood makes Wordsworth confident and happy and this stanza, therefore, is in a much lighter and dance like rhythm. Although the 'radiance' of childhood is lost and though 'nothing can bring back the hour/ of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower' (every common sight apparelled in celestial light St I), there is no need to grieve for this. He can gain strength in, what remains behind since he has learned new kinds of sympathy and faith! This stanza in a way repeats the theme and language of stanza 3 with its spring and universal joy. But, there is an essential difference between this and the earlier stanza. In the earlier stanza the poet's attempt to enter fully into the joy of the natural world was crossed by 'a thought of grief. Besides, he was assailed by doubts and feeling of loss, despite his earnest efforts not to be sullen'.

In this stanza, he makes no effort to feel the fullness of the bliss of childhood. He has realised that it is only the young and innocent who can feel this in their hearts'. He knows fully well that there can be no full emotional participation in the life the natural world. Then where lies consolation?" We in thought will join your throng'. He has realised that only 'in thought' participation is possible. He seeks only what is possible the kind of intellectual sympathy made possible by the insight achieved. A renewed confidence in the power of the intellect to offer support to man and a strengthened faith in the value of all life replace the unclouded vision of childhood, but only because another relation grows up besides the relation of man to nature- the relation of man to his fellows,. Human suffering, when looked at from this exalted position, is after all not pointless.

It is as though the poet has come to terms with his won existence and has provided some kind of solution to the anguished question raised through the earlier part of the poem. When he now turns to the fountains, meadows and birds, he turns with a proper understanding and so with a quieter and deeper enjoyment of the pleasures he finds in the beauty of this world.

The child perceives intuitively while the adult perceives reflectively. Although he is conscious of the childhood vision, he seeks consolation from that he still possesses the chastening influence that one gets through the experience of sorrow in life ('the still sad music of humanity' and the faith that man is not destined to perish but that he will live through and beyond death to the life eternal. The calmness and self-control and the joy which spring from understanding are evident in this stanza.

Stanza 11:

In the final stanza the poet reaffirms his continuing love for all objects of nature. But this love is not the same he expressed in the opening stanzas. The love he now has is born out of understanding of humanity, its tenderness, its joys and sorrows, and what is more, its mortality and immortality. Though he has lost the 'celestial gleam' of childhood, it is compensated by his human awareness and compassion. Though he still loves brooks, new born day and sunset, his love is deeper and sober as age has 'brought with it experience about which the child knows nothing. There has taken place a shift in the centre of his interest from nature to man. The growth and development of the human heart which comes inevitably with adult life, makes the poet sympathise not only with his fellow beings, but also with the entire creation. Even the meanest flower now can give, if not the joy of 'bright radiance', but something deeper than joy, 'thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.'

The coming of the 'philosophic' mind does not make him feel less. On the contrary, the philosophic mind has increased his power to feel. The meanest flower as well as the setting sun all speak of age, suffering and death ('Another race has been and other palms are won!). At the same time, they all make him aware of mortality and precisely because of this, they all becomes significant and precious.

The poem in a way has come full circle. The loss of childhood glory is replaced inevitably by the philosophic mind as one grows up and in the process faces suffering and agonies.

This stanza reveals a 'quiet modulating of the music to a peaceful close'.

" The greatness of this poem is that with an Ode's proper fullness of recognitions, it celebrates the central bewildering episode of the story of mankind - that episode which is part of the biological history of man, which is re-enacted in every individual life as it grows to maturity and which is an allegory of innumerable moments of illumination or obscurity throughout our adult lives."

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S.T. COLERIDGE

His life and Works

Coleridge was not merely one of the leading poets of the Romantic Age but was one of the 'seminal minds' of the 19th century. T.S. Eliot calls him 'the greatest English literary critic' and 'the greatest intellectual force of his time'. An outstanding poet, a great thinker and an orator, Coleridge has evoked the admiration of everyone. According to Wordsworth, his friend and collaborator, Coleridge was 'the most won-derful man.' For Charles Lamb, he was 'the proof and touchstone of all my cogitations'. Though all recognise his extraordinary genius, many have commented on his lack of will and his incapacity to organise his life, to direct his powers for any length of time to a single object. His inability to complete many of his poems or his plans makes him 'a sick genius'. In fact Coleridge called himself ' a continually divided being', one who is torn between strong intellect and weak will'.

The youngest son, of Rev. John Coleridge, vicar and school master and of Anne Bowden, Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born in 1772 at Ottery, St. Mary. Devonshire From the beginning he had the instincts of a scholar and an idealist, besides a capacity for spontaneous and deep feelings. As a child, he was lonely, but precarious. His habit of omnivorous reading, especially of the exotic and the supernatural , was truly astounding. At six years of age, he read 'The Arabian Nights' and absorbed their magic and mystery fully. The death of his father when he was only eight was a severe below to the boy, who thereafter tried to seek in his friendship with others the image of an ideal father.

He entered Christ's Hospital School in London as a 'charity boy'. He was an outstanding classical scholar even at that early age. His scholastic abilities and his brilliance as a talker won him many admirers school. Charles Lamb was one of his ardent admirers, who in his 'Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty years Age recalls how the passer by 'stood enchanted with admiration to hear the inspired charity boy ex pound in deep, and sweet intonations the mysteries of classical writings. But despite his popularity and scholastic success, Coleridge, was essentially lonely and friendless. He later joined Jesus College, Cambridge, where he won a gold medal for poetry. He suffered from bad health and often from pressure of debts. He even had a brief spell of Army, life; but his brothers managed to get his release.

In June 1794, Coleridge met Robert Southey at Oxford, who was then an established poet. Together they formed a scheme called 'Pantisocracy' (from the Greek roots, for 'all, equal' and rule'), 'an ideal agrarian society to be run on communist lines. They chose a site on the banks of the Susquehanna River in America. It required 'a band of young idealists-twelve gentlemen of good education and liberal principles andtwelve ladies.' To fulfil this 'requirement. Coleridge had to marry Sarah Flicker, the youngest sister of Southey's wife. The scheme naturally failed. Coleridge had to endure disappointment and frustration in his married life for the rest of his life, for Sarah was little equipped emotionally and intellectually to be his wife. At first, however, Coleridge enjoyed the illusion or happiness and these found expression in his poems of the period- 'The Eolian Harp' and 'Reflection on having left a Place of Retirement.'

The need to earn a living made Coleridge occupy himself for some time with politics and journalism. He founded the journal 'The Watchman', which ran only for ten numbers. The most important single influence on his development 'was rjis friendship with Wordsworth.. Coleridge was then settled at Nether Stowey and Wordsworth and his sister

Dorothy were living nearby. They became 'three souls in one', united in a common love of nature. Whpt Wordsworth did was 'to loose the springs of the fountain which, till that moment had lain half frozen beneath the earth.' Both ad-mired each other, Coleridge found in Wordsworth what he himself lacked strong will and an earthly matter-of-factness. The year 1798 saw the publication, of the 'Lyrical Ballads', which ushered in the Romantic Movement. The first poem in this volume was Coleridge's 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', which revolutionised the subject matter and style of English poetry. This was followed by other, equally great, poems-the first part of 'Christabel'. 'Kubla Khan', 'Frost at Midnight' and 'France: An Ode'.

Unlike Wordsworth, Coleridge was not at all a prolific writer and his reputation rests on these poems and on Dejection : An Ode', which he wrote a few years later.

Coleridge discontinued writing poetry and instead began writing extensively on religion, metaphysics and politics. He visited Germany and lectured on literature, science and philosophy. He wrote a regular feature in 'The Morning Post', Continuous ill-health and his habit of taking opium weakened him physically and depressed him mentally. His domestic discord and his impossible love for Sara Hutchinson a friend of the Wordsworth's, further worsened his condition. He was troubled by guilt, misery, illness and self-pity. In a fit of despair, he spoke of abandoning poetry altogether as he felt that he 'never had the essentials of, poetic genius'. His belief that he lacked 'the shaping spirit of imagination' led him, to write once of his most poignant poems-' A Verse Letter to (Asra)', his private name for Sara Hutchinson, which later was revised and published as 'Dejection: An Ode'. This was the last important poem he wrote. He, however, continued to give a highly successful series of lectures on Shakespeare, Milton, the dramatists of Greece and France, both in England and abroad.

The last phase of Coleridge's life began in 1816, when he entered Df. Golliaman's house in Highgate, where he died in 1834. It was during this sage of Highgate' phase, that he wrote his great philosophical and critical works-' Biographia Literature'. 'Aids to Reflection' and, Opus Maximum'.

Thus Coleridge evokes in us both admiration and pity-admiration for his extraordinary genius and his remarkable achievements against heavy odds; and pity for his lack of will, his inability to execute his plans is and his failure to fulfil his talents to the full.

KUBLAKHAN

One of the most celebrated and the most magical of poems, Kubla Khan' is also one of he most enigmatic. Published in 1816 rather as a psychological curiosity, than on the ground of any supposed poetic merits. Coleridge called the poem A Vision in a Dream. A Fragment'. This is how Coleridge gives the genesis of the poem. 'In the summer of 1797, the author then in ill health had retired to a lonely farmhouse between Porlock and Linton. In consequence of a slight indisposition', an anodyne (supposed to be opium) had been prescribed, from the effects of which he fell asleep, in his chair. At the moment he was reading the following sentence in Purchas's Pilgrimage. "Here the Kubla Khan commanded a palace to be built and a stately garden thereunto. And thus ten miles of fertile ground were enclosed with a wall". The author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he had the most vivid confidence, that he could not, have composed less than from two to three hundred lines' if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as THINGS, with a parallel production of the correspondent expression, without any sensations or consciousness of effort. On awaking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, and paper instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock, and detained by him above an hour, and on his return to his room, found to his no small surprise and mortification, that though he still retained some vague and dim recollec-tion of the general purport of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone has been cast, but alas! Without the after restoration of the latter.'

Humphrey House observes that in calling the poem 'a fragment and a psychological curiosity' out of modesty, Coleridge played right into the hands of critics, many of whom viewed it as an-example of pure inspiration and the expression of the unconscious. Being surrealistic, they argued it was wrong to talk of its 'meaning' or unity. Epithets like patch-work brilliance', 'inspired incoherence.' A piece of verbal magic' and pure magic' are used to indicate the essential mystery and rich complexity of the poem.

The poem is the supreme example of what happens When the creative imagination possesses {he whole of a person and when the poet 'brings the whole soul of man into activity". The inwardness of creative power' fuses and synthesises all discordant and even contradictory elements like internal with the external; idea with images; subject with ob-ject; personal with universal, creation with destruction; form with con-tent, sound with sense, colour with perfume; sleeping with waking and soon. The various parts are, moreover, somehow related to *one* another to produce one total, powerful effect.

Critics are generally in a agreement about the 'meaning' of the last section of the poem, which, they say, is concerned with the experience of poetic creation. Humphrey House is confident that the poem is a poem about the act of poetic creation, about the ecstasy in imaginative fulfilment. For George G. Watson too 'Kubla Khan' is a poem about poetry, and that the last section is an exemplification of Plato's theory of poetry. Harold Bloom considers the poem a vision of creation and destruction, each complete' and .makes comparison with Yeats' 'Byzantium'

Kubla Khan is the grandson of the legendary Chengis Khan, the founder of the Mongol empire in China, Coleridge has softened the proper names given by Purchas to make them musical and exotic.

Analysis of the Poem

The poem is divided into two parts, the first part consists of lines, 1 to 36, while the second part consists of lines 37 to 54. Many critics maintain that there is no unity between these -two parts and that being a fragment, the images and symbols are ambiguous, if not confused and incoherent. Others , however argue that there is an essential unity between the two parts and that the poem does reveal some truth and does make a completed statement on some topic, John Livingstone Lowers, in his monumental work 'The Road to Xanadu' traces the in-credibly multifarious sources from Coleridge's vast reading, which coa-lesced into the poem.

Line 1-11

The opening lines are both descriptive and highly evocative. Kubla Khan ordered a pleasure house to be built in Xanadu, on the banks of river Alph, which flows through 'caverns measureless to man' and 'down to a sunless sea'. An area of ten miles was enclosed for the purpose with walls and towers inside which were gardens with 'sinuous rills' and 'sunny spots of greenery'. All these creations of man are set against the sacred river and the 'forests ancient as the hills'.

The hammer- like quality and the assonance of the opening lines suggest the forcefulness with the oriental despot's decree is carried out. The pleasure dome and the sacred river are the central and recurrent images of the poem. The pleasure dome, the precise details of which are given, suggests a kind of a paradise, but of a sensual and artistic kind. The dome, for instance, is 'a miracle of rare device', a work of superb art and a symbol of artistic achievements. But then it also suggests sensuous pleasures, decadence and moral laxity and consequently transistorises, like the bubbles. (Note the shape of dome is also bubble-like). It may also be noted that the, epithet 'pleasure', is always used for the river. The anti-thesis of these two images are thus obvious. The river is called Alph, which is as sacred and life-giving as the Nile or the legendary Alpheus. Everything about it is mysterious and enigmatic. Its origin and its eventual fall into the sunless sea evoke in us awe and wonder. After moving in a zig zag manner, it runs under ground through mysterious caverns and -'down to a sunless sea.' The sea is sunless because it too is in, the depths of the earth, impenetrable by, the sun, like the caves. Note the contrast between dome, which is open to the sun and the caves, which are dark and mysterious. Life has often been compared to a river flowing into the sea of death. The adjective 'sacred' used of the river flowing into the sea perhaps suggest this idea. Critics have also hinted at the autobiographical element implied in it. While the pleasure dome for them stands for Coleridge's sexual attraction for Sara Hutchinson, the river terminating in a lifeless ocean may have signified his unsatisfactory married life and consequent frustration.

In contrast to the boundless caverns and sunless sea, we have in lines 6-11, precise mathematical details about the pleasure house as is being built as per Kubla Khan's decree. Once again notice the hammer -like quality of the lines and the use of the passive voice. All these suggest the lack of personal relationship and the haughty aloofness of the tyrant. We find his men measuring, confining, barricading, building, planning and taming Nature for carrying out his decree. A fertile area (fertile on account of the 'sacred river') of ten miles was selected and it was enclosed with walls and towers. A beautiful garden with 'bright' sinuous rills (fountains sparking in the sun) and 'sunny spot of greenery', was also provided. The wild forests of Nature, which are 'as ancient as the hills' are set against the artificial creations of the men. Note the general way in which Nature is described (e.g. 'many a', 'there were') while the pleasure dome is described in minute details. The hidden caves of Nature are set against the 'sinuous rills' and the sunny spots of greenery' against the forests

and the 'sunless sea'. The word 'bright', connotes something abnormal, and hence unnatural-perhaps a verdict on man- made creations. 'Walls' and 'towers' also suggest that exclusiveness and the deliberate effort on the part of man to cut himself off from Nature, from the unity or life. There is the added suggestion that not only the fertility of the land, but even the sinuous rills' is possible because of the underground river. The contrast between nature, and Art, between boundlessness and exclusiveness is evoked in these lines.

Lines 12-36

This part of the poem begins with the mysterious and awe inspiring sense from which the river takes its origin. As the river ends in caverns of immeasurable depth, so it commences by springing up sud-denly out of a deep chasm. The poet breaks into an exclamation of won-der as if he suddenly lights upon a wild and picturesque scene, the land plunging down through cedar woods to a deep valley. A note of fear and beauty is struck when he conjures up the scene. The atmosphere is both' and of the sacred river and all that these imply. Both sights and sounds interrningle as the shadow of the pleasure dome is reflected midway between the fountain and the caves, where is also heard mixed harmony of the fountain and caves. The visual mingling of sounds' ('measure') make it 'miracle of rare device'. "To one side is the river's source in the chasm, to the other one the caverns measureless to man and the sunless sea into which the river fails and Kubla in the centre can hear the mingled measure of the fountain and the dark underground caves; the convex and the concave. Light and shade; visual and auditory and what k more, pleasure and sacredness are all integrated to make it indeed rare'. The image of the floating shadow perhaps may suggest the insubstantiality;' amid impermanence.of the creations of man and this is reinforced by the use of the word 'device', however rare it may be. Being artificial, it is subject to threat and destruction and hence the relevance of the ancestral voices warning of annihilation. With the balancing of opposites and the fusion of extremes in Kubla's 'rare device' the first part of the poem comes to a close, the threat from .the primitive, 'savage, ancestral' regions notwithstanding. As Humphery House observes, 'the paradise contains knowledge of the threat of its own possible destruction. It is not held as a permanent gift, the ideal life is always open to forces of evil; It must be not only created by man for himself , but also defended by him. It is not of the essence of this Paradise that it must be lost; but there is a risk that it may be lost.'

Lines 37-54

The second part is remarkable for its loveliness of diction and ecstatic vision. Once in a vision he saw an Abyssinian maid playing upon a stringed musical instrument and singing of mountain Abora, which is reminiscent of Milton's Amara in 'Paradise Lost' a kind of on earth. If he could revive i.e. recreate within himself, her music, it would give him a joy so profound that he could create in poetry (music, loud and long) Kubia's dome of pleasure and the caves of ice. Those who heard his song would see his visionary creation vividly-. They would recognize him as one divinely inspired. Amazed at his 'flashing eyes and his floating hair' the world be filled with awe and fear and in order that he should not be able to do harm, they would draw three circles around him as part of the religious rituals and shut their eyes to save themselves. They were sure that the poet was under the spell of inspiration which is both beautiful and terrifying. The figure of the poet in his poetic frenzy with his eyes in a fine frenzy rolling and his hair blown back by the wind is drawn from Plato's conception of a poet, which is adopted by the Romantic poets. The connection between poetry and religion is also hinted at here. The wind is often represented as poetic and indeed religious inspiration. The poet in his visionary moments realises the fusion between pleasure and sacredness and is himself regarded as holy and sacred, a seer who can 'see into the life of things'.

The song of the Abyssinian maid is a counterpart of the strong music in the soul spoken of in 'Dejection'. From it comes a deep light, which is the condition for poetic creation. We also notice that as in the case of the 'Ancient Mariner' , the passion in the poet's countenance

is revealed from the reactions of his listeners. The poet here seems to be like some primitive figure (note the expressions in the earlier sections like savage place"; holy and enchanted' and 'ancestral voices' which find an echo here.) a prophet who is different from ordinary people in his holiness and in his sacred inspiration. For the uninitiated he may appear to be intolerably beautiful and terrify flag as he is inspired by a paradise vision. It is to be noted that the poem ends with the significant word paradisal, which is quite different from the 'miracle of rare device' of Kubla Khan. Unlike Khan's pleasure dome, which creates but also threatens it with destruction, the potency of creative imagination is of the realisation of the unity of that it is lasting as it comes out Being. It is authentic and is a fact (all whoheard should see them there') although many may not be able to bear its power and glory.

Humphrey House rightly observes that the poem is a 'triumphant positive statement of the potentialities of poetry' and vehemently denies that it is not about the failure and frustration of the creative power, as some critics have stated. He illustrates his conclusion from the autobiographical elements of Coleridge as also from the rhythmic character and the nature of metre and words used.

The change of scene and apparent change of subject together with Coleridge's assertion that the poem is a 'fragment' have led many critics to suggest that the second part has nothing to do with the first. But a discerning critic can find many a connection between these two parts. The River Alph in the first part and the poet in his frensy in the second part are integrally related. Alph is a sacred river which is presented in a context suggesting fear and awe. Its energies are potent and are beyond human control. The poet too is 'holy and enchanted'. He is filled with divine fire and his vision is of a superhuman kind. The sudden bursting forth of chaotic energy from deep within characteristic of both the sacred' river and the 'holy' poet. Though the Abyssinian maid, though sings of Mount Abora, her song arises from the depths of his own being ('revive') before he can build the dome in air. In fact, another point of connection between the two parts is the dome itself. When he asserts that he can 'build that dome in air', what kind of dome does he ...imply? Of course, the dome that has been described in the first part. If Kubla's pleasure dome has not been fully described , the relevance of the second part would have been completely lost. There is, however, one significant, difference between the kind of paradise Kubla Khan built and the paradise which the poet in 'his' fine fren2y creates. While Kubia's dome symbolises the contrasting, even warring elements of human existence and hence contrasting, even war the threat of destruction is implicit in the poet's paradise; it is a complete reconciliation and full resolution through poetry, because it is the outcome of the whole soul of man into activity' and his acquaintance with the undivided life. Many words and images of the first like 'sunny dome' and 'caves of ice' are repeated in the second part. There is also hidden and implicit analogies between the two parts. Thus the poem, in spite of Coleridge's assertion does make a unified effect and does convey a positive coherent statement.

The metre used is iambic tetrameter, varied with rhyming iambic pentameter. The rhyme scheme is subtly interlinked. Alliteration, as-sonance, enjambment, archaic language, exotic orientalj name all are used to reinforce the effect. Note the effect of sounds like 'In Xanadu did Kubla Khan' , 'A Damsel with Dulcimer' and words like 'honey dew' and milk' of paradise and the names like Kubla Khan, Alph, Abyssinian maid, Abora.

P.B. SHELLEY

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

Introduction

'Ode to the West Wind' was written in 1869 and was published in 1820. Shelley himself has observed about the poem "This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno near Florence, and on a day when the tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours which pour down the autumnal rains." The poet was depressed at that time and perhaps this was an attempt to win over this depression, remembering the process of regeneration in Nature. He had lost his son, William. There was some bitter criticism against his poem. "The Revolt of Islam" appeared in the Quarterly. Shelley became more conscious of the role of a poet. In spite of adverse criticism, he was sure that, he will rise up as a great voice. Any poet for that matter will rise up from his ashes like a phoenix.

Content Analysis

Shelley addresses the wild west wind which symbolises the inner spirit of the autumn season. The dry leaves are shattered and driven off like ghosts by this unseen enchanter. The poet sees a destroyer as well as a preserver in the wild wind. It serves a chariot to the winged seeds and takes them along to their dark wintry bed where they lie during the chill winter. At the time of spring the seeds are wakened to life by the gentle zephyr. Flowers of different hue and scent will spring up everywhere.

The strength and vitality of the west wind are felt by the clouds. They appear as leaves on the tangled boughs of a huge tree in the sky and they belong to heaven and ocean. The" wind shakes these messen-gers of rain and lighting and brings them down to the earth as rain. The odd disorder of clouds appear as the curls on the head of Maenad, a fe-male devotee of the wine God, Bacchus. The dirge of the dying year is sung by the west wind. The closing night serves as the dome of a vast sepulchre, vaulted over by the clouds from which bursts black rain, fire and hail.

The Mediterranean is woken from its summer dreams by the west wind. It had been sleeping and dreaming of faraway places and town overgrown with moss and reflected in its calm waters. The Waters of the Atlantic are cloven into chasms as the west wind sweeps furiously over them. The greenery at the bottom of the sea is afraid of the west wind and denudes itself of all its leaves.

Shelley pleads to the west wind to lift him as a wave, a leaf or a cloud and leave him free from agony, The poet realizes that he is tameless, swift and proud like the west wind. The weary hours spent in a hoary world have braised and tortured him. The poet would like to be-come a vehicle like forest through which the wind can express itself. He invites the fierce spirit of the west wind to inspire and drive his dead thoughts like withered leaves to quicken a new birth. His message will spread on earth like ashes and sparks from and un extinguished earth. The west wind may deliver its message through his lips which is full of hope 'if winter comes, can spring be far behind?"

Annotations

1. O Wild West wind, Thou breath of Autumns being

Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead

Are driven like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing. (11.13) The west Wind is 'described as the spirit or soul of the autumn season in 'Ode to the West Wind' by Shelley. It is the force that works behind the phenomenal changes of season like ran and failing of leaves'.The dead leaves are fleeing from the West wind like ghosts from and enchanter.

The poet institutes a comparison between visible and familiar leaves to invisible and imaginary ghosts. The abstract and the remote are concrete and real in the world of a poet.

2. Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow
   Her clarion over he dreaming earth, and fill
   (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
   With living hues and odours plain and hill (11.9.12)

In his 'Ode to the west wind' Shelley calls the gentle West wind of the spring the azure sister of the wild west wind of autumn. It wakes up the dead world* of winter to life. Blowing the clarion is to make a loud shrill call on a trumpet. The sound awakens people and attracts attention and the spring wind seems to wake up the seeds to life by making them sprout. The gentle west wind of the spring, called the azure sister by 'the poet, promotes the growth of plants and trees, producing new leaves and flowers. The whole country turns colourful and aromatic. Flocks are taken out to graze and buds are induced by the wind to feed on air. Even though the gentle west wind is colourless it is described as azure since the sky turns blue at' the blowing of the wind.

3. "Oh lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud"

   I fall on the thorns of life! I bleed (1,54)

In 'Ode on the West Wind' Shelley feels dejected like a leaf which has fallen down. 'The poet should also be raised like the wave or the cloud'. The poet wants to stir in its strength like the wave, the leaf and the cloud.

Shelley had idealistic hopes about the reformation of the world.

The stark realities of life shattered his ideals and he was completely dis-appointed. He imagines himself to be on the thorns of life and bleeding. He pleads to the West Wind to save him from the sorrows of existence. 3. If winter comes, can spring be far behind'. (1.70) "Ode to the west Wind" ends on a note of optimism. Winter represents sorrow in the poet's personal life and justice and sorrow in society. On the other hand spring denotes happiness in poet's life and justice and peace in society. In spite of his bitter experience and frustrations Shelley has still hope about future. He has firm conviction that human beings can bring about miraculous changes in this evil stricken world. "

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POETRY
(GENERAL STUDY)
EDMUND SPENSER
PROTHALAMION

I. Aims and objectives:

In the following pages we are going to learn a good deal, about Edmund Spenser, the Elizabethan poet, his place in English Literature and his major literary output, with special emphasis on one of his minor poems titled Prothalamion. By the time we come to the end , we will have an acquaintance with (a) Spenser and (b) his literary creations and will know quite a lot about his spousal ode, 'Prothalamion'.

II. 1. Introduction:

It is always essential to know as much as possible about a man and his times to properly evaluate his creative work. So we shall begin the study of Edmund Spenser with a look at his biography in a nutshell. As we are not studying Spenser in thorough detail, it is enough to high-light just the most important phases of his career.

II. 2. Biography: the Major Events

1552: Edmund Spenser was born-in a place called East

Smithfield in London as one of the three children (two boys and a girl) of John Spenser and Elizabeth Spenser. John Spenser came from Lancashire. The Spensers were rather obscure people, John having been a clothier. However, they had connections with the famous Spensers.

1562-69: Spenser was at Merchant Taylor's school, London. Which was just three years old when Spenser joined it. The Headmaster insisted that the study of English should precede both in time and in importance, the study of Latin. Well, it was unconventional and a radical departure from the norm. However, he might have studied, besides English, Latin, Greek and Some Italian and French.

1569: Spenser entered Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, Probably he translated John Van Noodt's. "Theatre of Worldlings." Noodt was a native of Brabant who had taken refuge in England from the Romish Antichrist

Remember that Spenser was just sixteen at that time

1569-76: Spenser was at Cambridge. There he met Gabriel Harvey, Fellow of Pembroke, and came 'under his powerful and controversial influence. Afterwards he went to his father's native place, Lancashire. It is surmised that there he met the unidentified. "Rosalind" who figures several times in Spenser's work like "The Shepherd's 'Calendar' and Colin Clout's Come Home Again' as also in the correspondence between Spenser and Gabriel Hervey. Perhaps she did exist in the person of one Rose Dyneley. Perhaps she was merely conventional and an idealized sweetheart. In any case her identity does not matter at all. 1577: Spenser visited Ireland; his first visit; possibly as secretary to the Governor General, Sir Henry Sidney who was Leicester's father-in-law (Leicester is referred to in the Prothalamion poem.)

He was back in London by late 1577 or 78.

1577-80 : 'Virgil's Gnat' was written.

1578 : Spenser was secretary to Dr. John Young, Bishop of Rochester.

1579 : ' The Shepherd's Calendar, was published. Correspondence with Gab rial Harvey tells us that he was about to go on Leicester's service (though the journey did not materialize). Probably wrote Mother Hubbard's Tale.'

1580 : Spenser went to Ireland as Secretary to 'the Lord Deputy. Lord Grey. He lived in or near Dublin. There is some evidence available to indicate his first marriage. Spenser had begun work on his magnum opus i.e. The Fairy Queen.

1580-88 : Spenser was in Ireland. He leased a house in Dublin and another at Country Kildare.

1583-84 : Spenser was Commissioner of Musters in Kildare.

1588-98 : Spenser was appointed Clerk to the Council of Munster, S.W. Ireland . He took an estate of roughly 3000 acres at Kilcolnian.

1589 : Sir Walter Raleigh visited Spenser. Together they re-

turned to London with the Manuscript of the first three books of The Fairy Queen'.

1590 : Books I, II &III of. 'The Fairy Queen' were published.

Spenser was granted an annual pension of £507. He wrote some minor poems like 'The Ruins of Time', 'Daphnaida' and 'Muiopotmos'.

1591 : 'Complaints' and 'Daphanuida' were published.

Spenser returned to Ireland (probably in the Spring). 'Colin Clout' was

written by the end of the year. 1591-94 : The major part of Amoretti' was written..

1594 : Spenser resigned Clerkship to the Council of Munster.

He married Elizabeth Boyle arid Wrote Epithalamion.'

1595 : 'Colin' 'Clout Astrophel', 'Amoretti' and

'Epithalamion' were published. Spenser returned to London in the winter.

1596 : Spenser was in London, Books IV, V& VI of 'TheFairy Queen' were published along with Four Hymns', 'Prothalamion' and the second edition of the first three books of The Fairy Queen' and 'Daphnauida'.

1597 : Spenser returned to Kilocolman.

1598 : Spenser was recommended as Sheriff of Cork. Rebellion broke out in Ireland and Kilcolnian was sacked. Spenser fled to Cork and left for England on 9 December, 1598.

1599 : Spenser died, rather poor on 16, January , 1599 at Westminster. He was buried at Westminster Abbey. The foregoing account mentions only the most important events in the life of Edmund Spenser, You are advised to read any good and brief biography of Edmund Spenser for a detailed study of his life and

works.

Self Check Exercises:

1. What kind of education did Spenser get at school?
2. What capacities did Spenser work in?
3. List the minor works of Spenser.
4. List the major works of Spenser.
5. Refer to the Encyclopaedia Britannica and collect as much * information as you can on Petrarch, du Bellay, Philip Sidney, Gabriel Harvey etc.

III. Spenser's Times: the Renaissance in England:

Perhaps most of you have heard or read about the Renaissance. It was the cultural and intellectual revival which had begun in Italy in the 14th century. (Some say that it began in May, 1453 when Constantinople fell before the invading Turks.)

The Renaissance had enriched Italian language and literature at .the hands of Petrarch, Ariosto, Tasso, Boiardo and others; in France Rorisard, du Bellay and a group of writers who called themselves the 'Pleiade' had set out to lift French language and literature to an eminence equal to that of Italian literature. Following the footsteps of Geoffrey Chaucer who "taught me homely, as I can, to make', Spenser chose to write in English. Here he was inspired by his famous school teacher Richard Mulcaster, who passionately, zealously loved English and who said, "I love Rome, but London better, I favour Italy, but more, I honour the Latin, but I worship the English."

2. Influences on Spenser:

No writer can be totally original; no writer can be an island; no writer can ignore tradition. Every writer is shaped by his predecessors, contemporaries, his learning 'and, above all, his talent. Spenser is no ex-ception. He came under the influence of Italian and French masters, his own contemporaries and mentors like Mulcastor and Harvey, and the il-lustrious Chaucer. All of us accept the genius of Spenser. Here we will consider only the Italian and the French Influences.

III. 2. a. Petrarch: his influence of Spenser:

Let us see how Spenser came under the Petrarchan spell. Petrarch

was an influential, famous. Italian poet of the fourteenth century,

well known to us at least through his Petrarchan sonnet.

Both Petrarch and Spenser held that literature should be didactic: it .should teach some profound truth under a veil of fiction.

Petrarch adored and sang of Laura; Spenser adored and sang of Elizabeth Boyle.

Both desired fame and glory.

Both had elitist audience as their targets.

Petrarch died in 1374 and Spenser was born in 1552. The pro-ductive period of Spenser began some two hundred years after the death of Petrarch. So the common features must have been the result of Petrarch's influencing Spenser.

III. 2. b. du bellay: his influence on Spenser:

Now we will see how Spenser was influenced by the French poet, du Bellay. Joachim du Bellay was a French poet who died when Spenser was just eight .

Both du Bellay and Spenser loved their respective mother tongues passionately and relegated Latin to the last position. Bellay was inventive. He 'invented new words, borrowing elements from all French provinces; Spenser did something similar in English. He drew on ancient and rustic forms and gave archaisms a new lease of life.

Bellay was (later) enrolled as a member of the 'Pleiad' (the group of seven poets with Ronsard at the-top); Spenser was accepted as a member of Sidney's poetic coterie-the Areopagus. Both du Bellay and Spenser wrote for countries and lords. Their poems were 'fantastic' and rococo' (highly ornamented, florid). Music was a dominant feature of the poetry of both.

Both harp upon the medieval, imaginative love.

Bellay wrote 'Regrets', Spenser wrote 'Compliments'

I believe that by now you have an excellent picture of Spenser's debt to both Italian and French poetry. So we need not spend any more time on the topic.

III. 3,c. Other influences

As the major influences were Italian and French their poetic forms were looked upon as "THE" forms to writes poem's in-eclogues, elegies, "sonnets, hymns and the like. Spenser and his fellows simply imitated. Nevertheless, a refined, cultured puritanism, his intimate acquaintance with platonic philosophy his school teacher, Richard Mulcaster, Gabriel Harvey, Sir Philip Sidney and his coterie (the Areopagus) and the great Geoffrey Chaucer were the other influence on Spenser.

Spenser's Language: Merits and demerits:

We shall be brief here: We will mention only the salient ones. Spenser tried hard to preserve the continuity and unity of English. He experimented with 'dialects and .archaic words. His language is marked by actuality (the contemporary idiom), archaism, dialect, borrowing from continental language especially Italian and French. The result is that in many places his language seems antiquated and so unfamiliar. Nevertheless, he is totally Renaissance Elizabethan.

Whatever may the imperfections of his vocabulary be, his poetry is exceptionally musical -which is borne out by his spousal verse, many of his sonnets and the Spenserian stanzas of' The Fairy Queen'.

After Chaucer his was the voice most audibly heard in nearly 200 years in England.

The Spenserian stanza is a remarkable achievement and by that alone the 'poets' 'poet' will be remembered for ever. His experiments with the sonnet form must also be mentioned and recognized.

I am sure you will experience the musical felicity of Spenser's poem on reading them aloud

Now you will attempt to answer the following questions on Spenser's poetry as a body. Self Check Exercises:

1. Name the major influences that shaped Spenser, the poet.
2. What are the special features of Spenser's language?
3. Why is the language 'of Spenser's poetry rather difficult for the modern reader?
4. Take a few Spenserian stanza is organized, the major factors/ per sons that influenced him, and the like. In the next few pages we shall make an aerial survey of his poems. Then we shall confine ourselves to 'a study of his two 'spousal' verses with emphasis, on the poem prescribed for our study Prothalamion.

V. a. Virgil's Gnat"

The first part of 'The fairy Queen' was published in 1591; it was a success. The success led to the publication of some of Spenser's poem's with the title "Complaints". "Virgil's Gnat', 'Mother Hubbard's Tale,' the du Bellay sonnets etc. were the contents.

Using an artificial, deliberately exalted style. 'Virgil's Gnat' tells' a story. A gnat which had woken a sleeping shepherd in order to warn him of an approaching snake had been killed by him. It appears now before the shepherd in a dream, describes. Hell to him and charges him with ingratitude. The shepherd is repentant. He raises a monument for the gnat.

The poem is dedicated to the Earl of Leicester. Circumstantial evidences tell us that the gnat is Spenser, the shepherd Leicester. The latter had not rewarded the former for services rendered.

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The poem is an adaptation of the Virgilian poem titled 'Culey'

V. b. The Shepherd's Calendar:

This is Spenser's typical Renaissance poem dedicated to his friend and well-wisher, Sir Philip Sidney and containing extensive glossing by someone referred to as E.K. (possibly Edward Kirke, Spenser's friend from 'Cambridge University)

The poem consists of eclogues. An eclogue pastoral poem with a story in which shepherds converse. Spenser owes much to Alexander Barclay's translation - Kalender Shepherds. One eclogue corresponds to one month of the year.

Spenser departs from Barclay. Some of the eclogues have love morality and religion as themes, some are elegiacal; some are compli-mentary; one is a lament for the neglect of poetry etc. etc.

The treatment is aesthetic, rather than narrative or philosophic. The style is typical Renaissance, Spenserian.

The pastoral eclogue was an accepted literary kind' with set conventions which can be traced to Theocritus and Virgil. Spenser's models have "been Virgil and the Italian Baptista Mantuanus (1481-1544). The French Clement Marot (1496-1544) and Jacopo Sannazaro.

V. c. The du Bellay and the Petrarch poems:

They are referred to as ' vision' poems. The Petrarch poems were translations from a French version by Clement Marot. The du Bellay poems are translations from 'Songe' (dream) by du the Bellay Many of them are in the form of sonnets, some rhyme and some without, some with fewer than the standard fourteen lines.

The poem deals with the ephemerality of earthly glory and the vanity of human wishes. They are written in a serious rhetorical style.

V. d. Mother Hubbard's Tale Prosopopoia:

This is Spenser's best imitation of Chaucer-Usually it is taken as a satire. The poem led Spenser to a minor disaster in the shape of Leicester's displeasure. The story follows.

A marriage between Queen Elizabeth and the brother of the French King the Duke of Alenon- was contemplated and negotiations were underway, initiated by the latter's agent, named Simier. Elizabeth used to call him lovingly as her 'ape'. The prospect of such an alliance shook many of the' countries, especially the puritans. However, it was approved of by Burghely, .the Lord Treasurer, the Fox in the poem. Spenser probably wanted to warn Leicester, his patron, (Leicester and the Queen were toying with the idea of getting married). Regrettably, Leicester was annoyed and angry with Spenser. Spe: ser left for Ireland immediately after wards-into a virtual exile.

The skill of Spenser in character portrayal is evident here.

V. Colin Clout's Come Home Again:

The poem is an idealized autobiography of Colin Clout who is Spenser himself. Spenser and his friend, Sir Walter Raleigh, returned to England from Ireland in 1589. In London Spenser, published the first three books of the 'The Fairy Queen'. Though he had hopes of advance-ment nothing materialized except an annual pension 50/- Broken-hearted, he returned to Ireland. The trip t· ·ondon and the trip back to Ireland are the subject matter of the 'Pastoral poem'. It is also a critical assessment of the contemporary society.

V f. Astrophel:

It is an elegy in commemoration of Sir Philip Sidney, who died in 1586. (Sidney finds a place in other poems too. The true courtier in 'Mother Hubbard's Tale'. Sir Calidore in The Fairy Queen' etc. are Sidney figures.) It is a disappointing poem.

It presents an allegorical representation of Sidney's life and death. It owes a lot to the legend of Adonis. Astrophel is Sidney. The word means 'lover of the star i.e. Stella-which recalls Astrophel and Stella' , the sonnet cycle by Sidney. Stella is generally taken to be Penelope Devereaux, sister of Essex,

V. g . Amoertti:

The Amoretti is a collection (or sequence) of 89 sonnets. They are probably autobiographical. The story line is the wooing of a lady called Elizabeth over a year during which she has been unresponsive, who then relents and reciprocates. Remember that Elizabeth Boyle was Spenser's wife.

Some of the sonnets are imitative of Petrarch. By and large, some of the sonnets are good poetry.

V. h. The Fairy Queen

Spenser worked on the poem for nearly twenty years. It was an ambitious, epic project, Regrettably, as it is strictly 'English', its insu-larity does not permit us to treat it on par with the epics of other lan-guages.

Spenser had planned the book in twelve parts. However, he wrote only six parts and incorporated two Cantos of Mutability (which was a posthumous addition. The first three parts (Books , as they are in fact called) were published in 1590, then all the six in 1596. The Mutability edition appeared in 1609.

The poem is an allegory- moral, historical and topical. Spenser wanted to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline', for which he chose King Arthur the legendary king of En-gland. King Arthur will be THE IDEAL knight and many others will be personifying other virtues. Queen Elizabeth is Gloriana; Duessa is prob-ably Mary Tudor or Mary, Queen of Scots; Lucifera could be Mary Tudor; Orgoglio could be Philip II and so on,

The poem is a fusion of allegory and romance in a language which is rich in archaic words, befitting an archaic theme.

V. i. Spenser's Remaining Poems:

Besides the above, Spenser has written quite a few other poem too. We may dismiss them as mere academic exercises and curiosities.

V. j. Epithalamion and Prothalamion:

V J.I. Epithalamion

Marriage songs i.e. epithalamia (This Greek word literally means on the bridal Chamber) had a long tradition in Spenser's England. Spenser's Epithalamion' is an autobiographical poem. The stanza form here is an adaptation of the Canzone from the Italian language. It is a remarkable musical composition, a great formal lyric.

The theme is the idealization of Spenser's marriage to Elizabeth Boyle in June, 1594. The poem treats in detail the events of his wedding day.

The poem may be said to possess the characteristics of a pageant/ masque; a series of tableaux where homely details, descriptions of Nature, reminiscence of literary activities, mythology etc. are brought together to highlight Spenser's personal feeling of joy. The influences of Plato and Petrarch and his school are evident in the poem.

V. J. 2 .Prothalamion; a General Study

v J 2. (I) Introduction

This Greek expression, coined by Spenser himself on epithalamion' means' 'a song preceding nuptials'.

If you have the text with you, you will find that the poem is titled Prothalamion or A Spousal Verse made by Edmund Spenser

"In honour of the double marriage of the two honourable and virtuous ladies, the Lady Elizabeth and the Lady Katherine Somerset, daughters to the Rt. Honourable Earl of Worcester and espoused the two worthy gentleman. M.Henry Gilford and M.William Peter, Esquires."

Prothalamion' happens to be the last complete poem of Spenser to be published. As matter of fact, it is not a bridal song or marriage hymn. It is record of a 'formal' meeting of some sort before a marriage, a marriage that is going to be solemnized very soon. Spenser refers to it as a 'spousal' verse, where 'spousal' could mean betrothal instead of marriage: Well, the marriage mentioned in the subtitle took place o 8 November, 1596. The poem could have been written some six or eight weeks earlier.

We shall now attempt a summary of the poem. If you do not have the text with you, you had better get hold of the text and read it several times to catch and marvel at the music of the lines. Always remember; a paraphrase is something like a body without its soul; it is never, I repeat, never, a substitute for the poem. V. J. 2 .(2) Paraphrase :

Stanza 1

The day was calm; the gentle breeze subdued the hot rays of the sun. (I was unhappy about my stay, which was profitless, in the court. I had hoped for some advancement, but nothing came my way.) I went for a stroll to pacify my disturbed self along the shore of the silver-streaming Thames. The bank was 'painted with variable flowers' and the meadows were ' adorned with dainty gems fit to deck maidens' bowers and crown their paramours (i.e. lovers) on the bridal day, which was not long. I said : Sweet Thames! Run softy, till I end my song.

I saw by the river side a flock of nymphs, lovely daughters of Thames and the Oceans. Each looked like a bride. Each carried a basket made of twigs. They culled flowers to fill their baskets with and later to transfer them to their flasks. Their beautiful fingers knew how to pluck flowers of all kinds. The flowers were to deck their bride grooms' bouquets on the 'the bridal day which was not long'. I said: Sweet Thames! Song.

Stanza 3

I saw two swans swimming down along the Lee (River Lee from Kent which flows into the Thames at Greenwich and is a tributary of trie Thames). They were the fairest of the fair and the whitest of all swans. They were whiter than the snow on top od Pindus (a Greek mountain range 8650 ft. above the sea level). Even Jove, who appeared in the form of a swan to Leda, was not whiter. Leda, it is said, was as white as the Jove swan. The gentle river which carried them seemed to dirty them. The waves were asked not to wet their silken feathers, not to stain them and mar their beauty which 'shone as heaven's light'. I said: Sweet Thames!.....

Stanza 4

Straightaway the nymphs-now their baskets were all filled with flowers-ran towards the silver swans to look at them 'as they came floating on the crystal flood. The nymphs were amazed. Their astonished eyes took their fill. They felt that they had never seen such a sight as the team that drew the chariot of Venus (the goddess of love and beauty in Greek mythology). Such lovely swans could not have been of any earthy seed'. They had to be angels or of angels. However, they were bred summer's heat (Note here-probably Spenser is plying on the word 'Somereset'- the girls were from 'Somersets'. They looked as fresh as day. I said: Sweet Thames.....

Stanza 5

The nymphs drew great store of flowers yielding fragrant odours' to the sense and strew them upon the swans and the waves. The river then looked like Peneus (the river of

Thessaly originating on Pindus and flowering through the vale of Temple to the Aegean Sea. Which was said to be always strew with flowers from the fertile banks of the river) The spate looked like flower decked floor of bridal chambers. Mean while to nymphs had made garland of fresh flowers and they crowned the wonderful swans with the garlands, One sang this song pre-pared for the auspicious day their marriage. Sweet Thames...

Stanza 6

O you gentle birds ! the world's fair ornament and Heaven's glory, whom this happy hour leads to your lovers' blissful bower! May God bless you with joy and heart's content of your love's union. May Venus Goddess of love and beauty and her son Cupid, who afflicts lover's hearts with love, smile upon you. Cupid 's smile, it is said, re moves all dislike and discord from friendship and matrimony. May peace and prosperity descend on you. May your bridal bed abound with chaste pleasures and fruitful issues that may confound your enemies. May your joys overflow all measures on your bridal day.... Sweet, Thames.

Stanza 7

She finished her speech. The other nymphs sang aloud the refrain that the bridal day was not far off. The refrain echoed and echoed. The swans continued their journey down the Lee Which slowed down its flow.All other birds flocked about the two (who excelled them) just as Cynthia, the goddess of the Moon, shamed the lesser stars. They fol-lowed them in a row to lend them help on the wedding day. Sweet Thames!

Stanza 8

At last all arrived in London (Merry London, my most kindly nurse, that to me gave this life's first native source, though from another place I take my name, an house of ancient fame' these lines are autobio-graphical. Refer to Spenser's biography) to the brick towers (whose shadows float on the "Thames waters) Where the lawyers had their chambers which once housed* the Knights Templars (The Order of the Knights Templars was founded in 1118 A. D, to protect the pilgrims to Jerusalem) who became extinct because of pride by 1312 A.D. Amongst these towering structures was a stately palace (where oft I gained gifts, and goodly grace of that great Lord who used to stay there' Spenser re-fers to Leicester's palace where he was first employed; Leicester died in 1588. Spenser lost a friend and well-wisher on his death). Alas, this is not the time or place to mention my personal sorrow I must mention only joyous things, Sweet Thames!..

Stanza 9

Now the palace is occupied by a noble Lord who is England's glory. (The Earl of Excess, Spenser's patron) and the world's wide wonder. He of late shook Spain (Essex had attached Spain), seized Cadiz and burnt down the ports and the ships anchored there. The giant rocks on either side of the Straits of Gilbraltar quaked for fear of Essex. (In the next five lines Spenser lavishes praise on Essex-and says that owing to his accomplishments, Queen Elizabeth's glorious name will be heard all over the world etc. etc.

Stanza 10

This noble lord came out of his palace, like the radiant evening star (Hesperus). He was followed by a great train and he descended the steps to the river. Two very handsome knights stood out in the crowd. They were fit grooms for queens-intelligent, talented and elegant; they looked like Castor and Pojlux (the Gemini, the twins of Jove and 'Leda, brothers to Helen) who deck and brighten the blue shield of heaven. The two stepped forward and received the two fair brides the swans and at the appointed time* and place they were to-be married the day being not far off. Sweet Thames!

Note:

The last two of each of the Stanza i.e. the refrains are not identical throughout; there are some, sight variations here and there. They have some significance; however, .we are ignoring them. V.j. 2.(3) Commentary:

We will now attempt a brief commentary on the poem.

'Prothalamion' is shorter and more compact than "Epithalamion' Yet, the former lacks the intensity found in the latter. It is remarkable achievement in terms of rhythm and music. Coleridge referred to the refrain as the swan like movement of his exquisite Prothalamion. Only on reading the poem aloud the music can be experienced and admired.

The poem has its weakness, .though. In the first stanza itself Spenser digresses to indulge in an autobiographical remark. A similar defects is found in stanza 8. where he refers, to London as his nurse etc. and mentions his family tree, In stanza 9 we find him referring to Leicester and Essex and their role in his personal life. Such digressions vitiate the poem.

We also find clumsy, defective grammar in lines five to nine, Stanza 1. ('Afflict', the verb and 'whom' and 'my brain' are not properly grammatically related.) Vague and stock attributives like gentle, goodly fair etc.,' are scattered throughout and overworked. The description of the swans is too rhetorical. The allegory-swans; brides fades out clumsily in the last stanza.

There are a few incongruous and awkward lines in the poem. We are taken aback when Spenser wishes his two young couples, 'fruitful issue upon their bridal day'. Are the brides going to be delivered of babies on their wedding day? How scandalous and inconvenient it could be remembered 'upon the bridal -day' which could mean that she is get-ting married. Another instance of the bridegrooms-receiving their brides and at the appointed tide each one did make his bride against the bridal day which is not long' which amounts- to their marrying the brides be-fore the wedding day.

Despite the defects listed above, the poem is a great lyric heralding the rebirth of English lyric poetry after two centuries of hibernation. It is also Spenser's swan song in one sense. Spenser died in January, 1599. The poem is his last completed one was written probably in September /October, 1596.

Self Check Exercise

1. Read the poem aloud several times.
2. Enumerate the imperfections of 'Prothalamion'
3. Write ten sentences on the technique of composition of Prothalamion.
4. Attempt a critical evaluation of the poem.
5. Attempt a line by line paragraph of the poem in modern English.
6. Make a list of the various figures of speech used by Spenser in his 'Prothalamion'.

VI. Summing Up

In the foregoing pages we have been looking at Spenser-his life, works, the salient features of his literary output, and the like. We spent some extra time paraphrasing the poem -titled, 'Prothalamion' prescribed for our general study. A paraphrase as v/e have already mentioned, is a skeleton, with to flesh, blood or soul. What therefore, we should do is to read itself aloud several times to get a feel of it. It is in many respects, the most readable and musical poem of his period.

If you can get hold of some of the following books, read and learn some more about Edmund Spenser.

VII. Bibliography

1. Winbolt : Spenser and His Poetry
2. Muller R.P.C. : Spenser's Minor Poems
3. Nelson, W : The Poetry of Edmund Spenser
4. Harry Berger Ed. : Twentieth Century Views
5. Any Short biography of Edmund Spenser.

JOHN MILTON

(I) Introduction to Milton

John Milton's life is drama in three acts. Born»in London as the son of a scrivener, he was lucky to get the best education possible. At sixteen he entered Christs College Cambridge, earned the name The Lady of Christs' by his appearance and ways, took his M.A. n d retired to Horton in Buckinghamshire, to prepare himself worthy of the mission of a. poet. This calm and peaceful retirement gave birth to L Allegro", "Comus" "II Penseroso' and "Lycidas". Soon after his mother's death in 1637 he set out on a foreign tour, was well applauded for his scholarship in different cities but returned to his motherland as she was in troubled days.

In the second act he breathes the foul and heated atmosphere of party passion and religious hatred generating the lurid fires with glare in his prose Pamphlets. The civil war broke out in 1642. Milton tried to invigorate his "compatriots in their struggle for Liberty 'with his prose Pamphlets. His own wife. Mary Powel, the daughter of a royalist family found his puritan household unbearable, but his tracts on Divorce, brought her back to him. His best -known prose work ' Areopagitica' pleaded for the liberty of the press. In 1649, he was appointed Latin Sec-retary and wrote a number of controversial pamphlets. By 1653 he was completely blind and his wife passed away. He married Katherine Woodcock in 1665 but she too died soon. With the Restoration in 1660 Milton lost his position and was under the threat of execution.

The three great poems *Paradise Lost* (1667, *Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes* are the utterances of the final period of solitary and Promethean grandeur, when blind, destitute, friendless, he testified to righteousness, temperance and judgement to come, alone before a fallen world. He had a peaceful death on 8th Nov. 1674. The 'Organ Voice of England' was silenced for ever.

(II) Introduction to the epic

Epic poetry begins with Homer, According by when Aristotle in his Poetries investigates the rule of heroic poetry, it is to the Iliad and Odyssey that he turns.

The fable or theme of an epic must have dignity. It must represent great issues. It must be single and entire. Homer is, content with but one incident in the Trojan war-the wrath of Achilles. Further, Aristotle praises Homer for the diction and the sentiment in which also he has attained perfection.

For purposes of historic study, the epic may be subdivided into prirnitive epic and later epic-epic of growth the epics of art, or primary epic and secondary epic, or traditional and literary epic. An epic of growth may be regarded to a certain extant as the final product of a long series of accretions and synthesis; ie., scattered ballads gradually clustering together about a common character and these at length being re-duced to approximate unity by the intervention of conscious art. The Anglo-Saxon Beowulf would be an example. To the same class we may also assign the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey,* though we must do this with some diffidence, as the majority of critics see the controlling power of a supreme artistic genius in the works as they stand. The epic of art is the product of individual genius working in an age of scholarship and literary cultured on lines already laid down. Virgil's *'AeneicL* would be an example. *Paradise Lost* in English is one of the supreme masterpieces of epic literature.

To the same class belongs Spenser's *Fairy Queen* and Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* The literary epic naturally resembles the primitive epic on which it is ultimately based, in various fundamental characteristics its subject matter is of the old heroic and mythical kind; it makes free use of the supernatural; it follows the same structural plan and reproduces many traditional details of composition; while greatly, as it necessarily differs in style it often adopts the formulas, fixed epithets and stereotyped phrases and location which are among the marked features of the early type. But examination discloses, beneath all superficial likeness, a radical dissimilarity. The heroic and legendary material is no longer living material, it is invented by the poet and is handled with laborious case in accordance with abstract rules and principles which have become part of an accepted literary tradition. Where, therefore, the epic of growth is fresh, spontaneous, and racy, the epic of art is learned antiquarian, bookish and imitative. Its specifically 'literary' qualities-its skilful reproduction and adoption of epic matter and methods, its erudition, its echoes, reminiscences and borrowings are indeed among its most interesting characteristics.

A minor form of the epic of art may just be mentioned-the mock epic, in which the machinery and conventions of the regular epic are employed in connection with trivial themes and thus turned to the purpose of parody or burlesque.

Eg:- "The battle of the Frogs and Mice"

"The Rape of the Lock"

(Refer C.M.Bowra, to learn more about the epic)

MILTON'S PARADISE LOST

Paradise Lost is divided into twelve books.

Book 1: The scene is Hell; time-nine days after the expulsion of Satan and his followers from heaven. They lie on the burning lake. Satan first recovers, rouses Beelzebub, discusses with him their position, and they move to a dry land- Their numbers and names described they range themselves in battle array before Satan. He induces in them the hope of winning the newly created world and its inhabitants. A council chamber Pandemonium is built and they discuss future plans. Book II: The debate in Pandemonium Moloch, Belial and Mammon speak. Beelebub advocates the ruin or the winning of the world to their side as revenge to the Almighty. The plan is approved. Satan volunteers to go to tempt Adam and Eve. The council breaks up and Satan starts to the world.

Book III: The Almighty perceives Satan, points him out to the son and speaks of Satan's eventual success and the condition of redemption The son volunteers. Satan reaches the Universe, searches for a way in gets in, reaches sun, disguised as an angel, gets directed to the Earth by Uriel, alights on mount Niphates.

Book IV: Passion distorts the face of Satan, moves to Eden, sees Adam and Eve, and hears about the tree of knowledge. At night fall he tries to tempt Eve in a dream, is discovered by Gabriel, who was warned by Uriel. Satan flies.

Book V: Raphael comes to warn Adam and Eve at the bidding of the Almighty. Tells Adam who his enemy is and why. Describes the rebellion in heaven.

Book VI: Raphaeal continues narration. Three days war in heaven is de-scribed, at the end of which Satan and his troops are cast into hell. Raphael warns Adam again.

Book VII: Raphael describes the creation of the world. Book VIII: Adam enquires concerning the stars and heavenly bodies. Adam narrates his experiences in Eden, his first seeing Eve etc. Raphael goes once more warning Adam.

Book IX: Adam and Eve go for work. Eve proposes to divide the work, Adam dissuades, she persists, he-yields. Satan finds her alone, tempts her, she eats the fruit of the forbidden tree and induces Adam to do so. Their sense of the sin and shame is described.

Book X: The Son of God descends to Eden, doom falls on Adam, Eve and the Serpent. Satan returns to Pandemonium and announces the result. All turned to reptiles. Sin and Death now ascend from Hell to Eden to claim the world as their, but the Almighty foretells their ultimate overthrow by the, Son and commands, the angels, to make the earth less fair. The repentance of Adam and Eve is described.

Book XI: The Son interceding, the Father sends Michael to Eden to reveal the future to Adam. After announcing to Adam his approaching banishment from Eden, Michael takes him to a high mountain and un-rolls before him a vision of the world's history till the Flood. Book XII: Michael traces the history of Israel after the. Flood till the corning of Christ ending with renewed promise of resumption. Michael leads Adam and Eve to the gates of Eden, and they go forth, sad, yet consoled with the hope of salvation.

(II) Milton Controversy: - Milton Criticism.

The expression itself is a thing of the past, as no such controversy exists about Milton today. It refers to an attack made in the 20 the century against Milton.

Of course, critics and creative writers had long felt that. Milton lacked some quality but they couldn't 'name' it. Neither was there any attack' levelled against him. Addison was all praise for Milton but felt that "our language sank under him and was unequal to the greatness of soul which furnished him". According to Addison the trouble was not with Milton but the language, but trouble there was Dr. Johnson felt the babilonish dialect' offensive" "the poem is one of the books which the reader admires and lays down and forgets to take up again. Its perusal is a duty rather than a pleasure". Keats felt that 'Paradise-Lost finds in itself is a corruption of our language'. Walter Bagahat felt that there was a radical fault in the structure of Milton's great poem. "Paradise Lost as a whole is radically tainted by a vicious principle, it professes to justify the ways of God to man, to account for sin and death and it tells you that the whole originated in a political event.

The majority of the earlier critics still thought Paradise Lost a classic and kept Milton always on a high pedestal. Not so the moderns. More systematic attack came from them. Among them three essays may be noted.

1. A note on the Verse of 'John Milton by Eliot
2. Milton's Verse Revaluation: F.RLeavis
3. Paradise Lost and its Critics: A.J.A. Waldock.

Eliot and Pound felt Milton not useful to them. Leavis disliked his verse-it was not expressive but mechanical. It exhibits a feeling for words rather than a capacity, for feeling through words. After all, if a poem is made of words and the poets use of words is demonstratebly and disastrously wrong, what is left of the poem? Eliot later recanted his earlier statements and Milton was restored the former glory.

(III) Milton's Grand Style.

It is difficult of define the 'Grand Style' most characteristic of the epic. Even Arnold who held that at the highest level of achievement in literature is the Grand Style, seems to have restricted it to poetry. Its outstanding qualities are sublimity of both thought and expression and compression. Longinus, the first romantic critic, defined the sublime: Milton obtains this effect of sublimity in the opening lines of the first book itself, by rising above narrow fanaticism, by appealing to Urania and the Holy Spirit.

If we take the Grand Style as having reference to the character of the vocabulary, and to the nature of the plot involving super human and majestic figures, Milton is in the highest ranks among the masters of the grand style. There is an intimate connection between great theme, elevated diction and the expression of general ideas about life. As Middelton Muny puts it: "the grand style is the deliberate invention of Milton, first for his celestial,

argument and secondly because he was drawn..towards the notion of a peculiar, poetic vocabulary".

Milton wrote for 'fit audience, though few' and expects to be read with a concentrated attention. His allusions convey much in few words. He continuously uses words and phrases which recall to the learned reader passages in Homer, Virgil, Spenser, Dante etc. These should bring to the mind of the reader a whole series of associated ideas. "Hope never comes to all" takes us to Hector's widow and the gate of Dante's inferno.

The use of Latin and Greek constructions-inflections-make Milton's verse more erudite and antiquarian. The [illegible] of *"Paradise Lost"* is composed of many elements which on die whole result [illegible] varied medium. Occasionally he uses foreign-derived words in the sense the[illegible] in the original language. Milton is capable of brevity with epigrammatic [illegible]

[illegible] its own place and in itself,

[illegible] make [illegible] Heaven [illegible], a [illegible] of Heaven."

Milton delights in describing persons, scenes and events which suggest vastness and grandeur but the descriptions hardly give any con-crete details. The general outlines of the object are only suggested (to suggest is to create) and a total impression is created, the reader being left to fill in details with the aid of imagination. Shaftstsbury calls it the 'Miltonic Vague'. An unmistakable impression of dignity and majesty is created by large looming suggestive images. Coleridge points out how the abstract vagueness of Milton's description of Death appeals to the imagination with subtle force which concrete and clearly defined imagery would lack altogether.

Milton employs epic similes to overcome a sense of tedious-ness and to give a refreshing tone to a lengthy narration. Since the time of Homer and Vergil these have become one of the recognised conventions of the epic.

Pope distinguishes between two styles in Milton-the unusual style marked by exotic words and phrases and a totally different kind of style, the character of which is simplicity and purity. Modern criticism, after the sound and fury of the first decades of the 20th century seems to have veered round to Pope's view. J.S.Summers writes: "The style moves and changes as the poem itself does. The description of Eden and the war in Heaven and the creation of the world differ from each other in style, syntax, imagery and tone.

Milton's use of what Saintsbury calls verse paragraph saved him from the two dangers to which blank verse is exposed: becoming too formal and stiff in couplets, or diffuse and formless as the sense and rhythm may be carried on and on. Milton entered on the heritage that Marlowe and Shakespeare bequeathed and brought blank verse to its highest pitch of perfection. Surely Milton surpassed in loftiness of thought and in majesty.

THE HERO OF PARADISE LOST

1. Addison considers Messiah the hero both in the principal action and chief episodes.
2. Mr. M. Saurat declares that Milton himself is the Hero.

   Legouise: "The archangel Satan is the poet himself. Satan reveals the poet's own love of independence. Milton saw God as the king of England surrounded by submissive and docile angels. He was actually chanting a hymn to freedom and rebellion; it is in Satan he has put most of himself, his pride and his temperament.
3. Adam is man and therefore the true hero is the human race.
4. Satan is the hero.
5. Landor in "Imaginary Conversations" argues: "It is Adam who acts and suffers most and on whom the consequences have the most influence.

These are just a few expressed opinions. 'One has to concede that Satan is by far, the strongest character in Paradise Lost but certainly Adam remains the hero.

Milton gives a handsome body to Satan instead, of providing him with horns and cloven hoofs. "He, above the rest/in shape and gesture proudly eminent/stood like a tower". His appearance invites confidence; his speeches carry conviction and his decision not to submit or to yield, his lore of independence and power- "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven" - give him a place in the readers imagination from which no theological subtleties can dislodge him. This has led many to assert that Satan is the hero of Paradise Lost.

The first to be misled was Dryden, who wrote in 1697: "Milton would have a better claim to have written a genuine epic if the devil had not been his hero." Blake asserted that Milton was of the devil's party without knowing if. According to Hazlitt Satan is the most heroic subject that has ever been chosen for a poem. Oliver Elton confirms his view in the English News that the real tragedy is played out in the breast of Satan and it is true, in this sense, that he is the hero of the poem!! Goethe, Chesterfield and Prof. Mason were just a few of Dryden's distinguished successors. But Milton's intention in writing and the meaning conveyed by Paradise Lost as well as the Puritan's attitude towards God, the title and the avowed theme of the poem should silence the satanists.

Milton's intention was to 'justify the ways of God to man'.

Not to condemn it. Even in him blindness to felt.

".....\..... Who best

Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best

They also serve who only stand and wait".

Originally everything was meant to be subordinate to the human drama-the struggle that took place in the hearts of Adam and Eve.

"The thorough going satanists will have to sacrifice both Milton's con-scious intention and structural unity to their disbelief

(E.M.W. Tillyard). The opening lines of Books I make it explicit. He sings "of man's first disobedience, and the fruit/of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste/Brought death into the world and all our woe". Obedience, to the will of God makes man happy, disobedience makes them miserable. If Satan and his affairs have to come in as creating the temptation, they are incidental, not the central theme. From the very beginning of his life, Milton cherished the ambition of serving his creator by means of his talent. The dove-like' spirit he invokes in Book I, must be the Holy spirit for the devil was anathema to him and never could he entertain the idea of Satan as a hero.

It is natural and some characters like Shylock or even episodes come out more prominently than the author intends them to do. Throughout his life, Milton had been a rebel-a rebel against college dis-cipline, a rebel against church, a rebel against matrimonial bond and a rebel against his king. When he came to present the arch-rebel he could not, but, give some of him own qualities; tremendous courage, sturdy j make up, a definite will and a consciousness of unappreciated merit. Milton was carried away by the creature of his imagination and lavished all his powers and skill, in spite of himself. The greater part of his sympathy in the splendid figure of Satan is an instance of the artist getting the better of the man and S.B.Charlton points out in his Shakespearean Comedy.

It is a grand picture of Satan that we get Book I, II and IV. He begins splendidly in book I, and talks magnificently in Book II. Floun-dering in the fire, he shows courage never to yield. Proudly he bids farewell to the happy fields where joy forever dwells and hails the horrors of hell. His mind is not to be changed by place or time: "The mind is its own place and in itself/Can make heaven of hell, a hell of heaven." He shows indomitable courage

when he volunteers to go to tempt Adam and Eve. As David Daiches said: " Satan is a great figure, and he is meant to be'. Satan is made an impressive antagonist so that God's glory would be enhanced in contending against him.' The *Raid* and *Aeneid* would not have been interesting if Hector and Turnus were mere weaklings.

Soon after Satan has to reduce himself into a little angel, to assume the form of animals, to became a tsad and end as a serpent hissed off the stage in sheer contempt. True he Mad strutted his hour upon the stage, but was ultimately stripped of every sign of grandeur.

In Book IX Milton, reaffirms his theme. He writes about the better fortitude/of patience and heroic martyrdom'. These words have more relevance to Adam than to Satan. The first reference to Satan, the infernal serpent-projects Milton's moral situation with an almost brutal clarity. "Paradise Lost" the title has greatest application to Adam and Eve. Milton sings not Satan's loss-Milton'begins after his loss. To think of Satan as a here, is to be a victim of the romantic preference for the social villains.

BOOK IX

Lines-1 to 47: Is an introduction to the book. Milton feels that the theme of the fall of Man is greater and more tragic than that of Iliad, or the Aeneid.

No moreunblamed: refers to the earlier four books of paradise Lose.

Angel - guest - Raphael.

Man- Adam.

1.11. That-disobedience

1.13. Sad task-to describe the fall of Man.

argument-theme-1.15 Achilles: the hero of Had.

His foe-Hector, son of Priam, King of Troy.

1.17. Turnus-Antagonist in Aeneid.

Lavinia-daughter of Lavinius betrothed to Turnus but later disespoused.

1.18. Neputune's ire-In Odyssey the hero Ulysses is subjected to the anger of the sea-Goddess or Juno's - Juno is the queen of Gods, and was responsible for all the sufferings of Aeneas.

1.19 Cytherea's son: Cythieria or Venus is the mother of Aeneas.

1.20 answerable-corresponding

1.21 Celestial patroness: Urania in Book 1 1.26 long choosing and beginning late Milton had the idea of writing the epic as early as 1640. Lines 30 to

40 ref. to romantic epic of Ariesto, Taso and Spenser. 1.44 That name-the name of epic Poetry.

Lines. 48 to 98: Under cover of darkness Satan circles the Universe (the Geocentric concept of the Universe) and finds a way in. He thinks it fit to hide himself within some beast and seeing the serpent the most cunning of all creatures, decides to enter into him. Lines 99 to 178: here we have a soliloquy of Satan, bringing out his envious thoughts. He finds to his surprise that the earth is but a 'terrestrial heaven' more heavenly than heaven itself-an improvement on heaven. The sight of earthly pleasures torments Satan and he decides to destroy it by destroying man for whom this is created. What God created in six days, Satan can destroy within a single day. Hence his glory.

Lines 178-191: Satan finds a sleeping serpent and enters into him. Lines 192 - 204:the next morning, as usual, Adam and Eve offer their prayers to God, and they plan to go on

with their daily gardening. Lines 205-225: Eve feels that as their work demands more time and since there are various types of works, it is better that they divide their work and work separate. For, if they w6rk together they are likely to look at each other and smile and talk about this and that, and thus spend the time.

Lines 226-269: Adam appreciates her idea, but assures her that God dosen't demand much work. Moreover, they have been warned of a sly enemy who might tempt them at any opportune moment. If they are together there will be more strength in them to overcome temptations. Lines 270-289: Eve is not all that happy that Adam should have a poor opinion of her fidelity to God and him. She was informed of the enemy of Adam and had over heard Raphael warning him,and is sure of pre-serving herself from any attack.

Lines 290-317: though Eve is free from sin and blame, Adam does not want her to face the trial alone. It is better to avert the attempt itself. Moreover Satan must be very powerful, for he could seduce angels, So, as they are almost sure they have to face it Adam feels it is better to face it together.

Lines 318-341: Eve doesn't understand why one should avoid temptation for by overcoming it, one strengthens oneself. Moreover Satan will no more underestimate their abilities.

Lines 342-384: Adam doesn't believe in Pre-destination. Man has the freedom to accept or reject God. The danger lies within man, but it also within his power. So he lets Eve go warning her that their enemy may ring in a seemingly good object, procured for an evil purpose. Lines 385-548: Eve walks away from Adam for work, Satan finds her alone and is enraptured for some time with her beauty. He moves towards her and praises her beauty.

Lines 549-779: Eve, already moved by Satan's flattery wonders how a serpent could speak. Satan attributes this- gift to a fruit-type of fair apples'. Naturally Eve would like to see the fruit. Satan leads her to the tree of knowledge : Seeing the forbidden tree, Eve remembers God prohibition. Satan speaks eloquently to Eve about the advantages of tast-ing the fruit. He proved all that he said with his own example, fester is taken in by his words, and after some perplexed musings, decides to eat the fruit.

Lines 780-1016: Seeing Eve tasting death the Serpent slinks away. Eve is not very sure of the result of her action. Slowly fear creep into' her, she decides to make Adam share her fate, whatever it might be. She tempts Adam to eat the fruit. Adam is shocked, but decides to die with her, for he cannot live without her. Eve is quite happy at Adam's all abandoning love for her. Foolishly over come with female charm he eats.

Lines 1017-1189: Result of eating the fruit. Lust grows in them and they move to a bower for lustful dalliance, but once wearied with their amorous play, disillusionment overcomes both. A sense of shame over-comes them they become conscious of nakedness and suffer form sorrow and anger. Adam finds fault with, Eve and Eve with Adam. Their accusations continue.

(I) THE FALL OF ADAM AND EVE

The theme of Book IX is the temptation and the fall of Man. The fall of Adam and the fall of Eve are shown in different circumstances. Milton seems to put more of blame of Adam, for Milton always thought Man superior to woman:

"He scrupled not to eat, against his better knowledge, not deceived. But fondly overcome with female care. In other words Adam transgresses against his better knowledge.

Once again, as many others have noted many a time, we come across a perfect example of the clash we see in Paradise Lost, betweenMilton's theory and his performance. It is true, Adam is shocked seeingthe fallen Eve. Horror and chill ran through his veins and all his

joints relaxed. But this is oddly out of harmony with what follows Adams decision, and the following speech. It is not mere comradeship and Gregariousness suggested by Tillyard, that makes Adam fall; it is not being fondly overcome with female charm that he decides to fall with her. Adam falls through love not sensuality or luxuriousness, it is the love conveyed to him by Raphael-"the scale by which/ deliberately and clear heartily joining Eve in transgression, not to be parted in Punishment? Adam feels the natural bond, he is pulled to his own part in Eve, "for what thou art is mine: Out state cannot be severed We are one." It is no foolish attraction. Even if he is offered another Eve, he will never be happy; he cannot live without her; they have shared a lot. The memory shall always plague him. So he decides never to be parted bliss or woe, decides to abandon God, abandon heaven and knowledge of God. Milton denounces this act; but is was Milton who imagined his passion so intensely as to make us almost wish it could be approved. Milton makes the reader accept something which is entirely different from what has been presented. We are so convinced, by Adam's words and we can't simply believe Milton when he blames Adam overcome with feminine charm though" we have to concede that he allowed himself to be carriedaway by his love for Eve.

If Adam's fall is just one event, Eve's fall is the culmination of train of events in the sequence. Eve was created -weaker. She was made overly credulous. Moreover she was caught unawares. Mr. Green says her error is intellectual not moral. There are several phases in Eve's fall it is because of her previous errors that she falls in to the final error. The starting point is the dream in Book V where Satan 'squat like a toad'. Unto the ear of Eve.' The angel in the dream pays compliments and says "taste this and hence forth among the Gods. Thyself a Goddess". Secondly the day of temptation itself was a bad day for her-her unlucky day when things had gone wrong from the start. She decides to have her own way, she feels hurt by Adam's mistrust, her obstinacy to be alone, to be independent, to be individualistic asserted itself. She wanted to be Eve, not his shadow. Had Adam been firm, Eve would not have gone. The third phase is the temptation itself. The tempter prepares the ground with flattery by his masterly mixing up of issues; his glossing words bewilder Eve, her curiosity is aroused, the game in won, she comes to the tree, seeing the tree Eve's face falls, but then comes the great temptation ' speech by Satan, like a famed orator of Athens of Rome. His antithetical arguments and equivocal language baffle her, she pauses and thinks-only perplexed musings-and bases her reasoning on a false premise that the serpent is saying the truth. Her deceived mind rnisinforrns her will. She eats.

Mr. Charles Williams found the key of the fall of Eve in injured merit, due to which Satan fell. Satan stirs In her the same, a sense of proper dignity, of self-admiration, a spirit of inquiry, a feeling of rights withheld, injured merit. It is ultimately a self-loving spirit that brings about the doom.

According to Mr. C.S.Lewis the fall is simply disobedience doing what has been told not to be done. This results from pride being too big for one's boots. Dr. Tilliyard would attribute the fall to 'triviality of mind'. In Eves mind there a radical opposition between passion and reason.

Whatever may be said for or against Eve, one thing is certain that the mother of Man doesn't get the sympathy of Milton. Adam is altogether selfless and sacrificing, but she played the serpent to Adam, not out of a love similar to that of Adam for her, but jealousy. She could not let him be in bliss though she my have to die. She could not think of Adam living with another Eve. Adam does not care to have a happiness that will be denied to his wife but Eve does not want Adam to enjoy happiness which will be denied to her.

MILTON'S SONNETS

A sonnet may generally be described as a poem of fourteen lines expressing an intensely passionate mood of the writer, in a highly emotive language The sonnets were first written by Gia Cpmo de Lentino. But the form was popularised by the Italian poet Petracht-who dealt with love themes in sonnets. The Italian form is now generally known as the Petrarchan

sonnet. There are certain structural peculiarities to this form. The poem is divided into two sections. The first eight lines are called the "Octave" and the remaining six lines are called the sestet. The sestet is usually cut into two tercets. The characteristic rhyme scheme being : ab ab, ab ab, cde, cde. This structure is further reinforced by the thematic peculiarities. In the octave the poet presents a problem, makes certain queries or asks some questions. In the sestet he gives the solution to the problem or answers the queries and the questions: the great English poets who have cultivated the Petrachan form are Wyatt and Surrey, Spenser, Milton and Herbert..

Another variety of the sonnet is the Shakespearean sonnet or the English sonnet. It has certain structural variations. Instead of the octave, sestet pattern, the English sonnet employs three quatrains and a couplet, rhyming ab ab cd cd, ef ef, g g.

Sir. Philip Sidney composed sonnets using a peculiar rhyme scheme : ab ba, be cd, cd dc d d. One might say that this is a combina-tion of the Petrarchan and the Shakespearean forms. The last six lines may be taken as two tercets (cdd, cdd) characteristic of Petrarchan form or as a quatrain and a couplet (cd dc, dd) typical of the English form.

Another important variety of English Sonnet was introduced by Edmund Spenser. Dissatisfied with the tendency of discreteness in Surrey's English Sonnets, he introduced - linked rhymes. The Spenserian Sonnet uses the rhyme scheme ab ab, bc bc, cd cd, ee. The linked rhyme offers the pattern for more closely developed argument. 'It was been a practice with many English poets to write sonnet sequences -a number of sonnets addressed to the same person or on the same theme.

Milton's sonnets were written half a century after the great Elizabethan sequences and all the best known poets of his age avoided the form. Milton, after his efforts of love-sonnets, broke away from the Elizabethan tradition, eschewed the theme of love and adopted the Ital-ian form, through in nearly all his sonnets he avoids a break between octave and sestet. Of the ten sonnets in the 1645 volume only "How soon hath time the subtle thief of Youth is a masterpiece though the Nightingale sonnet and. 'when the assault was intended to the city are both fine of their kind.

During the seventeen years of his political activity, Milton cul-tivated the sonnet, maybe because he could not devote himself to long flights due to political involvements. The later sonnets are of various kinds satirical (those on the divorce controversy) complimentary (those addressed to Laws), a mixture of compliment and polities (on the new forces of conscience, on the late Massacre in Piedmont) and personal (the memorial sonnets on his wife and Mrs. Thomson, and the two sonnets on his blindness), the most moving sonnets are on his blindness.

The sonnets have very little imagery: and what there is comparatively conventional. Milton obtains his impressive effect by piling clause on clause, by accommodating what he has to say to the sonnet form, with no padding and no sense of strain, by the superb organisation of his matter, and by a monumental., and sometimes epigrammatic pre-cision of statement

Shakespeare's sonnets are, more richly poetical, more sensuously alive, the best of Wordsworth's are almost as fine as Milton's and some by Hopkins exhibit an even greater concentration and some spiritual qualities we may value above Milton's but in any collection of the greatest English sonnets Milton will have his place.

On his blindness

In both 'How soon hath time and 'When I consider' Milton involves in personal meditations. He is concerned with his use of the special talents God had given him. This sonnet is explicitly biblical in language.

Three biblical passages are woven into the octet of this sonnet. (1) the question of Christ in St. John IX , whether the blind man had sinned for his blindness. (2) the Parable of the labourers in the vineyard. (3) The parable of the talents.

Milton's blindness was held by his political opponents to be a sign of God's disfavour. According to Christ, blindness was no punishment from God, but a means of making Gods work manifest to men. His eye sight was restored by Christ. As his sight began to fail him Christ's words gave him strength: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in, the world, I am the light, of the world"

It is usually assumed that the sonnet was written when Milton became completely blind in 1652. This represents the contemplation, and resolution, of the problem of Milton's personal destiny as a Christian and as a writer. He faces and accepts, the facts at their worst, and finds that for Christian, hope remains. The last three lines echo P.4.11 649 . where the angels stand ready at command and are his Eyes/that run through all the Heavens, or down to the Earth/Bear his swift errands over moist and dry/or sea and Land". The comparison implicit is between the angels who serve God in Heaven and the devout men who humbly and submissively accept God's decrees, and wait with quiet endurance for the fulfilment of his purpose.

The structure of the sonnet is that of a dialogue. When I

consider. I ask; patience replies; It is a dialogue between the two

selves of Milton one rather foolish and the other envisioned. The turbu-lence of emotion underlying the complaint is expressed through the tangled syntax and metrical irregularities of the octet whereas the final line, They also serve who only stand and wait is metrically supple and brings us beautifully to a point of rest, the rest of one standing in readi-ness to carry out the will of God.

On his Deceased-Wife:

There has been a lot of discussion as to which wife Milton refers in this sonnet, Katherine Woodcock the second wife or Mary Powel his first. Too much of biographical interest can be harmful to a just appreciation of the work, though we have to find an answer to who his 'late espoused saint' is. Whether it was the saint (that is, saintly person) to whom he was recently married or his former wife who is now a saint in heaven we shall not discuss.

In "when I consider" Milton moves from a troubled to a deeply serene state as in the religious poetry of Herbert; but here in me thought I saw..." the movement is from restrained emotion to the deep pathos of Milton's walking from his Dream: "I walked, she fled, an day brought back my night."

With the help of the strong pauses on line ending a sense control is effected. The emotion is expressed by the 'disturbed' syntax of the second quatrain. The repetition-Mine as whom', 'such as yet'-suggests a troubled mind. The delayed verb came vested all in white and - the vagueness of reference in 'Mine' and such suggests the 'vagueness of a man awoken from sleep, 'struggling to recapture the clarity of a dream. In the latter part of the poem the play with 'light, sight and white prepares for the powerful pathos of the conclusion, They stand in paradoxical contrast to his blindness. Day light is his night the darkest time; it is only at night he gets some light at least wife may visit him in a dream vested all in white'.

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JOHN DRYDEN
MAC FLECKNOE

Introduction to the Neo-Classical Period

The Neo-classical period spans from 1660, the year of the Res-toration to 1798 the year of the publication of the Lyrical Ballads which, we say, inaugurated the romantic revival in English poetry. This is usually subdivided into

the Restoration age : 1660 to 1680 (Roughly)

The Augustan age and

The age of sensibility or the age of Dr. Johnson.

In fact one cannot go by any such compartmentalisation. It is called neo-classical, for the writers of his period looked back with admi-ration on the classical writers. It is called Augustan period for it was time of prolific literary activity, like the age of great Augustus of Rome. This is another justification for the label because the 18th century writers modelled their works largely on the literary masters who flourished during the time of emperor Augustus and after. The growing interest in the classical masters expressed itself in the form of the translations of the classics. It was not only an effort to produce an exact rendering of the original but also it meant an attempt to look at contemporary London life in the manner in which Horace and Juvenile had looked at their Rome. They understood the underlying sameness of human nature, life and society in spite of the difference in place and time.

Augustans do subscribe to the classical concept that poetry is a mimesis of nature. Aristotle felt that a creative writer abstracts ideas from nature, then makes it more beautiful with the concrete; thus aes-thetic reality is formed. In the "Essay of Dramatic Poesy" Dryden ex-presses that imitation means a recreation of reality. The poet imitates nature, but it is nature wrought up to a higher pitch a heightened and beautified reality. To the Augustans, nature meant a very systematically, well ordained pattern.

The Augustans had very little originality. They believed that it was not the business of the poet to invent or transform material, rather poetry was a means of reproducing the wisdom of the ancients. The whole stock of poetical wisdom had been demonstrated by the great masters of the past and their successors should be content with repro-ducing their ideas giving them a fresh modern application In short the business of the poet was to put the old wine into new bottles. Naturally they denounced emotions and imaginativeness, which the romantics, valued pre-eminently. They looked askance on creative imagination, unlike the romantics to whom poetry was essentially an outpouring of emotions "felt in the blood and felt along the heart." This is not to say that Augustan poetry is entirely desiccated. There are moments when the consciousness of the reader is touched by the movement of emotions.But there is a radical difference. These emotions are aroused not to de-light the reader but enlighten him to the idea. The primary abstraction. Thus the emotion aroused in the readers is subsidiary an under current which easily gets dissolved in the primary abstraction. The Augustans imitate ideas, not aesthetic reality. Naturally they concentrated on witty, elegant and forcible expression of ideas. One might justly describe Au-gustan poetry as Appolionian or cerebral or intellectual, poetry that gives intellectual satisfaction on account of the aptness, elegance and propriety with which the ideas are conveyed. "Twice two is four" appeals to the head. So also in Augustan poetry.

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Naturally the Augustans preferred a language best suited for them. They felt that a distinctive language decorated in all the ways possible would heighten the effect; that it would give greater charm. But in course of time poetry became, a mere craft and ceased to be an art, Poetic genius no more rested on creation but mere dexterity of well, chiselled words and phrases, mere art of displaying felicitous expressions arranged neatly in couplets.

The Augustans looked at poetry as a means of moral edification. Art was an effective weapon of social improvement, an effective medium of uplifting morality. Dominant moral aims are characteristic of Augustan poetry. It is no flaring up of a passion, not any spontaneous overflow, not the hum of a bird but a product of long deliberation and ethical edification or moral amelioration in a deep concern of the poet. Naturally there is very little of universality; his own society in his own situations make him topical, we get the London of pope and Dryden as we got the Rome of Horace and Juvenile.

Thus poetry was brought down from its high pedestal on which Milton had set it, writing for fit audience though few. Thus indirectly, there came a deflation of the dignity of a poet. He was no longer a super human person endowed with mystical or prophetic wisdom, but an ordinary man speaking in a plain language, and exhorting like a preacher. He is in the service of the society ridiculing vice and promoting virtue. Naturally their attention was focussed on satire.

Some feel a sort of compulsion, when they see a picture hanging crooked, to walk upto it and straighten it. So do the satirists. They draw attention to any departure from the right path, with a spontaneous or self-induced overflow of powerful indignation. In the preface to *The Battle of the Books*, Swift admits that 'Satyr is a sort of glass wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but-their own...' So a satire in general terms will not have the desired effect. Dryden and Pope therefore directed their satires to particular individuals, making everyone scared of them.

The great influences of the time united to make the Restoration an age of satire. With the reestablishment of monarchy there breaks out an insurrection of instincts that have long been held back-re volt against austerity, reaction against hypocrisy, spirit of mockery or of satire. The open denunciation of false authorities became not only a duty but a pleasure and if the audacity of thought and the frankness of utterance often deviated into cynicism, this was only a reaction so natural. Restoration satirists, are often realistic and crude, just as they are biting to a degree. Political strife also accounts for the violence of tone-civil war, protectorate, Whigs and Tories.

(i) Dryden:

Dryden has been, recognized as the greatest poet of the Restoration. He was a versatile genius who practiced different literary genres poetry, drama and criticism. Born in a family of Puritan Reservation, he was educated at Westminster, graduated in 1654 from Trinity College. His first poem was an elegy on his school friend Lord Hastings. With the Restoration Dryden accosted Charles, with a panegyric Austria Relix, He married Lady Elizabeth Howard, a woman of high connections. Dryden turned his attentions to drama. He wasn't quite a success; his highest achievement in this genre being his adaptation of Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra entitled All for Love.

In 1665, the theatres were closed down and Dryden retired to Charlton Park. Here he wrote 'The Essay of Dramatic Poetry', a defence of the English stage, against the censure of those who unjustly prefer the French this remains the best example of comparative criticism where Dryden prefers the moderns to the ancients and the English to the French. Returning from the countryside, Dryden once again focussed on play writing, but he felt that his genius was ill equipped to bring forth the type of comedies which marked the Restoration age. Today we call them comedy of manners. Restoration comedy was full of characterizations of licentiousness and replete with obscene remarks. It dealt with the relations and intrigues of gentlemen and ladies living in polished and sophisticated society.

From 1661 to 64 the Cabal Minister was in power. Some of them secretly instructed Charles II, to sign a secret treaty at Dover with the French king on attacking Holland, and to enlist the support of the French king who was a catholic. Naturally the protestant members of the ministry opposed this. They feared that Catholicism would be reintroduced. Charles II had no children, in his wife, Catherine of Portugal. Next in succession was his brother, James, Duke of York, a catholic. These who opposed the duke joined under the Earl of Shaftsbury and moved and roused the commons. In 1678 Titus Gates fabricated the popish plot, implicating that the Catholics were planning to kill the king and to give the country to the Jesuits. The protestant Whigs under the leadership of Shaftsbury and the Duke of Buckingham, moved the Exclusion Bill in order to exclude Prince James from succession and to press the claims on Charles' illegitimate son, the Duke of Monmouth. The bill was passed in the House of Commons, but was rejected by the House of Lords. It seemed that the country was on the verge of a civil war. Charles II dissolved the parliament and Shaftsbury was arrested on a charge of high treason, and was imprisoned in the Tower. A week before his trial Dryden came up with Absalom and Achitopel his greatest achievement. Dryden took the Biblical parallel of Absolom against his father, King David, with Buckingham as Zimri, for in the Rehearsal, Buckingham had held. Dryden in ridicule under the name John Bayes. There is ironic humour in the parallels themselves and the development of the story in biblical terms gave Dryden ample scope for insinuations and suggestions.

The grand jury, of Middlesex acquitted Shaftsbury and. to celebrate his victory the Whigs struck a medal on him. This gave Dryden the opportunity for his next satire "The Medal" (1682) This was answered by the medal of John Bayes written by Thomas Shadwell, who later on superseded Dryden s poet Laureate. He made a few indecent, comments on Dryden recalling his puritan origin, his misfortunes at Cambridge and accusing him of gross infamous crimes and impotency. Dryden now retaliated with, his Mac Flecknoe (1682).

(ii) "Mac. Flecknoe"

Richard Flecknoe was an Irish priest who considered himself a great poet. Unfortunately no one else thought of him as a poet. Flecknoe was dead before 1682, but his name remained a symbol of bad poets. The theme of Dryden's poem is the choice of Shadwell by Flecknoe as his heir and successor to the Kingdom of nonsense and dullness in prose .md verse. Of all his children, Fiecknoe finds Shadvel his only worthy successor, for, he has outflecknoed Flecknoe; he never deviated into sense.

The terrible castigations to which Shadewell is subjected owe their origin to a disagreement in which there is an admixture of political motives, but of which, the dominant reasons are of an individual order. Dryden attacks not only the vice but also the vicious. This has all the characteristics of a comic, mock-heroic fantasy-the pompous crowning, by Flecknoe, a prince among poetasters, of an heir worthy of himself which will supply Pope with more than one drafts of his "Dunciad". The blending, a special gift with Dryden, of a crushing force of mockery with the sovereign good humour of a merry giant strong enough to conquer without-strain and bitterness, remains the particular feature of this poem.

The particular interest of Mac-Flecknoe is that it is a noteworthy example of mock-heroic poetry. The mock heroic is not a mockery of the epic or heroic poetry, but the application of the dignified poetic form, which is purposely mismatched to a lowly subject. Epic conventions having echoes from lofty situations are employed for satirical purpose. A trifling subject is inflated with epic devices with a view to heightening the sense of absurdity. Dryden makes use of the simple crudities of innuendo and obscure suggestiveness while recalling echoes from Virgil's. Aeneid. Cowley's Davide's and Milton's Paradise Lost. The abdication of an Aeneas in favour of his son Ascanius is brought as a parallel to that of Flecknoe in favour of Shadewell. A burlesque effect is produced as a result of the contrast between the sublime and the ridiculous. Again in the analogy, what St. John Baptist was to Christ, Flecknoe was Shadwell (to prepare the way) Dryden finds an effective means of

inflating the central characters and exposing their absurdity and doltishness. Dullness is so elevated as though it were a mark of excellence. The ironical tone is maintained throughout. Solemnly, epic situations and lofty biblical contexts are connected to the silly and frivolous pranks of dunces like Flecknoe and Mac Flecknoe.

According to A.W.Ward, Mac Flecknoe has double claim to immortality. It is full of Horation good humour and genial satire. The boisterous fun and downright-raillery, the sustained comic tone and the genial spirit, gave the composition from degenerating into a lampoon. This attempt to extinguish a single dunce suggested to Pope the idea of annihilating a whole race.

In the preface to Absolom and Achitophel Dryden wrote: the true end of satjre is the amendment of vices by correction, and he who writes honestly is no more on enemy to the offender than the physician to the patient; when he prescribes harsh remedies to an inveterate ailment. One has to concede that there are allusions, even obscene sometimes, to Shadwell's person. But the good-humoured comic tone and the dexterity with which Dryden spins the plot reveal his better intentions. He was-but trying to prevent the literary imposters, Flecknoes, reputed for their word wasting talents have been have been over the realms of dullness for long, A lash like Dryden's was necessary.

(I) The Text

Flecknoe feels it is time for his departure. He has for long ruled over the realms of dullness his reign like Augustus at an early age.

1.1-2: Opens with a pompous platitude on the transience of life how Fate comes as the last-leveller.

1.3-4: The only point of comparison between Augustus and Flecknoe is that both began to rule young. This is obviously a mock-heroic hit because the dullness of Flecknoe is contrasted with the greatness of Augustus.

1.5-6: Flecknoe was undoubtedly, the king of dullness in all realms of prose and verse, It was undisputed

1-7-14: Flecknoe has produced a large number of dunces. Now tired of the sexual strain of begetting he seriously thinks of a successor.

1.15-20: Flecknoe pitches upon Thomas Shadwell because he has been consistently dull from his literary infancy.

1-15: Biblical reference : God created man in his own image: Here it is blasphemous-another mock-heroic hit.

1-18: Confirmed in stupidity: stands in humorous contrast to Christian confirmation

1:21-24: The-other dunces occasionally produce something sen-sible but Shadwell has been confirmed in stupidity. In the dark igno-rance of other writers now and then a gleam of sense penetrates, but Shadwell's thickset stupidity permits no flash of wisdom.

1:24-28: On the obesity or corpulence of Thomass Shadwell with good honoured structure and genial sarcasm Dryden Jibes at Shadwell's stupidity. The very sight-of the man is eye-filling. Dryden compares Shadwell to the majestic looking Oak; for Shadwell has an imposingly large structure but he is 'wooden' (stupid), dull and insensitive. The Oaks block the rays of the sun, similarly Shadwell permits no ray of sense.

1-29-33: Both Shirley and Heywood, according to Dryden are verbose and worthless. The excelled in the art of wasting woods but Shadwell out-did them in this art. He has thrown them into shade and won for him the much coveted title "the prophet of Tautology". Flecknoe feels jubilant that even he himself, a greater dunce than Heywood and Shirely, is inferior to Shadwell, or his son-superior to himself. By a blasphemous comparison he compare

himself to St John the Baptist who came before Chirst to prepare the way of the Messiah. Flecknoe is merely the herald of the supreme exponent of dullness Shadwell.

1 -34-4 : a hit at Shadwell musical pretensions-Even a cacophony, a worthless noise, is excellent music when compared to Shadwell's most outstanding achievements.

1-42-an allusion to Shadwell's Epsom Wells. Sir. Samuel Hearty is tossed in a blanket in his play The Virtuoso'.

1-44- Arion was the great musician of Corinth. Once while he was returning from a musical contest, the sailors robbed him and threw him in to the sea. But the music that he played on his lute attracted the dolphins and they bore him safely to the land. Shadwell could produce only harsh shrieks and bull roaring.

1-45 to 52: The thick-eared people came thronging about to register their admission for the musician. The scum of London came to cheer Shadwell, just as tiny fishes throng near the fragment off food thrown.

1-53-to 56: with pretended encomium Dryden says that Slid well kept better time than St. Andre, the French dance master. His troop took part in Shadwell's opera, 'the Psyche'. Dryden implies that the per-formance of the dancers was bad, and Shadwell's conducting the choir was all.out-of time. Dryden praises Shadwell for the extra unnecessary feet in his lines. He compliments Shadwell for overloading the lines.

1-57 to 63 : The psyche was such a perfect piece of tautology that Singleton, an actor grew pale with envy. He has always acted the role of Villerius in the lute and the sword scenes of Davenant's play The Seige of Rhodes. He was now convinced that this play worthless in comparison with Shadwell's Psyche. It was futile to be an actor any longer. Turn Dryden's statements inside out to get his appraisal of Shadwell. His style is ironical and meant to disparage in the guise of praise. Flecknoe is very happy about Shadwell.

1-64-93 : Dryden describes the scene of Mace Fleckne's com-, nation.

Augusta- London

1:74: a Nursery : a theatre in Golden Home in 1664, to train children for the stage.

1:79:80: No good plays were performed here. It was ludicrous to find little boys and girls acting the role of majesty queens.

1:82: The nursery is a monument of wretched playwrights. Those who are forgotten, are kept alive by little actors.

1.83: The language of these Plays is also mediocre. Only puns and word play.

1.94-105 : The whole of London getting ready for Shadwell's coronation. Trash works of worthless authors were strewn instead of carpet.

1.108* Young Ascanius: Dryden parodies the scene in book. V. of Aeneid where Aeneas declared to his followers that in the event of his death Ascanius, his son, would succeed him.

1: 10-11 : Instead - of the radiance of learning "which forms a halo ol enlightenment there flickered around his head clouds of dark ignorance. His brows thick with the fogs of stupidity

1:1 12-117: Shadwell takes a solemn oath that he would as-siduously patronise and propagate dullness. Just as Hannibal took an oath of uncompromising hostility with Rome, Shadwell swore to remain an arch enemy of good sense. As Homilcar made Hannibal swear, here Flecknoe made his son swear. The effect is mockheroic.

1:120-125: Kings carry a ball and sceptre as the insignia of royalty. 'Here Shadwell is given a mug of ale and a copy of one of Fleeknoe's medicore plays. Love's Kingdom. One

may view sexual creativity and poetic creativity, as analogous here. Dryden alludes not only to Shadwell's drinking habits but to think of a ball as a single testicle. Flecknoe, a priest and celibate, and his illegitimate son, Shadwell can create only abortive and debased issue as the ale. In his other hand in-stead of the sceptre he has 'Love's, kingdom which might imply the fe-male genitalia. The ensuring reference to the birth of psyche strengthens this image In short Shadwell's creative attempts areas abortive: he has the sexual characteristics of woman. Obviously it is a reply in kind to Shadwell's jeer: "An old gelt mastiff has more mirth than thou"

1: 126-27: Flecknoe crowns Shadwell with a wreath of poppies an allusion to Shakdwell's opium addiction and also the soportific quality of his works.

1:1:50-131 : Another mock-heroic situation: Dryden alludes to the naming of Rome built by Remus and Romulus. A dispute broke out between them and they appealed to the Omens. Romulus saw twelve vultures, whereas Remus only six, and Romulus named the city. Here, instead of vultures, the birds of Zeus, twelve owil, birds of ill-omen ap-pear.

1:134:135: Burlesque of Jupiter shaking off his gifts of intelli-gence to others.

1:147:48 : Let success teach others to compose better works Shadwell must imitate Fleckone and create literary adorations: Both are not masculine, they experience feminine pangs; They are barren too and experience only the parody of giving birth. They have the pangs but no issue. But then what are Virtuoso & Psyche? Potent ale issues forth urine. In other words they are volumes of excreta.

1-150-160 : Sensible playwrights introduce fools into their plays to manifest the author's intellectual ingenuity. But Shadwell must create genuine force, bearing his perfect image. His characters reflect the authorte stupidity. They are the best proof of his dullness. They should differ only in names.

1-163-67 : Shadwell was accused of having plagiarised from Sedley's plays. But this practice spoils the unalloyed stupidly and dull-ness which Fleckone regards as superior to anything. Shadwell shall not steal from other writers but trust his own spontaneous stupidity.

1:168: Sir Formal-a Character in virtuoso. He always uses flowery figures of speech.

1.170: Northen dedications-Shadwell had dedicated five plays to the Duke and -Duchess of Cumberland.

1.172 : Shadwell resembled Ben Johnson in nothing but his ro-tundity.

1.175 : Flecknone declares that Shadwell is entirely his child. The irony here is one dunce recommending nonsense to another. Ben's plays are artistically good. There fore Shadwell shall not imitate him.,

1.178-83 : Jonson never rose to such nonsensical heights.

1.185-86 : The stolen passages stand out conspicuously from ;j Shadwell's trash. In other words he doesn't know how to utilise what he has stolen. Fleknoe urges Shadwell to go on. being ridiculous.

1:192: a personal jib at Shadwell's obesity.

1:198 : Shadwell must be proud of his creepy, soporific, spiritless verses. His tragedies must provoke laughter, his comedies sleep. In spite of himself, he produce the opposite of what he intends. Actually Shadwell was reasonably successful as a writer of comedies, and certainly superior to Dry den in this.

1.199: Even when Shadwell sets-out to be mordantly satirical, the aim misfires and he becomes harmless.

1:203-4: Shadwell should aim at fame in the use of wit in cheap and stupid anagrams.

1.205-6: Flecknoe advises Shadwell not to write plays but exercise his shallow wit in pseudo-witty description.

1:207-8: a hit at Herbert and the metaphysical school in general orthographic presentation.

1.212.13: Bruce and Longville prepared a trap and drove him down. Here is another mock heroic stroke. In the Bible (II Kings ch: 2, 22-17) Elisha leaves his mantle to Elisha, on his ascension to heaven Elisha got the gift to prophesy from Elisha. In a similar way Flecknoe's mantle of dullness fell upon Shadwell as. Flecknoe descended into hell The alliterative pattern of the final couplet should explain the Subterranean Wind" The proper alliteration to balance and rhyme with prophets part is obviously his father's part" Whatever Shadwell and Flecknoe give is so offensive as 'fart'. What more conclusive a statement of Flecknoe's and his son's poetic talents could be there than the final note ending not with a bank or whimper but a 'fart'?

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THOMAS GRAY - (1721-59)

1. Introduction

Gray and Collins were contemporaries and precursors of the Romantic Movement, along with Thomson and Burns. They stand at crossroads between the Augustan and the romantic traditions. Their poetry, Janus-like looks behind and ahead, partaking of Augustan qualities, while developing new interests. Of course, Goldsmith, Dr. Johnson and others indicated the drift but in Gray and Collins there is a more open admiration for nature. The poetry stands significantly outside the Augustan tradition with its stress on the subjective emotions of the poet communicated through suggestive symbols and evocative language.

The flight of the poet on the viewless wings of poesy distinguishes Gray's progress of poesy from the conventions of the preceding age. Shakespeare is mother nature's child and when laid on the green lap of nature the dauntless child stretched forth his little arms and smiled, Milton's blindness is felicitously explained as caused by his audacity to look at "the living throne, the sapphire blaze". It is true that in Gray, we come across Augustan decorum, self-conscious craftsmanship and a meticulous attention to exact phrasing and well-balanced form. In other words, Gray's poetry is the perfect flower of Augustian age and carries within it the seeds of romantic revival. He was not a quite contented Augustan, not altogether at ease in the peace of the Augustan or rather of the Georgains. Gray's early works have a taint of Augustan didacticism. But his elegy and his odes are free- from it and romantic feeling asserts itself boldly. Phelps remarks that Gray's poetry "marks the transition from classicism to Nationalism" Dr. Jonson, perceiving the influence, felt, naturally offended, and declared in his characteristic tone that the admiration for Gray was all hypocrisy. A sense of the historic past too developed in him.

According-to Lord David Cecil, "Behind the England of his own day, he discerned as in a vision the long perspective of its past." Gray's letters bear a romantic tone. This made Mitford exclaim that no man was great admirer of nature than Mr. Gray He influenced his age more than his age influenced him. He led, rather than followed.

2. The Elegy

There has been a lot of discussion about the theme of the Elegy. It expresses many truths, which are of permanent value to mankind. It is about death's -mastery over life; It has its the simple annals of the poor" It is about poets, about his own self, about poetry and about the future of poetry and about the role of poetry in society. Incidentally it may be said to exhibit the inner urges. Elegy, in its modern connotations, implies a poem of lamentation. The poet expresses his deep sense of bereavement and sorrow at the loss of a dear departed. Naturally it is a lyric expressing deep personal feeling. Often the expression of grief shades off into a philosophical discussion on serious issues like life, death and a destiny. Some of the best-known, examples of the elegy in English are Miltons Lycidas", Auden's "In memory of W.B. Yeats" Tennyson's "In Memorium" Shelley's "Adonais" and Arnold's" "Thyrsis"; Originally the elegy meant any lyric written in the elegiac measure alternating dactylic pentametre and hexarnetre lines. However in England during the 17th century and after, the term began to be applied to a poem of lament on the death of a person. The mourner recalls the days of friendship between himself and the departed. He plunges into grief, but ultimately he recovers from this mood of dejection through an optimistic assertion of the immortality of his friend.

Gray, does not mourn the death of any single person, but the poor and the humble in general. The lack of opportunities prevented their flowering. The inequality of states makes the waste of human potential inevitable. Death makes nonsense of the pomp of the wealthy. The poor scholar and poet is uncertain of his future and in a mood of dejection The element of consolation is suggested only implicitly. The poet concludes his twilight piece brooding over the last leveller.

The mood of the poem was deeply influenced by the death of his friend Rechard West in 1742. The scene is the churchyard at the village of Stokepages in Buckinghamshire. He thinks of the rude forefathers of the village lying buried in the churchyard. He gives expression to the . thoughts and feeing that pass through his mind when he saw the grave-yard, and imagines a place for himself, with them.

I : curfew is a bell, to warn the people-to put out fires and lights. It was in vogue under the Norman rule.

In-1 -4 : description of a quiet evening Cattle and ploughmen return home leaving the poet in darkness. In 3: weary way - transferred epithet.

In. 5-8: Darkness overtakes accompanied by silence broken by the humming of the beetle and the sheep bells tinkling.

In: 9-12. The owl seems to complain against the poet who disturbs her solitude.

In: 13-16: His eyes pass along the mounds under which the country-bred forefathers were buried.

In. 17-20: They cannot be roused. Note the romantic description

In : 21-24: A vivid picture of a father returning home in a village setting.

In 25-28: They worked hard and cheerfully when they were alive.

In-29-32 : L56 let not ambitious and wealthy people scorn their humble lives - Note the personifications characteristic of the Neoclassical period.

In : 33-36: about the emptiness of all earthly glory.

of:: "Sceptre and crown. must tumble down And in the dust, be equal made with the crooked scythe and spade"

In: 37-40: Don't blame them for lack of expensive monuments.

In: 41-44: two rhetorical questions. Honour and flattery cannot bring the dead to life-

I n: 45-48 : Among them there might have been real talents.

In : 49-52 : But they could not bloom because of poverty

In : 53-56 : Most beautiful lines >f the poem. Two generalisations drive home his particular meaning

In: 57-60: Elaboration of the earlier lines. Hampden: John: was a great patriot Milton : John: Famous poet but a fiery spirit. Cromwell: Oliver: Lord Protector after the execution of Charles (1664)

In : 61-68 : Their poverty prevented them from achieving anything great, but it checked their crimes too.

In; 69-72: poverty made them truthful; they never flattered the wealthy.

In. 73-76: They led a quiet life far from the din and bustle of city life.

In : 77-80: Some monuments with carving mark the graves and they serve to draw a sigh for the dead.

In: 81-84: The names of the death, and some holy text are carved by the untaught country poet more from the warm feelings of his heart than form the talent of his head.

In: 85-92: The dying man looks yearning at the living to remember him.

In: 93-96. The poet feels that after his death some kindred spirit may inquire about him

IN: 98-120: is the answer which will be given by a peasant. He might say to the kindred spirit that Gray used to roam across the lawn or the upland, or lie down at the foot of some beech tree looking into a brook, or linger near the wood murmuring like a disappointed lover. He would inform him that one day he was absent and on the next he was buried. The peasant would be directing him td read Gray's epitaph.

In: 121-132, Grays epitaph for himself, where he pictures himself as" a youth favoured neither be wealth nor fame, a scholar, full of sorrows and miseries and a generous man whom, God rewarded with a friend (Richard West] Gray requests the people not to disclose his merits and shortcomings or weaknesses. They all should rest with him in the bosom of his father and his God.

"Had Gray written nothing but his Elegy, high as he stands, I am not sure that he would not stand higher; it is the corner stone of his glory.... Gray's Elegy-pleased instantly and eternally."

Lord Byron.

"The dignified iambic pentameter measure, combined with the skillful use of monosyllabic words and long vowels, gives exactly the effect of quiet melancholy for which the poet strives".

Herbert. W. Starr.

"An examination of the Elegy as a whole reveals that he considered his generalisation about death to be the subject of his balancing of privileged and underprivileged is only one way of illustration, carrying his generalization out to its social limits of rich and poor".

Lyle Glazier.

"it must be recognized that the Elegy is not simply a local de-scriptive poem, but a philosophical poem or as Gray would have said, a poem of moral reflections.

Frank H. Ellis.

"Gray's Elegy, the richest bequest of eighteenth century English literature, has for its central theme the idea of undeveloped human power".

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WILLIAM BLAKE

His Life and works

William Blake, whom Charles Lamb called a most extraordinary man,, was a poet, mystic and artist. Born in 1757 in London as the son of a small tradesman, he spent most part of his life in. comparative poverty and obscurity. He received no formal schooling; but read widely throughout his' life and learnt Latin, Greek and Hebrew himself. He, however, attended Henry Par's Art School and was apprenticed in his teens as an engraver to James Basire. His tendency to see visions began from his early years and continued till the end of his life.

Black was acutely conscious of the injustice and oppression around him and challenged every assumption of the then existing soci-ety. An uncompromising rebel and a violent revolutionary, he was vehe-mently opposed to the materialistic philosophy with its insistence on reason and society. He followed no conventional rules; but adhered to his own creative imagination and visionary insight. Blake equates imagi-nation with God himself. Imagination is the Divine Body in Every Man' says Blake In other words, God is the creative and spiritual power in man and apart from man the idea of Good has no meaning. Blake was a relentless fighter against accepted tenets of Government, religion, education and social life.

He married Catherine Boucher in 1782 and though they had no children, their married life was not unhappy. His efforts to make a living by engraving, however, did not often meet with success. He copiously illustrated all his works. He engraved every word of his poems on to copper plates and surrounded them with designs and illustrations. These designs and illustrations intensify and enrich the poems in many ways.

The last years of his life were especially gloomy for him. The failure of revolutions in Europe, the prevailing social unrest of the times, financial difficulties, charges of sedition against him and the loss and betrayal of friends-all these resulted in a crisis in his life. His belief in visions and his wild and irrational behaviour led many to doubt his sanity. Neglected during his life-time, Blake, the eccentric genius breathed his last in 1827.

His works include Poetical Sketches. Songs of Innocence and songs of Experience and a number of later Prophetic or Symbolic works including 'Thel, Tirel, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, The French Revolution, Milton and Jerusalem. More than any one else, it was Blake who ushered in the Romantic Revival.

Poetical sketches, which was put together in 1784, contained Blake's early poems. Although many of the poems in this collection were conventional, a few poems like How Sweet I Roamed, anticipate his later mature poetry. The use of personification and symbols, the note of social and political concern and the discovery of any original, prophetic voice distinguish some of the poems from those of his contemporaries.

Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience

1789, the year of the French Revolution, saw the issue of songs of Innocence with its illuminated painting, In 1794, Blake reissued it with the addition of Songs of Experience to form a new book. It is the only volume of poems .which Blake hirriself published.

The 'Songs' "constitute one of the most remarkable collections of lyrical poems written in English" so says Bowra. The title page describes the songs' as "showing the two contrary

states of the human soul." The two sections of the book are contrasted elements in a single design. Blake was both a radical and a visionary and both these sides of his nature can be seen interacting in these 'songs'. Blake was quite aware of the two fold nature of all things and in arranging his songs, Blake followed his own maxim that without contraries is no progression'. The songs of Innocence set out an imaginative vision of the state of innocence, while the Songs of Experience' show how life challenges and corrupts and destroys it. Songs of Innocence' express through the mouths of little children joy, security and beauty of life. Every poem in this collection coveys his belief in the goodness of nature and his love for it. The symbol of it is the lamb which stands for gentleness and the child Jesus. These 'Songs', like The Echoing Green,' The Shepherd', The 'lamb', Spring The Blossom', The Divine Image', 'A Dreame etc., give us a vision of the world as it appears to a child. 'Pure are the children themselves whether their skins be black or white', and the Songs abound in images of country life, flowers, birds, lambs, shepherds, angels, God with His 'Golden tents,' green pastures etc. These symbols of pastoral life give us a vision of a world a purity, beauty and joy. For him, 'childhood is both itself and a symbol of a state of soul, which may exist in maturity,' It is here that Blake differs from Wordsworth. As Blake conceives it, joy is the core of life. It is in fact our being and essence. In the state of innocence, ie when man fully realises his spiritual and creative powers, and thus displays his full divine nature, he enjoys security and assurance as belong to lambs under a wise shepherd. The father of Blake's poems is God, who himself is the lamb and also the little child It is he who Watches over the sleeping children and gives his love to all without distinction of colour and race. Blake believes in the divine essence which exists potentially in every one and the state of innocence is nothing but the full display of the divine qualities of 'mercy, pity, peace-and love'. It is the creed of brotherhood which is the centre of his gospel', In the 'Songs of Innocence, life governed by these powers alone can give completeness, meaning and security. That is why Blake calls his 'Songs of Innocence, 'happy songs every child may joy to hear.' Symbols from the Bible naturally abound in these poems. If is indeed astonishing to notice that despite intense concentration of leaning, complex state of mind and an all comprehensive vision, these 'Songs' are refreshingly lyrical and musical and are indeed sweet and happy.

When one passes from the 'Songs of Innocence' to the Songs of Experience', one becomes acutely aware of the familiar world of physical, moral and spiritual degradation? These poems show how what we accept in childlike innocence is tested and proved feeble by actual events; how much that we have taken for granted, is not true of the living world how every noble desire may be debased and prevented. Blake is no more a piper of pleasant glee, but an angry, passionate rebel Experience destroys the free and spontaneous life of the imagination and substitutes it with fear and hypocrisy. The joy in life is replaced by denial of it. Submission to fear and envy breeds hypocrisy and this distorts love and pity, making them a mere cover for selfish and cowardly motives. In such a state,

Pity would be no more

If we did not make somebody poor.

Instead of brotherhood, equality and forgiveness, secrecy and guilt and jealousy are practised. In poems like London, The Chimney Sweeper'. 'The Sick Rose', Infant Sorrow', The School Boy etc. Blake shows with deep anguish and fierce indignation the sinister and dark world of experience. The child chimney sweeper, the soldier, the harlot and the school children are the types of the oppressed and exploited. Instead of freedom and joy, there is slavery and exploitation. There" is no joyous participation in life and reason binds and curbs all natural impulses. What is astonishing about the 'Songs of Experience' is that despite its violent emotions and its merciless, satirical temper, they are in the highest degree lyrical, Unlike the images in the 'Songs of Inno-cence', the images in the Songs of Experience' are mostly personal. In fact, the 'Songs of experience' are more powerful and more magical than the 'Songs of Innocence' because they are borne out of a deep anguish, from a storm in

the poet's soul perhaps, Blake sought some ultimate synthesis in which innocence might be wedded to experience; goodness to knowledge.

Innocence must be consummated with experience and such consummation can expand, strengthen and deepen the unfettered life of the creative soul. Beyond experience Blake foresees such a consumma-tion and hints that it will come. But then, such a state will not come simply from good will or pious aspirations and that the life of the imagination is possible only through passion and power and energy. That is why he sometimes stresses the great forces which lie hidden in man and may be terrifying; but are nevertheless necessary if anything worthwhile is to happen. He see that the creative activity of the imagi-nation (seeing through the eye and not seeing with the eye', as Blake puts it) and the transformation of experience through it are possible only through the release and exercise of awful power. 'Tyger' perhaps symbolises it. Such a synthesis is hinted at in the first poem of the 'Songs of Experience', where he speaks with the voice of the Bard that summons the fallen soul of earth to some vast apocalypse.

The Lamb

The poem which is from the 'Songs of Innocence', presents the state of unclouded vision characteristic of childhood innocence. Both the subject and the style are very simple and straight forward. The poem consists of two stanzas of 10 lines each. The first two lines of each stanza give us the theme, the second six lines its exposition and the last two lines its conclusion. This structural simplicity reinforces the theme. In the first stanza, the child, who addresses the lamb, gives a description of the little lamb meek and mild - and finds joy in its company. The lamb has been blessed with 'life' and is fed by the stream and over the meadow. It has been endowed with bright and soft wool (clothing of delight'); its tender voice fills the valley. The entire stanza pulsates with life and joy of just being a lamb. The child, who identifies himself with the lamb, is all purity, innocence and affection for the small creature. The simple metre and rhythm, the pastoral images and the simple repetitions, almost like the earnest prattle of a child, all reinforce the simple delight and the sense of oneness that the child feels in the company of the lamb.

While the first stanza is a series of questions, the second stanza is in the form the answers. All the questions are about God the creator and there is love behind every question (Dost thou know who made thee?). The child without any air of patronising superiority answers his own question by identifying the lamb with child Jesus, who is both the Creator and the Redeemer. Jesus is called a Lamb himself, because like the lamb, He is meek and mild. Besides, He was crucified; and further, Christ was also a child when he first appeared on this earth as the Son of God. Thus, the unity of all created things and their identification with a Creator are beautifully summed up in the lines:

I. a child and thou a lamb

We are called by His name.

Both the child and the lamb are called by His name, because two of the crucial attributes of God are His incarnation and his passion. So, when the poem ends.

Little lamb, God bless thee!

The nature of God as both the Creator and the Redeemer and the delightful understanding of the unity and oneness of all are conveyed with out any apparent effort.

This poem with its pastoral and religious images (which again reinforce the unity of being) has a counterpart in the 'Songs of Experience' 'The Tyger'. The lamb and the tiger are in fact the representatives of the contrary states of the human soul. While a lamb is a symbol of innocence and joy, the tiger is symbol of the violent and terrifying forces in man's soul. Taken together, the lamb and the tiger represent the duality of human nature.

Holy Thursday

(from the Songs of innocence)

While poems like The Lamb The Echoing Green Laughing Song, A Cradle Song. Spring and 'Infant joy.' successfully portray a world of pure innocence and joy without the trace of any disturbing elements, 'The Chimney Sweeper' and 'Holy Thursday' strike a different note. True, these two poems do have the quality of innocence seen from the point of view of children and hence their inclusion in the 'Songs of Innocence'. The children here are also innocent, essentially free and happy and they act spontaneously. But, these poems bring to light the vulnerability of their innocence and its exploitation by the adult world for narrow, selfish ends. Although outwardly the scene presented in Holy Thursday is solemn, grand and attractive, the poem faces many disturbing questions concerning the children of charity school and the 'beadles' and the wise guardians of the poor.

Holly Thursday is Ascension Day. i.e. the day on which Christ rose from His grave and ascended to heaven. On this day. children of charity schools of London are taken out to St. Paul's Cathedral for singing in the service. The children look beautifully in their fresh faces and they are marched in formation to the church in the uniforms of their respective schools (in red, and blue aid green) The, beadles (officers of the parish who we're employed to keep peace and to punish the wrong-' doers) carried rods (symbols of authority), which were as white as snow although the spectacle seems innocuous, the implicit irony cannot be missed. The way the children are spruced up for the occasion and led to the church in two and two is an indirect commentary on the state of innocence, where there ought to be no discipline no regimentation, no marching, no uniforms and no guardians to punish them. The wand wielded by the beadles is a symbol of authority and, in this case religious authority, forcing the innocent children to behave themselves, sup-pressing their natural instincts The wand is 'white as snow', suggesting frigidity of man-made moral laws while true innocence, borne out of impulse and imagination vision, is warm and friendly. The poem reveals the essential innocence and joy of the children despite their outward appearance and regimented way of life. The children were at first com-pared to lambs, because of their qualities of innocence and meekness, (refer to the poem The Lamb'). Their voices, as they sing have been compared to a mighty wind and then their voices, singing in harmony, are like harmonious thundering, In other words these children assert their essential innocence by freely and spontaneously singing, raising it to heaven the voice of song', This act of theirs raises them to a level far above the supposed benefactors, who are without vision, without inno-cence and without love. Beneath them sit the aged men, wise guardians of the poor'! The irony here becomes sharper and biting. Beneath' the children, unable to 'rise in the same way, sit the aged men, 'wise guard-ians of the poor'. Note the irony in the words 'grey-headed', 'aged' and 'wise'. The implication is that they have lost the unclouded vision of childhood and they are wise in the sense of worldly wise. They have no genuine love, but only professional pity, which is motivated by mere hypocrisy and selfishness, which the children of their own (with radiance all their own') ascend through their song for above the physical confines of the high dome or Paul's Cathedral. Momentarily at least, like Christ, they escape the grave of this world of Blake's London'. (Note the relevance of the little.)

In the last lines the children are compared to two angels, because of their simplicity, innocence and meekness. The official title guardians of the poor is again ironical, because Blake here implies that the Charity Schools were based not on kindness and Christian charity, but upon selfishness and self glorification. Blake treats these professional charity mongers and the beadles with an amused contempt. The last lines, where the children are compared to angles, sound didactic. The moral is that the reader is asking to show sympathy to any child who comes for help, because pushing away a child means pushing away an angel.

The final irony lies in the relationship between this anniversary celebration of professional charity mongers and Holy Thursday itself. The 'poor' children, like Christ, do

ascend to heaven, while the wise guardians of the poor' remain below. The theme of the poem 'The Lamb is reinforced.

To drive an angel from the door' alludes to the story of Lot (Genesis 19) The children look like ang[illegible] their fresh faces and innocent hands. On another level, they make a fine sight for a spectacle walking advertisements for the selfish charity mongers. The neglect and indifference are hidden behind the outer spectacle.

The surprising fact about this poem is the way a commonplace meeting of charity children is transformed in a severe indictment on so-ciety while at the same time, preserving and emphasising the essential innocence and divine glory of the children.

UNIT 4. SONGS OF EXPERIENCE

"Songs of Experience" completes and deepens the pattern begun in Songs of Innocence'. An awareness of experience is essential for fully visualising the state of innocence. Blake was very much influenced by Milton and like Milton's 'Paradise Lost' these Songs are also concerned with the fallen world, a kind of death in life. He sees all around him the symptoms of the Fall. Priests, rulers and teachers and the urban industrial landscape symbolise oppression and tyranny. As against the meekness and joy symbolised by the lambs, the children, the flowers and the echoing green', here meet with the cries of chimney sweepers, the curses of harlots and sights of soldiers and the bitter cold of the winter. There are no loving guardians, no freedom and joy, no love; but only oppression, slavery, exploitation, misery and guilt. Hypocrisy reigns supreme. The poems in the Section makes us startle and we shudder at what man has done to man. The tone is passionate and intense. Here, 'words have indeed become deeds'. The important poems in the Collection are Introduction, 'Nurse's Song', The Tyger', The Little Girl Lost', 'Holy Thursday', "The Sick Rose', The Chimney Sweeper', London etc. some of these poems like 'Holy Thursday', The Chimney Sweeper' and 'Nurse's Song' are counter parts of the poems of the same titles in Songs of Innocence.

Holy Thursday

The poem is a bitter denunciation of society. The scene here is the same we have encountered in the poem of the same name in Songs of Innocence. Despite the discipline and regimentation and despite the beadles and their rods and despite the wise guardians of the poor, the children in the first Holy Thursday' are essentially innocent and they do sing spontaneously and hence are likened to angels. Here, however, it is unrelieved gloom, 'eternal winter'. The unnatural neglect of the children enters into their souls and their song turns out to be a 'trembling cry', The poet wonders in the first stanza what is holy about Holy Thursday", when children are reduced to wretchedness and misery? It is mere observance, mere sham, devoid of any true Christian virtues like mercy, pity, peace and love. The irony becomes devastating when he comes to the cold and usurious hand which feeds these children. Contributions to maintain these charity institutions come from self-seeking people who have not only no genuine love for the children, but are out to gain money by unfair means. It shocks him to realise that these rich which, who are soulless are the patrons. Though England appears to be rich and fruitful, it cannot really be so, if there are poor people. He know that the fields of England are not bleak and bare and that the sun does shine and the rain does fall. In other words, there is enough to supply everybody. Why, then is there misery poverty? Why is there the eternal winter? The answer is implied. The poverty and misery are man made. It is the result of man moving away from his real self his holiness. The sacred duty of a Christian is to love his neighbour and if this duty is observed by every one, there will be no social evils.

The poem in fact goes a step further. It questions the very idea, of charity. He fails to understand whether charity in any form and from any motive is necessary at all. It is not charity that is needed, but love, Charity perpetuates distinctions between the rich and the poor, love obliterates all difference. It horrifies him to note that the poverty appeals to the mind of the children, it has made them feel insecure, dejected and wretched. Thus in this

poem Blake lays bare the true nature of charity, which only makes the children remain poor for the glorification of their rich patrons.

The poem is almost bare and has not many images. The poet is in a highly agitated mental state, as is evident from the trembling lines themselves. Besides, the occasion (Holy Thursday) very well suits the poet to lash at the social evil of charity and the charity mongers.

The Two Holy Thursdays'

Both the poems have their background Holy Thursday and contain social criticism. In the first poem (ire. from Songs of Innocence) the criticism is merely implied. It highlights the essential innocence and jov of the orphans despite the regimentation and discipline imposed on them. Besides, there is greater insight and wealth of images and details in it. In the poems from the 'Songs of Experience', the poet seems more anxious to preach a moral and the social criticism is passionate and bit-ter. Besides, the poes is bare and devoid of images. The situation, more-over, is not particularised, but merely sketched in general. According to one critic, the innocent song ends on a positive note without preaching a sermon, while the experienced speaker preaches a sermon that is nega-tive in tone, being full of moral anxiety but destructive of moral obliga-tion.

The Tiger

The most famous and the most impressive of all Blake's Songs', The Tiger', is the result of much thoughtful revision and careful planning. But it is, strangely enough, the most moving and splendidly symbolic, defying paraphrase like The Sick Rose. It is noted for its deep insight and visionary power. The poem abounds in rich complexities and meaningful paradoxes. Words, images, rhythm and tone all harmoniously combine to make the poem truly great and marvellous. It is also noted for its extreme compression and consequent ambiguities.

The 'tiger' for Blake represents the natural, primeval and heroic creative energy in life. If is a symbol for the fierce forces in the soul needed to break the bonds of experience. The tiger is not to be mistaken for evil. 'Blake habitually endorsed energy as one of the greatest enlivening and moral qualities. Lamb and Tiger are but parts of the contraries of the world, without which there; is not progression and with-out them the fallen world may well be deprived of the anger and violence which are needed to change society. Blake suggests that tiger like forces are needed in man if oppression and exploitation are to be resisted and the yoke of slavery thrown off. Only through experience and the release of such powerful and awe-inspiring force as the tiger's can the state of innocence be truly established.

The poem begins with the tiger described as 'burning bright in the forests of the night'. The tiger, its whole body burning in the silent and dark jungle, is in itself a startling spectacle. 'The forests of the night', in which the tiger's force is open (burning) and recognisable is totally opposed to deceit, mystery and concealment, which characterise religion, politics and society in general (Cf. Holy Thursday). The poem then proceeds with a series of questions, indicating the awe and wonder of the speaker at the fearful symmetry of the tiger and the immortal hand or eye' which could create it. The terrible beauty' of the tiger evokes both awe and admiration not only to the animal but also to its immortal creator. The paradox 'fearful symmetry' is highly suggestive, conveying among others the dual nature of the tiger (both destructive and ennobling) as well as the complex emotions (like awe, wonder and fear) aroused in the mind of a beholder. Similarly 'burning' suggests both destruction and purification.

The second stanza takes up the 'fearful symmetry' and 'wonders how the creator framed the terrifying beauty of the animal. Even while we are made conscious of the deliberate and powerful act of creation and the mystery of its creator, we are never allowed to lose sight of the strength and terrible beauty of the tiger. The questions as they progress become partly formed (stanza 4), thereby showing the increasing awe and wonder bordering on

fear at the sight of the tiger as it gradually takes shape, and the creator as He moves about his business, gathering materials from remote and distant parts of the cosmos. The pounding rhythm and stabbing questions, -which break of in mid sentences, speak of the breathless gasps of wonder and the agitation of the human heart pounding at the sight of the dread tiger. The repetition of the word dead intensifies the awe and bafflement. The questions follow like the falling of hammer, increasingly insistent, while the creator like some celestial blacksmith hammers out the shape of the tiger. The poet wonders how the creator did soar to the distant skies or descent to the depths of the earth in order to obtain the needful fire for the tiger's eyes, (distant deeps of skies) whose hands could have dared to catch hold of the fire) he asks in puzzlement. Note the act of creation as it proceeds through these questions. First, the fire of its eyes is gathered from the cosmos; then the heart is created and the feet forged and ultimately the brain is formed. All these are conveyed through questions, which act as exclamations. The images are taken from a work shop or smithy and we are held in fascinated attention by the details of the immense process by which the tiger was created. We see the Creator as a winged figure, who has hands and feet. We see the shoulders exerting its strength, the hand in control of its materials and the feet as He moves about his work. The tiger as a result, is twisted and forged into shape under His great force. As the beast takes shape, the tension of the poem becomes greater and it reaches an unbearable height at the end of the 4th stanza, when the process is complete and the tiger takes its fearful symmetry. The last part of the 4th stanza (What dread grasp dare its deadly terrors clasp') at once highlights the terrible beauty of the tiger and the deadly terrors' it evokes in the mind of the baffled and stupefied viewer. Besides, the poet is expressing his awe and wonder simultaneously at both the tiger and its creator.

There is a change of mood and syntax in the beginning of the 5th stanza. These lines may at first appear to have nothing to do with the tiger. The rhythm and pattern of these lines are quite different from the pounding rhythm and stabbing questions of the previous stanzas. But soon we realise that this pause serves only to bring out the essential paradox in the creation of the tiger, as the second half of the stanza takes us to the creator and His likely response to His own two creations - the lamb and the tiger. The most baffling lines in the poem are those concerning the weeping stars (lines 13 and 14) A number of interpreta-tions, often contradictory, are offered by various critics. Many, however, agree that the stars represent angles. Tradition has it that the angels wept after the battle in heaven between God and Satan and when they lost one third of their number to God's superior Power. (Of. Paradise Lost') Their humiliation was complete when God proceeded to create the earth and its inhabitants, among them the tiger. Another interpretation is that the angels were so amazed to see the new creation of God that they threw down their spears and wept. Did they cry of joy or sorrow? Spear Blake elsewhere uses, as an instrument of oppression. So, it is reasonable to suppose that the angels represent the material power. Releasing to their dismay that their reign of oppression and tyranny is over and that that creation of the tiger is the beginning of their end, they surrender themselves to the awful power of the tiger by throwing away their spears. 'Water'd heaven with their tears; however, doubts the genuineness of their repentence. In Paradise Lost, as Blake knew, the battle in heaven led to the creation of all thing, including the lamb and the tiger. God, according to Genesis; Saw that it was good.' Blake turns this account into a penetrating and profound question when has all kinds of implications:

Did he smile his work to see?

Did he who made the lamb make thee?

How did God, the Creator, respond to his own creation? Was he pleased with the tiger? or Was it so terrifying and awe-inspiring that even He stood aghast at his own creation? The lines also pose another question: What kind of a Creator was he, who could make something so gentle and so innocent as the Lamb arid so powerful and terrifying as the tiger? God, no doubt, whose range is infinite and whose power is unimaginable, can contain within Him such opposites and exercise his creative power in such contrary and limitless ways.

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The emotion of the poem seems to have resulted from the two irreconcilable elements, namely the tiger and the lamb. The creator, who looks at both of them at a distance, is like an artist who looks at his own works. The lamb links the poem to the lamb in the Song of Innocence! Then again what is the motive and intention of the Creator behind the creation of the tiger? The poem raises a number of profound questions without attempting to give any answer. Perhaps, ho direct answer is pos-sible. We know the meekness of the lamb and the wrath, of the tiger are contained in Christ's own person. Man too contains these contrary states. It is for him, therefore, to give shape to the vast potentialities with which God has endowed man. The Lamb the Tiger are but parts of the contrary state both of the individual soul but also of the world, without which there is no progression and without which there can be no real change. Thus the tiger is needed to break the bonds of experience and to make the state of innocence a reality.

While the lamb represents forgiveness of signs, the tiger stands for punishment of sins, Blake elsewhere says, "the wrath of lion is the wisdom of God. and the tigers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction' How to reconcile these two? This seems to be the crux of the problems Blake raises in the poem. There is another paradox too. The tiger, though not evil in itself, has some connections with Satan. In Revelation XXII: 16, where Christ says, 'I am the bright and morning star' since Satan was also identified with the morning star (Lucifer) Blake's lines take on a curious ambiguity, the God at once is a God of love and one of terrible jealously. Looked from this angle, the fearful symmetry, acquires a new meaning. 'Symmetry' implies an ordering hand or intelligence, while 'fearful' throws a doubt on the benevolence of the Creator. Does Blake at once belong to tradition and challenge it? The tiger being an image of the Creator (an other image is the lamb). 'Its deadly terrors' must be His S. Foster Darnor says that the tiger deals with the immense problem of evil. Evil for him is the wrath of god and its purpose is to consume error. The poem thus exemplifies in the profoundest sense the duality of both the Created and the Creator.

In the last section of the poem, we come back again to the tiger, repeating the first stanza except altering, 'Could' by 'Dare', thus reminding us of the power and superior wisdom of the Creator. This re-turn is significant and memorable for it enables the reader to return to the images of the first stanza with a new understanding.

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THE GENERAL PROLOGUE TO THE CANTERBURY TALES (GEOFFREY CHAUCER)

1. English Literature before Geoffrey Chaucer:

Before we start our study of Geoffrey Chaucer, it is desirable that we know something general about what preceded him in English literature. So I give below a microscopically brief account of English literature before Chaucer.

The Middle Ages

The Middle Ages span roughly a thousand years from 500 A.D. to 1500 A.D. When the classical world of Greece and Rome declined and disappeared, man tried hard to bring some kind of an order and some stability into an otherwise chaotic human life. Subsequently, two institutions emerged: the Church in religion and feudalism in society. The church, the spiritual world, had the Pope at the Vatican as its head. Feudalism, the temporal realm, had the king at the top. The hierarchies in each were well-defined. As the Middle Ages advanced, there appeared the freeman, the commoner and the yeoman those who had special skills in agriculture, trade and the like (there was no middle class as such, as we know today). There were frequent confrontation between the Pope and the king and almost always the people and the last word. But a day came when the king grew above indirect and excommunication, the two mighty weapons with which the Vatican threatened and quietened him. That day marked the end of the Middle Age.

The common Denominator/Core Factor of all Literature of the Middle Ages

Emphasis on the world to come, i.e. the world we are to go on our death seemed to be the core factor, the common thread, of all the literature of the period. In other words, people forgot to live their life in this world. Life in this world was looked upon as a preparation for life in the world to come.

Old English Literature

Regrettably we have no records of any writing in English dated before 500 A.D. Old English Literature is therefore, English Medieval Literature.

Old English or Anglo-Saxon is basically medieval. It is said to start from around 600 A.D. It quite primitive in its range and appeal the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes were Germany invaders. The Anglo-Saxons arrived in England from the north - western shores of Europe and Scandinavia around 450 A.D. The Jutes came from Jutland. By 550 A.D. They occupied most of present day England. With them came Anglo-Saxon literature.

The Most Important features of Old English Literature:

1. It is English Literature in its most basic, rudimentary form produced by medieval Christian Church. The subject matter, might how ever, be pagan or Christian.
2. It was static, It did not change with the times.
3. Both heroic epics of non-Christian origins and those of Christian ones might be found.
4. The form and the style had to conform to certain fixed standards, using formulas, compounds and oppositional forms.

5. The verse was alliterative.

6. There was little or no dramatic literature or prose literature in the period.

Middle English Literature

The Old English Literature and the Middle English Literature are both the products of the Middle Ages. The Middle English period is said to begin in 1066 A.D., the year of the Norman Conquest of England with the arrival of a new aristocracy and nobility and with French becoming the "official" language, the vernacular getting replaced. In 1265 Henry III condescended to give a decree in English. In 1326 English came to be used in the courts of law. In 1385 French was no longer compulsorily taught in schools - which might have placed English children at a disadvantage as the knowledge of French was considered highbrow.

The Hundred Year's War which began in 1338 and continued till 1453 was disastrous which arrested societal advancement in England. In 1348 the bubonic plague reached England and was responsible for the deaths of nearly .half of the population of England in just two years. In 1381 the Peasant's Revolt shook England. By the middle of the fifteenth, century the Wars of the Roses broke out. These dates are important, because Geoffrey Chaucer lived in the 14th Century.

Literary Landmarks of the 14th Century

As French became the official language (i.e. of the Government) after the Norman conquest, no significant English Literature emerged until the Age of Chaucer. Of course, there were imitations of French and Latin works-either translations or adaptations. Most of the writers remained anonymous. But after 1300 A.D. The authors began to assert themselves. We have therefore, some information on the major writers of the 14th century. Their number is quite small. For instance; we have Richard Rolle, John Wycliffe, John Gower, Geoffrey Chaucer, the Pearl Poet, William Langland (or the Piers Plowman poet) and a few others. Besides there were writers of Anglo-French and Anglo Latin products, of romances like Arthurian, Charlemagnian, classical and or historical, bestiary, ballads, chronicles, fabliaux, dialogues, debates, catechisms, science and general information, Lyrics, hymns, rudimentary -type plays etc. etc.

We shall now to Geoffrey Chaucer and his place in English Literature.

II. Geoffrey Chaucer: an outline of his biography;

Geoffrey Chaucer was born in London circa 1340 (the most probable date is 1334) as the son of John Chaucer and Agnes" North well. John Chaucer was a wealthy wine merchant, man of affairs and connected with the Royal Court. We know very little-about the members of the family, Geoffrey's childhood and the like. We believe that the at-tended one of the following three schools in London.

1. St.Pauls (a grammar School)
2. The Arches (at Mary le Bow)
3. St. Martin's Grand

He must have studied Latin, some English and the traditional subjects taught at schools in those days.

Geoffrey left school in circa 1356. He joined as page in the household of Countess Elizabeth, daughter of the Earl of Ulser and wife of Lionel, the third son king Edward III. The Countess must have taken Geoffrey with her as part of her train all over London. Southampton, Reading, Hattled, Windsor, Hartford Castle,. Anglesey, Liverpool and many other places, Geoffrey must have attended state weddings, funerals of the members of the aristocracy and nobility and participated in feats in the place. He must have been thoroughly

trained in the duties of a page at Elizabeth's place-to be well mannered, polite, noble like a courtier and so on.

Between 1359 and 1360 Geoffrey .was a soldier in the army of Edward III, which invaded France. He was taken prisoner and subse-quently ransomed (16/-) and released on the First of March, 1360. He returned to England in May and was in Lionel's service later.

In 1366 Geoffrey married Philippa, lady-in-waiting to Queen Philippa. His sister -in-law, Catherine, became John of - Gaunt's mis-tress and later his third wife (John -of-Gaunt) was the Duke of Lancaster). Meanwhile, Chaucer must have been reading scientific religious and philosophical matters and "Le Roman de la Rose" and the French poets of his day like Machaut, Deschamps and Froissart.

In 1368 he was abroad on diplomatic missions. In the following year he was perhaps in France and met Froissart. In 1372 he was in Italy on official business. In all probability there he met Petrarch and Italy on official business. In all probability there he met Petrarch and Boccaccio. In 1373 he was made Controller of Customs and Subsidy of wools, skins and hides, Between 1377 and-1378 he was on official visits to the Low Countries and France. In 1386 he left his position as controller. In 1389 he became Clerk of King's Works. In 1339 I he was Deputy Forester at North Petherto, Somerestshire, in 1400 he died. He was buried at Westminister Abbey (St. Benedict Chapel, now known as Poet's Corner)

The above account is too short and filled with too many gaps. We do not know that Chaucer, was busy with during the gaps. However, we know about his extensive European travels- to-countries like Italy, France, and the Low Countries and his meeting with important people. He must have observed, and learnt about their customs, manners, tradi-tions, rites, rituals, practices, costumes as well as "the manner of their speech. This knowledge must have helped him in sketching the charac-ter of his pilgrims in his masterpiece-The Canterbury Tales.

Ill Geoffrey Chaucer's Literary Output

A Calendar of his Activities.

It-has been the practice of the students of Chaucer to divide Chaucer's Literary career into three periods.

1. The French period (up to 1372)
2. The Italian Period (form 1373 to 1385)
3. The English Period (from 1386 to 1400)

As we do not know a ccurately the dates of composition of his works, we need to adhere to the divisions mentioned above. However, I am giving below the break-up of his output belonging to the three periods.

The French Period (Imitations and Translations):

1. Courtly Lyrics
2. Complaints - unto Pity of Mars of Venus
3. The A.B.C. Poem
4. Roman de la Rose
4. The Book of the Duchess

The Italian Period:

1. Life of St. Cecilia
2. Anelida and Arcite

The English Period:

1. The House of Fame
2. The Parliament of Fowls
3. The Legend of Good Women 4.Troilus and Criseyde
5. Consolation of Philosophy (translation of Boethius)
6. The Canterbury Tales.

Apart from the above, Chaucer has written quite a few minor products which we "may ignore now.

IV. The Canterbury Tales: The first 100 lines of the "General"

The Tales' *is a voluminous work. A general prologue is prefixed to it which is* something of a marvel in story telling. It is called "The General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales" It is 858 lines long. We have to study the first 100 lines in a detailed, exhaustive manner and the remaining in a 'general', non-detailed way.

The following is a word-by-word translation of the first one hundred lines of the 'General Prologue" If you have access to other translations, they will do. I am giving a glossary using which you may attempt a translation all by yourself.

When that April with his showers sweet
The drought, of March has pierced to the root,
And bathed every vein such in liquor
Of which virtue engendered is the flower
When Zephirus also with his sweet breath
Inspired has in every wood and heath
The tender shoots, and the young sun
Has in the Ram his half course run,
And small birds make melody,
That sleep all night with open eye.
(So excited them Nature in their hearts);
Then long people to go on pilgrimages.
And palmers to seek strange lands,
To distant shrines, well known in sundry lands;
And specially from every shire's end
of England and Canterbury they go
The holy blissful martyr to seek.
That them has helped when that they were sick
It so happened in that season on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay
Ready to go oh my pilgrimage
To Canterbury, with full devout heart,

At night was come into the hostel
Well nine-and-twenty in a company
Of Sunday folk, by chance gathered
In fellowship, and pilgrims were they all,
That toward Canterbury would ride.
The chambers and the stable were wide,
And well we were eased at the best.
And in short, when the sun was to rest,
So had I spoken with-them everyone,
That I was of their fellowship at once,
And arranged early to rise,
To take our way to the place I tell you about.
But nevertheless, while I have time and chance,
Before that I further in this tale proceed,
I think it an accordance with reason and in order
To tell you about all the characteristics
Of each of them such as it appeared to me,
And who they were, and of what social rank,
And also in which dress they were in;
And at a knight then will I first begin.
A knight there was and that a worthy man,
That from the time that he first began.
To ride out, he loved chivalry,
Loyalty, honour, liberality and courtesy.
Full worthy was he in his Lord's wars.
And moreover had he ridden, no man father,
As well in Christendom as in heathendom,
And ever honoured for his worthiness.
At Alexandria he was when it was won.
Full often was he at the head of the table
Above all nations at Prussia;
In Lithuania and Russia had he had military expeditions,
No Christian man so often of his rank.
In Granada at the seize also had he been
Of Algiciras and ridden in Benmarin.
At Ayas was he and at Adalia,
When they were won; and in the Mediterranean

At many a noble armada had he been
At mortal battles had be been fifteen,
And fought for our faith at Tremessen,
In lists thrice and always slain his foe
The same* worthy knight had been also!
Sometime with the Lord of Palathia
Again another heathen in Turkey
And ever more he had a supreme renown;
And though he was worthy, he" was[1] prudent,
and of his learning as mild as is a maiden
He never ever no churlish world did say
In all his life to any kind of person.
He was a true and perfect gentleman knight.
But to tell you about his dress
His horses were good but he was not gaudily dressed.
Of thick cotton cloth he wore a jacket
All spotted and stained with his coat of mail.
For he had just arrived from his expedition,
And went to do his pilgrimage.
With him there was his son, a young squire,
A lof er and a lusty bachelor,
With locks curled as if they were laid in press.
Of twenty years of age he was I guess.
Of his stature he was of middle height.
And wonderfully agile and of great strength.
And he had been sometime in Cavalry raid.
In Flanders, in Artoy^, and Picardy,
And had born himself well, considering his short career,
In hope to stand in his lady's favour.
Embroidered he was, as if he were a meadow
AH full of fresh flowers, white and red.
Singing he was, or fluting all the day;
He was as fresh as is the month, of May.
Short was his gown with sleeves long and ride.
He could make turns and write words for them,
Joust and also dance and draw well and write.

So hot he loved that by night time.

He slept no more than the nightingale.

Courteous he was, modest and willing to serve.

And carved before his fati er at the dinner table.

The foregoing may not be an ideal translation. But for our purpose, it will do.

V. Glossary:

Line	Word/Expression	Meaning in modern English
1.	His its / his	(The context suggests personification)
2.	Drought drought :	dryness (March is traditionally held to be dry and windy
	perced :	pierced
3.	Veyne	vein, vessels of sap, sap-bearing vessel
4.	switch licour	such liquid, such moisture ie.. sap of which virtue by the power of which, 'virtue' might mean 'power' or 'vital energy'
5.	Zephirus	The west wind of spring also
6.	Inspired	breathed upon with life-giving breath; animated
	hot	woodland
7.	Croppes	new, young shoots (not in the modern sense of 'crops')
	Young sonne	The young sun. The sun was said to 'just emerge from Aries, the first sign of the Zodiac, and so in the early part of its annual course i.e, around 12 March.
8.	Ram	Aries in the Zodiac
	hlave cours	During April the sun passed through the latter half of Aries before entering the first half of Taurus (the Bull). As Chaucer states that the half course in the Ram is completed the date must be after II/April
9.	foweles	This line means "Birds are light sleepers" or it is a reference to nightingale which sings all night in the spring. See the first few lines of "The Squire"
11.		Nature so spurs them on in their hearts (or inner dispositions)
	priketh	inspires; excites, incites; rouses
	corages	HEARTS
12.	thanne	then
	longen	long; desire
13.	palameres	palmers; pilgrims. 'Professiónal; Pilgrims were those who went to Palestine and brought back with them palm branches as tokens. Later, the word came to mean all pilgrims in a general sense.
	straunges strondes	foreign lands/shores
14.	feme	far; distant

	halwaes (literally)	saints; here it means 'shrines' or holy places'
	knowth	known
15.	ende	end
16/17.	Canterbury	The shrine of St. Thomas Becket was at the Canterbury Cathedral
	Wende	make their way
	Blissful	blessed
18	.....	Who had helped them they were sick
19.	Bifil it so happened	
20.	lay	stayed; lodged
21.	wenden	go
22.	full devout corage	very pious, heart; very devout disposition.
25.	sundry	sundry; various
	adventure	chance
	yfalle	fallen, met
27.	wolden ryde Wyde	were intending to ride,
28.	Wyde	wide; roomy; spacious (The Tabard Inn' was famous for its luxury and comfort)
29.	esed	made comfortable
	ate bests	in the best manner
30	Shortly	(in short)
31	hem	them
	everichon	everyone
32	hir	their
	anon	at once, soon
33	.....	made arrangements to get up early
34	.....	to make our way to the place I tell your of i.e. Canterbury
35.	Natheless	nevertheless
36.	Er	ere; before
	pace	proceed
37.	accordaunt to resoun in accordance with reason/order/suitables etting.	
38.	Condicion outward circumstances as will as in ward character	
40.	whiche	who

	degree	rank in society; social status.
41.	array	clothes; dress; costume along with equipage
	inne	in
	wol	will
	Knight	(Knights were obliged to serve the King in his wars, but it was also common for those so inclined to seek service in wars overseas against the heathen)
45.	chivalrie	the elaborate code of knightly manners; the ideal of knighthood,
46		.....Loyalty, a sense of honour; liberality and courteous behaviour these were the four "main virtues of the chivalrie code; the words are loaded with a greater richness of meaning than can be indicated by mere translations
47.	there to	moreover
	ferre	farther
51.	Alisaundre	Alexandria, captured by King Peter of Cyprus, in 1365
52.		Very many times he was placed at the head of the tables as a mark of honour.
53	nacions	representative of other nations
53-54.	Pruce	Prussia
	Lettow	Lithuania
	Ruce	Russia
		The Teutonic knights of Russia were in a constant state of warfare with the neighbouring heathen, and this, frontier of Christianity became a common hunting ground for knights unemployed in other chivalric exercises. Some what similar to the modern day mercenaries,
	Reysed	made an expedition (quite different from our modern "raised")
56-57.	Germade	the kingdom of Granada, held by the moors, from whom Algeciras was captured in 1344.
	Belmarye	Benmarin, a Moorish Kingdom, corresponding to the modern Morocco.
58.	Lyes	Ayas in Armenia, captured from the Turks in or around 1361.
59.	Grete See	The Mediterranean Sea
60.	Arme	armada, rather than army
61.	Batailles	battles
62.	Tranyssene	Tramessen, now Tlemcen, then in Moorish North Africa
63.	lystes	lists; in this case direct combat with heathen
ay	always	
64.	like	the same

65.	Palatye	Palathina, probably the modern Balatirt Turkey. The Lord of Palatye was .heathen but bound in treaty to the chivalric king Peter of Cyprus. Palathia was one of the lordship in Anatolia (Asia Minor) which survived the general Turkish supremacy. It might have been the scene of fighting in 1361.
67.	a sovereyn prys	a supreme renown
68-69.	wys	prudent (rather than 'wise')
	port	manner, bearing The two lines mean that, though he was an excellent man of war, he was courteous, unaggressive in behaviour, as the chivalric code enjoined.
70.	vileynye	coarseness of speech appropriate to a churl/vilemn; foul/unmannerly abuse.
71.	maner wight	kind of man
72.	verray	true
	parfit	perfect, complete
	Gentle	refined
74	hors	horses
	gay	gaudy, referring to this clothes thick, cotton cloth tunic worn under the coat of
75.	fustian	thick, cotton cloth tunic worn under the coat of
76.	bismotered	stained ; smeared with rust
77.	viage	voyage, expedition
78.	his pilgrimage	The words "his implies that it was the usual pilgrimage offered to asaint in return for safety or honour in brattle.
79.	Squier	Squire; attendant and arm-bearer for a knight. He would usually have been of the aristocracy. His duties would include carving at the table.
80	lustry	a word used by many writers to describe such bachelors and conveying such qualities as high spirits, exuberance as well as amorousness.
	Bachelor	a main training for knighthood (compare the degrees like bachelor of Arts. Bachelor of Science etc.)
81.	crulle	curled
	lokkes	locks of hair
	leyd in press	pressed in a curling iron of some sort
83.	evene lengthe	middle/average height
84.	deyvere	agile:active
85.	Chyvachie	cavalry expedition/raid; feat of horsemanship.

86	I	n Contrast with the knight the squire has not ventured farther than France.
87.	as of so litel space	considering the shortness of his service.
88.	his lady grace	his lady's favour
89.	embrouded	embroidered. Excessive decoration of clothing was forbidden to squires having an annual income of less than 200/Elaborate dressing often came under the moral condemnation of preachers, but courtly literature positively praised and encouraged it.
	meed.	meadow
91.	Floythnge	Playing the flute; whistling
94.	koude	knew how to
95.	Juste	Joust
	purtrye	draw; portray
	write	(an uncommon ability at the time)
97.	hoote	fervently; hotly
	nyghtertale	night time
99.	lowely	humble, modest
	servy sable	willing to serve
100.	Card	carve
	biform	before.

VI. Critical Evaluation

We shall now attempt a critical evaluation of the first hundred lines meant for detailed study. We shall start with the fist verse paragraph consisting 18 lines. These 18 lines are just one syntactic unit i.e. one sentences beginning with "when' and closing with "seeke". Stylistically speaking, therefore, the ideas presented therein must be closely linked. Let us see how.

We start by taking an inventory of the key lexical items and grouping them according to common semantic features. We need not be too punctilious.

April March Ram

sweet showers drought such liquor

root vein flowers tender crops (shoots)

Zephirus sweet breath inspired

young sun hot heath

small birds

pricks long

folk palmers pilgrimages

corages

shire's end of :England distant shrines

Canterbury holy blissful martyr

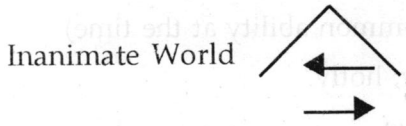
The above list consisting of the major lexical items can hardly tell you anything worthwhile or significant, as it is haphazard. "We shall, therefore, rearrange/ reorganize the words in order to bring some order and hence sense.

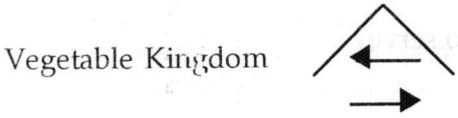
April, March Ram The temporal cycle and

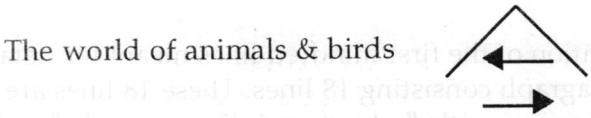
1. **Zephirus, sweet breath; the elemental forces and**
   young sun, sweet parts of Nature
   showers, drought liquor
   holt, heath, shire's end geographical units
   Canterbury

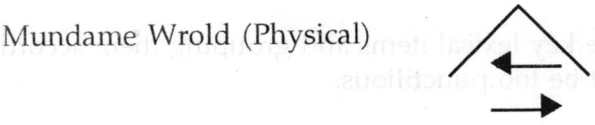
II **A- Nature**
root, vein, flower, tender Nature, Vegetable Kingdom
corps
B- Nature
small, birds, folk, palmers NATURE - Animal

Universe









This is the instance of the way in which the Great Chain of Being operates. On leads on to another and the process goes on and on and on. This explains ho\v people think in terms of going on pilgrimages in the month of April, the month of the rebirth of life, Good Friday and Easter Sunday after a protracted period of writer-which is the season of non-action, hibernation and death. People see Nature changing and in turn change themselves, get inspired. This is a cyclic process forever going on about us, in us.

It is only the human who 'think of going on pilgrimages (and for obvious reasons, too). Of all living things they alone are supposed to have souls and spiritual inclination.

This brief foregoing accc unt is enough to illustrate the poetic stature of Chaucer. See how economically, but quite effectively he has represented the complex idea of the inter - relatedness of everything in the world.

The rest is self explanatory. Chaucer tells us how the pilgrims came together at the

holy blissful martyr Kingdom

III **inspired, pricks, long Effects on the human**

heart, mind, pilgrimages mind.

Let us have a fresh look at the groups now.

The items under I represent INANIMATE things, i.e. the world of the non-living.

The items under II represent ANIMATE things i.e. the world of the living things.

At once the picture changes: The animate world and the inani-mate world are inextricably entangled. Any change that comes over the inanimate world strongly and surely affect the animate world. A chain reaction sets in.

Let us now look at group II. It represents the world of the living i.e. animate world. Here A stands for the vegetable kingdom (the world of trees, plants, creepers etc.) Looking at B more closely we find that "small birds" represents the world of animals whereas "folk' represents the world of the human. From the above it follows that the vegetable kingdom and the animal kingdom are inseparably bound. In the animal world birds, animals and humans coexist; they are bound together by the laws of Nature. Any change that comes over the animal world affects the world of the human and any change that happens in the vegetable world affects the world of the animals and the birds.

Now let us look at II B. we have "folk" palmers and martyr in that order. I.e. men, pilgrim, and martyrs. This sequence suggests the transition from the mundane world to the spiritual world, leading ordi-nary man to the world martyrdom and sainthood, the noblest stage one can aspire for in this world.

Let us now look at III. As a result of the changes in world outside people get excited and inspired and consequently strongly desire to leave behind them their mundane existence and go to seek spiritual solace at the shrine of St. Thomas Becket at Canterbury. A diagramatic representation may be attempts as follows:

Tabard Inn Sothwerk, how the expeditions was or-ganized, about the host, Harry Bailly, and the twenty nine pilgrims rep-resenting the three social groups of the period, i.e. the feudalistic, the ecclesiastical and the scholastic whose representatives cover almost all walks of life of the 14.th century England. He describes everyone in detail highlighting the general characteristics of each and at the same time pinpointing some peculiarities of each so that each character is both a type and an individual at the same time.

VII. A very brief critical commentary on the General Prologue

Chaucer is one of the best observers of English writers. The General Prologue bears testimony to this. The Prologue gives a realistic report of human nature and society of his century, "a gallery of portraits" In this Chaucer was not original; before him was Boccaccio in his "Decameron", The "Arabian Nights" and many others have a similar pattern. The type was quite popular in the literature of the Classical and the Middle Ages.

If we take the pilgrims at their face value, we stand to lose a good deal of information. Instead, we have to see them as representatives of a large number of various but related notions, judgements and typical patterns of behaviour. The result is that we find such person amongst our relatives, friends, and acquaintance in the present day world.

Chaucer is not just an observer of mankind. He is a gifted story teller too, besides being an excellent poet.

Chaucer began his work in "The Tales' in 1387. He was in his late forties then; He was already familiar with all the kinds of literary modes, conventions and the like. He was rather fond of the allegoric temper of the Middle Ages. Many of the pilgrims are allegoric images.

It is now a convention to group the pilgrims-the marriage/ dis-cussion group and the quarrel group. The former deals with the problem and issues of marriage; in the latter, one tells a story directed at another and gets tit for tat.

The number of pilgrims is not 'nine and twenty' To this number we ought to add the poet and the host, Harry Baily, and the Canon and his yeoman who join the team at Boughton-Under-Bleam. The number swells to thirty three.

Even though each pilgrim promises to tell two stories each either way in which case the number of stories would have been more than one hundred and twenty we have just twenty four, twenty three by the pilgrims and one by Chaucer himself. Some tales are unfinished.

Chaucer is totally detached and nowhere do we find him speaking his mind. He achieves the unity we find in the tales by cross-references and interlocking layers of ideas, besides forming groups within groups with a good deal of overlapping interests. The very fact that all the participants are pilgrims itself shows the unity in diversity.

The first forty-two lines of the "General Prologue" prepare us to listen to what follows by holding our interest, after kindling and fanning it. When we come to the Squire, the son of the Knight and on the threshold of youth we realize that some of the account will relate the human passion and romantic love. Let us recall April with the sweet showers, the soft, caressing Zephirus, the young sun, the birds making melody, the young shoots and flowers - these are all the usual paraphernalia of romantic love. And we read on. We soon begin to suspect that there is some mockery behind the pilgrimage -an assortment of persons from all known walks of life coming together, journeying together, agreeing to tell stories to while away the time and bring down the tedium (for, a true pilgrimage can hardly be boring as the pilgrims' mind will be filled with piety and devotion) especially when afterwards, some of the stories turn out to be totally unfit during a pilgrimage. Let us re member that the month of April is the Easter season- Crucifixion, Resurrection, Penance, Discipline and Piety.

VIII. Chaucer's England

It is believed that the ideas for "The Tales" germinated in Chaucer's mind between 1380 and 1387. These years were both transitional and paradoxical. These were strongly medieval and surprisingly modern in terms of social, political, religious and economic factors, Even though the society consisted of three sections namely the ecclesiastical, the feudalistic and scholastic, the English man freely voiced the theory that all men are created equal. The period saw labour resisting employer in concerned action (anticipating the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 in Russia). Yet, the period was thoroughly imbued with traditional beliefs that one who preached the brotherhood of man in one sentence reminded one's audience in the next that the tiller of the soil was ordained by God to be inferior and the peasant was guilty or actual sin if he rebelled against his lot. Here we are to recall the Great Chain of being, the Divine Right Theory and the sanctivity of Order which has been incorporated in Shakespeare's "Troilus and Cressida" in the form of Ulysses' speech. These years saw the "Commons" in parliament forming the bridge between the people and the government, establishing their role in the administration, even though it was just the start of the assertion of peoples legislative powers. These years also saw a wide-spread interest prevailing among the (socially) upper classes in learning and the arts; in education for the sons of he a respectable language in which to write and to conduct the affairs of state. However, it was the last phase of the "Dark Ages" standing for the dark illiteracy of the poor; it was a period when Wycliff's insistence upon popular reading of a vernacular Bible was constructed as grounds for religious persecution. It was wholly medieval in that it was still harassed by combat with monstrously powerful and hostile forces; the cold and the darkness, the storm and the sea, the unfriendly mysteries waiting beyond the horizon, diseases and sudden deaths, and greedy and ever impatient Satan ever ready to lay hold of the soul. It was still an island like, contained world with no science and technology and hence no industry and pollution, though psychologically ill-equipped to face the challenges of ovenwhelrning and smothering problems. It saw constant fights and feuds between establishments of every conceivable kind.

London was the centre of all activity. London shaped the things to come in every walk of life. Chaucer lived in London and saw the dis-turbing changes and developments taking place around him. We will now see what this London was like.

The immensely complicated political science in England centred in London, (during the years 1380-87). Although the seat of government was Westminster, a place close to London proper, London shared in sophisticated court life. London was the centre of trade and commerce and finance and, of course, the home of intellectuality; it set the standards for English fashions, customs and ideas. "What London thought was also what England thought". It had been the people of Lon-don who greedily listened to and openly and daringly sympathized with Wycliff when he boldly protested against the corrupt and evil practices of the Church. It was the disgruntled Londoners who admitted Wast Tyler's men to the city in the Peasant's Revolt in 1381. It was the Londoners who swelled the rebel band in sacking the Duke of Lancaster's palace, the Temple, and the Priority of St. John's Clerkenwell. It was with the connivance of the soldiers of London that Wat Tyler and his men were able to enter the Tower of London and murder the inoffensive Archbishop Simon of Sudhury and the Treasurer Hales. Again, ironically, it was Londoner's who sickened by wholesale murder and destruction, finally rallied to the defence of the King and the Loyalists and changed what might have been a nightmare revolution into an uprising which led to the total Collapse of the peasants. It was in the city of London where the great trade rivalries, often resulting in armed attacks, were nourished and became political issues so that the packed Parliament became a matter of course. Exporters and importers fought one another, the native fought with foreigners; merchant kings and princes drove the small fry to the wall; the heavily armed retainers of powerful victualler's guilds warred against those of the equally powerful non-victualler's even journey men within the guilds united against their own master craftsmen. Moreover London politics, which were essentially English politics during this period, were distorted by a national crisis of great magnitude; the Hundred Years' War had reached a phase of dis-heartening stalemate when "The Tales" was conceived and born, and English -men were bitterly divided over allegiance to the King.

Dissatisfaction with the conduct of the war with France and with the domestic policy of the Crown was rife. It joined forces with "the future usurpers of power" to bring about most of the difficulties of the ill-starred Richard II, The year 1358. saw the breach between Richard and Parliament formally acknowledged: The strength ordered justice couldnot now even be hoped for in the state. The magnetic personality of Richard had won him ardent supporters, who were bent oi keeping him on the throne, whatever it cost; but he had as many-, if not more, determined enemies who would no longer overlook, or declared they would not his tolerate consistent preferment of court favourites, his wan-ton extravagance and his arrogant wilfulness' In this year (1358) people learned to walk warily through sullen crowds, or in ominously empty streets^ Who could now be trusted, who now was friend and who foe? These were days when the sword or the gallows might be anyone's fate.

In 1386 Richard's cause suffered two more misfortunes. The first was the remarkable impetus which the rising popularity of the Duke of Gloucester, Richard's uncle and strongest enemy at this time, received through the capture by forces under Gloucester's command of the Flemish fleet. (To understand how momentous this naval victory seemed to the English we must bear in mind that no major battle in the war had been won by the,, English since the spectacular success of Richard's father, the Black prince, at Poitier's some three decades earlier. Only Clasis and a narrow strip of land in distant Aquitaine on the continent remained in English hands. English commands of the seas had been lost. The French and the Spanish were repeatedly raiding English coastal towns. Rumours were afoot that the French were assembling an enormous force to invade England.)

The Second misfortune to the King's cause in 1386 was the departure of John of Gaunt for Spain. This uncle of Richard was no more liked than his nephew and so, for Richard, he

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amounted to nothing as a potential enemy. On Johns' departure his place was occupied by Henry Bolingroke, his son and the future king, Henry IV. Henry's popularity made him an enemy with whom Richard had to reckon. Bolingbroke and Gloucester joined together and the combination against the Crown was formidable.

Both Richard and the Duke of Gloucester and with them the whole of England spent 1387 in preparing for armed combat. Misfortune dogged the King and his supporters. Eventually Gloucester seized control of the government. In December 1387 he marched against London, caught and confined Richard temporarily in the Towen and was successful in getting himself appointed at the head of a commission of regency. He then summoned a Parliament which he insisted upon being free of the King's adherents. (History has dubbed this parliament as the Merciless because of its wholesale decrees of death of exile for so many of Richard's friends, men who must all have been known to Geoffrey Chaucer). Gloucester's triumph was brief. Nevertheless, the disasters and terrors of his short regime must have had far reaching consequences on all who witnessed them.

Although the political pot of England was boiling over, and Chaucer might have observed all the events without ever getting drawn into the whirlpool, the events must have left an indelible memory on him. Like the mythical Ulysses, he was a part of all he had met.

Now we shall have a look at the city of London during the period. Chaucer's London was a study, like the times, in contrasts, Chaucer must have been as used to looking upon the splendour and extravagance of palace surrounding as upon the meanness of small dwellings crowded together in narrow lanes. The intricacies excitements and conflicts of a thriving commerce must have been as familiar to Chaucer as the squalor and desperate uncertainty of the London poor. Many writers of Medieval London have ignored the miseries, either because of contemporary pride or later conviction that the past, was golden; we find examples of these two points of view in the 15th century panegyric "London thou art of towers A Per se". which speaks only of happy gaiety and wealth, and in William Morris's romantic description of 14th century London, which speaks of the city as "small and white and clean" Chaucer's London was indeed "small" In area, but its population was relatively large; to a certain extent, the city was "white" for many of the closely built, gabled houses with their overhanging bay windows, were-lime washed; "but since the city was without proper sanitation; London could not possibly be called "clean". The number of Ordinances passed in the 14th century which stipulated better disposal of garbage and sewage indicates clearly the ineffectuality of such measurers. Moreover, the general sense of orderly peace conveyed by the 15th century poem (referred to earlier and attributed to the poet Dunbar) are both denied by the din and smells of a London in which brewers, wine merchants, bakers, cooks, fishmongers, butchers, poulterers, grocers, weavers, clothiers, furriers, shoemakers, tanners, glovers, makers of small wares, armours, superiors, blacksmiths and many more plied their trades within the city walls. "There was no nosier city in the world", Besant writes and adds a graphic description of odours which would mingle with the smell of decaying and worse refuse thrown into the streets or floating in the open ditches. But uproar and smell were an intrinsic part of the city, and an exiled Londoner in the 'Middle Ages undoubtedly had the sense nostalgic longing to return to his discordant and unclean city. Chaucer belonged to this London.

Between 1380 and 1384 Chaucer came under the influence of Wyclif and his followers, the Lollards, Wyclif had entered the King's service some years before Chaucer was there. Many of his friends were Lollard Knights. Chaucer invests his Parson (one of the Pilgrims) with many of the characteristics of the Wyclifites. The Flemish Crusade of 1383 too must have affected Chaucer.

Surprisingly, Chaucer's personal life was untroubled. As his genius is concerned with the timeless and permanent, he was not inter-ested in the immediate and ephemeral. Both

Richard II and Henry IV admired and patronized him. Chaucer's friends, political influence and financial security too must have protected him.

IX The Idea of Pilgrimages

We do not know who it was that first travelled to Jerusalem on the first pilgrimage to tread the hallowed ground. But we know that from the second century onwards there were streams of pilgrims to the Holy Land for the special purpose of prayer. This purpose implying "acceptance of the theory of sanctuaries which is an act of piety to visit" created the pilgrimage as later generations were to understand it" a journey undertaken, from religious motives, to a place held to be sacred". Eventually veneration of relics became an essential part of pilgrimage.

Although many devout Christians of Western Europe were always able to find their perilous way to Bethlehem* and Jerusalem, many more were unable to manage that long, difficult journey, and it was imperative that the church should find for these latter an alternative. Care for the tombs of saints had long been a pious customs: to extend the custom to a religious act through which divine aid would be obtained was but a step, and from that step soon developed the belief in miracles performed at the grave. Medieval man, searching always desperately for assurance in his extraordinary complicated and hazardous world came to be even more deeply convinced than his ancestors of the Dark Ages that intercessory powers and miraculous manifestations were attached to the bodies of saints and their relics. The number of pilgrimages to the graves of local martyrs and of the treasures left there in propitiation saw a steady increase throughout the Middle Ages. This explains the pil-grimage to the shrine to Thomas Becket at Canterbury.

Of the miracles wrought by the "water of St. Thomas" the diluted blood of the martyr, the most celebrated were those of healing. (Chaucer speaks of them). The monk Benedict a contemporary of Becket, writes (given here under in Modern English).

"By his merit the blinds see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the mute speak, the poor have the gospel preached to them paralytics are healed, those afflicted with, dis-ease recover, the mad are restored to reason epileptics are cured, those having a fever are raised up, and to conclude briefly, all manner of infirmity is cured; and almost all the gospel miracles have been repro-duced in many ways by his merit"

X. The pilgrims - The Knight and the Squire:

Chaucer begins his description with the words: "And at a knight then will first begin" A knight is a symbol of chivalry; he is identified with chivalry. The chivalric code stipulates that knightly behaviour is synonymous with decent moral conduct. An examination of his history of chivalry proves that the magnificent strength of the Order of Knighthood never lay in the numbers who followed the Rule (of the Chivalric Code) but the widespread acceptance of ideals in which medieval men had belief as profound as Christianity itself and which he bequeathed to succeeding generations. Chaucer's knight is the personification of those ideals, yet he is far 'more than that; like the other pilgrims taking this April Journey to Canterbury he is flesh and blood. He is one of those exceptional heroes who strive to live according to a great ideal yet who is at the same time understandably and understanding by human. Look at what Chaucer says introducing him:

A knight there was, and that no worthy man

That from the time that he began

To ride out, he loved chivalry

During the first eleven hundred years of Christianity, chivalry, as we understand it now, did not exist as an institution. It was around 1095. A.D. That Urban II (the Pope) in proclaiming the First Crusade welded together the Cross and the sword; as a result the Christian ideal of the Order of Knighthood was created and took a high position in man's

aspiration. Urban commanded that the members of Christ's army should be "wise, provident, temperate, learned, peace -making, truth seeking, pious, just, equitable, pure". It was a formidable order: just look at the list of attributes. (Professor Hearnshaw has observed that" the decadence of chivalry can be discovered in its very idea") So Chaucer's perfect gentle knight" embodies all the above listed ideals- a very rare specimen. The Knight was the Champion of the Church, the righteous and implacable enemy of the infidel, the compassionate protector of the weak and oppressed, the defender of all Right and Justice.

Professor Manly believes that the pilgrims could be identified with men and women Chaucer knew. About the Knight see what he says:

"Chance has provided us with an interesting set of documents which suggest that, though Chaucer may not have given us in the Knight a portrait on one of his own friends, he at least knew men of the exact type he has drawn with such affectionate skill"

Manly goes on to say that three members of the Scope family, Sir Stephan, Sir Geoffrey and Sir. William could have been models for the Knight. (Chaucer knew the Scrope family intimately) Manly asserts that Chaucer's Knights is "a figure at once realistic and typical of the noble and adventurous idealists of his day."

Whereas in the Knight Chaucer portrays the dignity of maturity and the upholding of Chivalry, in the Knights' son he portrays the gaiety and enthusiasm of youth (who all over the world share with the Squire what he represents) Chaucer uses glowing words to describe him -swift and light words which suggest a spring time morning in full splendour and wonder clothed in "fresh quilted colours" Chaucer himself perhaps was like the squire, when the was twenty. Under the feudal system of military service, a squire ranked next to a knight. In the 14th century Squire was called a "bachelor", when he was ready to graduate to Knighthood) Recall that we have Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science etc. etc.)

The ability to sing and dance was an important accomplishment in the 14th century for all ladies and gentlemen (and even for less wellborn men and women). Therefore, it is quite natural for Chaucer to endow, the young squire with ability to write both words and music for songs. Besides the squire knows how to draw, how to ride, how to joust and above all, how to dress. His physical characteristics agree with those given in the medieval romances.

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(Apart from the above, there are scores of books on Chaucer readily available in any good library)

ON HIS BLINDNESS
(JOHN MILTON)

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Objectives

At the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

(I) form a general idea of the Age of Milton:

(ii) understand about the personality and genius of Milton: and

(ill) realize that Milton's works are an expression of his personality.

John Milton (1608-1674) is renowned as one of the greatest poets of England and is placed next to Shakespeare in the hierarchy of English poets. Before we proceed to study about this eminent personality, let us make a brief survey of his age, highlighting only such aspects as are needed to understand Milton, the man and poet.

1.1 The Age of Milton

The seventeenth century, to which Milton belonged, is in several respects the century of transition into our modern world. It has been aptly described as a double faced age like the Roman God Janus-the one looking in the direction of the Middle Ages, and the other facing our own era. The early half of his century was a complex period, both in the literary and social life of England. The Stuart Kings James I and Charles I who ruled England then believed in the theory of the "Divine Right" of kings. They were corrupt, immoral and wilful despots. Naturally they came into conflict with the Parliament which ultimately led to a decade-long Civil War. King Charles I was defeated and hanged in 1649 and a Puritan Government was established with Oliver Cromwell as Dictator. Cromwell ruled the nation with an iron hand (like a despot) till 1660 when Charles II who had been in exile in France was restored to the throne of England. This is known as the Restoration (1660)

You may read any standard British history text book for a more detailed account of all these developments.

The Civil War separated men from the older ways of living, and the religious controversies killed much that had remained lively in the national imagination since the Middle Ages. Science and rationalism were growing in power and much of that power was to be utilized to destroy man's capacity for myth-making, to remove from the arts much of the authority they had once possessed. All these conflicts and tensions could not but have their impact on the literature of the age. While the Metaphysical school* of poets like John Donne and his follower Abraham Cowley accepted the new situation with a facile (not deep) optimism hoping that somehow science and poetry could be employed each in the service of the other, in general, a note of pessimism and despair runs through the literary work of the period. To quote for Evans: "It was in this period, when the position of the poet had been made difficult, that John Milton wrote in a manner that recalled poetry to the most elevated and regal conception of its function".

The Growth of Puritanism

The Age of Milton is often referred to as the era of Puritanism. As W.H. Hudson observes.

"The growth of Puritanism as a moral and social force its establishment as the controlling power in the state, and the religious and political struggles by which these were accompanied are for the student of the literature of Milton's age, the principal features of its history."

But what exactly do we mean by Puritanism? Puritanism was the doctrine of the school of English Protestants of the 16th and 17th centuries, whose avowed intention was the clearing and purging of ex-isting religious practices from anything not specifically authorised by the Scripture. They were totally and uncompromisingly opposed to the organization of the English Church under priests and to the entire body of sacraments. In the first two decades of the 17th century, the Puritan sect was a mere minority but an extremely effective and dynamic one. However in the forties they expanded into a force to be reckoned with.

Within range, the impact of Puritanism on the tone and temper of English life and thought was profound. But as Hudson remarks. "The spirit which it introduced was fine and noble, but it was hard and stern. We admire the Puritan's integrity and uprightness; but we deplore his fanaticism, his moroseness, and the narrowness of his outlook and sym-pathies. "The Puritans sought to destroy humane culture and thereby confine lite ıture within the circumscribed field of its own particular interests. It was fatal both to art and literature.

We habitually speak of Milton as Puritan. But let us remember that Milton was a Puritan "with a difference". Speaking about the pro-found influence exerted by the Puritan movement on the writers of the 17th century. William Henry Hudson writes: "It was only here and there that a writer arose who was able to absorb all its strength while tran-scending its limitations. This was emphatically the case with Milton the greatest product of Puritanism in our literature, in whose genius and work, however the moral and religious influence of Puritanism are com-bined with the generous culture of the Renaissance."

Difference from the Elizabethan Age

There are many striking differences between the 17th century and the great Elizabethan age that preceded it. In the first place, national unity, of which loyalty to Queen Elizabeth was the symbol, was gradually, impaired (destroyed) by the demand for a" more democratic form of church government or even entire freedom of the individual in matters of conscience all of which resulted in civil war, as we have already seen. "In the second place, the great conceptions, philosophical, political, and social that had marked the preceding age, gave way and disappeared." (Moody and Lovett). To mention one more glaring contrast, while the age of Elizabeth was full of enthusiasm and confidence in this world and the next, the early 17th century was overcast with shadows and forebodings, melancholy and depression. "To pass from one to another is like passing from a plain bright with sunshine into the twilight of a forest." (Moody and Lovett).

Thus we see that the 17th century was a complex one indeed, constantly changing is phases from 'decade to decade: Medieval and modern, authoritarian and liberal, lyrical and prosaic. It was also an age of satire, pamphleteering and much mud slinging amidst lyrical out-bursts of the finest poetry. It was in such an age that Milton appeared like a scintillating (shining) star, raged like a comet and established a unique niche (place) for himself.

Please refer to any standard text book of British History and become more familiar with the age in question, for, only then will you be able to place the poet in true perspective.

Let us move on to a brief study of the poet's life.

1.2 Milton's Life

John Milton was born in Bread Street Cheapside, London, on 9th December, 1608.His father was a scrivener (notary public), an occu-pation which combined the duties of the modern banker and lawyer. Though the elder Milton had embraced the Puritan faith, his Puritanism was not of the hard and forbidding type. Moreover he was a loyer of art and literature and hence young Milton grew up in a home where music, art, literature, and the social graces gave warmth and colour to an atmo-sphere of serene piety. Speaking about Milton's childhood days, Moody and Lovett observe. "During the boyhood England was till Elizabethan; among the great body of Puritans geniality and zest of life had not yet given place to that harsh strenuousness which Puritanism afterward took on. "The body's father

realized the promise and possibility of future greatness in his son, and took the utmost pains to have the boy ad-equately educated. Milton was very close to his father. He was taught music, and was allowed to range at will through the English poets; among these Spencer, the poet of pure beauty, exercised over him a charm which was to leave its traces upon all the work of his early man-hood.

Milton was educated at St. Paul's School and at Christ's College, Cambridge, where he remained seven years, taking his B.A. in 1629 and his M.A. in 1632. Milton's father had earlier wanted his son to join the Church, but he gave up all such intentions by the time he left Cambridge. Milton realized that his true vocation was poetry and self-culture. Thus in addition to his regular studies, he began to prepare him-self with earnestness and consecration for the life of poetry. "His mind was fixed on lofty themes, and he believed that such themes could be fittingly treated only by one who had led a noble and austere life." (Moody and Lovett).

Fortunately Milton's father was in a financial position to further his wishes, and on leaving Cambridge, he according by took up his abode in the country house of the family at Horton. Buckingamshire, some seventeen miles from London. Building steadily upon the firm foundations he had already laid, Milton thus became a very great scholar. He was a fairly expert Latinist, reading, speaking and writing a language that was far from dead. He was competent in Greek which had opened to him another great world of literature. He was well versed in music and he knew some French and Italian very well indeed. As Marjorie Hope Nicholson, one of the foremost authorities on Milton re-marks. "Thanks to his father, his St. Paul's masters and his tutors, John Milton at the age of seventeen was already very familiar with the two worlds from which he drew his poetry-Latin and Greek classics, and the Bible. "Referring to Milton's erudition (learning), W.H. Hudson observes: "This point must be carefully marked, not only because in the breadth and accuracy of his erudition he stands head and shoulders above all our other poets, but also because his learning everywhere nourishes and interpenetrates his poetic work."

Having now reached his thirtieth year, Milton resolved to complete his studies by travel. Don't we realize the importance of travel as a part of education? He therefore left London in May 1638 and went by way of Paris to Italy from where however he was prematurely recalled by news of the critical state of things at home. To quote Milton himself: "While I was preparing to pass over into Sicily and Greece, the melancholy intelligence which I received of the civil commotions in England made me alter my purpose; for I thought it base to be travelling for my amusement abroad while my fellow citizens were fighting for liberty at home."

Upon his return from abroad, Milton settled in London and set up a small private school, where he tried to educate a few pupils in his own manner. From 1640 onward Milton became increasingly active as a supporter of the Puritan cause against the Royalists. As a pamphleteer he became indeed one of the great pillars of that cause, and on the es-tablishment of the commonwealth was appointed Latin Secretary to the Committee for Foreign Affairs.

Milton's married life was a tumultuous one. His first marriage was with Mary Powell, a young girl of sixteen in the year 1642. It was very unhappy and unsuccessful so that Mary returned to her royalist parents within a few weeks and did not come back to her husband until 1645. She died in 1652 leaving behind three daughters. So he married Katherine Woodcock. This was a happy marriage but the wife died within a year of marriage leaving behind a daughter Milton married a third time a lady named Elizabeth Minshull who was thirty years younger than him.

Milton's advancing years were rather bleak. Early in 1653 a terrible calamity overtook him; his eyesight which had long been failing, was now ruined entirely by over-stress of work and he became totally blind. On the Restoration of monarchy in 1660) Milton was arrested and two of his books were publicity burnt by the hangman; but he was soon released and allowed to sink into political obscurity. With all his political hopes shattered he was poor

and lonely and blind; he felt bitterly the failure of the cause for which he had toiled so hard and sacrificed so much. His third wife Elizabeth did bring comfort to his declining years; but he was greatly distressed by the unfilial conduct of his daughters by his first marriage. In addition to his blindness, he suffered from gout and his strength gradually failing, but with mind unimpaired and serene, he died peacefully on November 8, 1674.

Milton was a very subjective writer like John Keats, Dante etc. And so it is necessary that you Should be familiar with his life and background. Now let us make a brief survey of Milton's important writ-ings with special reference to his poetical works.

1.3 Milton's Writings

W.H. Hudson classifies Milton's works into four periods. (I) The College period, closing with the end of his Cambridge career in 1632.

(i) The Horton period, closing with his departure for the Continent in 1638.

(ii) The period of his Prose Writings, from 1640 to 1660; and

(iv) The late poetic period, or period of his greatest achievement;

Milton's college poems, Latin and English, are for the most part experimental. However one poem belonging to this period is exceptional and that is the Ode On The Morning of Christ's Nativity.

To the Horton period belong four minor poems of such beauty-and power that, even if Paradise Lost had never been written, the would have sufficed to put their author high among the greater gods of English song". (W.H. Hudson); They are : L'Allegro and Il Penseroso (1633), Comus 1634) and Lvcidas (1637).

The first product of Milton's Horton period the poem in two parts L 'Allegro (the Joyous man) and Il Penseroso (the meditative man) is in its nature autobiographical. "The two parts of the poem paint the two sides of the poet's own temperament: the one urging outward, toward communion with the brightness and vivid activity of life; the other drawing inward, toward lonely contemplation, or musings upon the dreamier quieter aspects of nature and of-human existence. (Moody and Lovett)

Comus is a masque with a moral teaching revealing the poet's Puritan spirit... (The masque, by the way,, is a dramatic entertainment, which is a combination of music, elaborate scenic effect and dancing woven around a fairly tale; myth or allegory). An atmosphere of moral strenuousness finds expression in Comus, though in the most unobtru-sive manner.

In Lycidas we have a Puritanism which is political and ecclesi-astical as well as spiritual and ethical. A monody (song of mourning) on the death of Milton's college friend Edward King, this poem is in the form of the classic pastoral elegy. (In a pastoral elegy, which is a special form of elegy, the mourner and the mourned are represented as shepherds and the setting is rural, or of the country side)

In 1641, Milton published a series of pamphlets against episcopacy or th church. Between 1643 and 1645, he published a few pamphlets on divorce as well as the great and noble Areopagitica, which is essentially a plea for freedom of thought and speech.

It is generally agreed that the most miraculous and fruitful phase of Milton's poetic career was the last period. Hudson observes: "It was not till the restoration of the monarchy drove him into private life and obscurity that Milton found leisure to accomplish the immense task which year by year he had kept in the background of his mind." Forced to seek shelter from the storm of the royalist reaction, he carried with him into his hiding place the opening book of Paradise Lost begun two years earlier. The poem was finished by 1665, was published by an obscure printer in 1667. It is the greatest English epic poem written in twelve books a stupendous (great) masterpiece of intellectual energy and creative power, a brilliant illustration of the poet's sublimity, grand style, blank, verse, bold sustained imagery including Homeric

epithets and similes.

In 1671, four years after the publication of Paradise Lost appeared Milton's third volume of verse. (The college and Horton poems had been published in 1645). The volume consisted of Paradise Regained, a supplement of Paradise Lost and Samson Agonistes, a drama in the Greek manner. Paradise Regained written in four books seems to most modern readers a very slight thing beside its gigantic predecessor. The 'dramatic poem' Sanson Agonistes (Samson the Wrestler) crowns the labours of these closing years. As in the case of his great epic poem., in this work too Milton applies the forms of classic art to the treatment of a biblical subject, for the work is fashioned strictly upon the principles of Greek tragedy. Our admiration for Milton is sure to increase when we remember that he composed his greatest poem of the last period-after he had become totally blind.

A great book says Milton in his Areopagitica is the life - blood of a master spirit treasured and embalmed for a life beyond life. In other words, a great book is born of the heart and head of its author. What picture of Milton the man emerges from his writings? Let us make a brief and rapid survey.

1.4 Milton's Personality and Character

'Milton the literary artist is inseparably bound up with Milton the man. In other words, all his writings are a projection of his character and personality. We have already noted that he was born and brought up in a highly congenial (favourable) and cultivated atmosphere. He had delicate physical features with earned him the nickname "The Lady of Christ's" while at Cambridge. Another nickname "Paules Pigeons" had been shared by many boys.

Fortunately for Milton himself and his devoted father who did so much for him the boy was studious, serious, dedicated and determined to fulfil his 'call' to the literary mission. His character and personality may be described as "lofty" or "sublime" A dignified reverence and high seriousness marked all his efforts and endeavours. Underlying all his actions was the deep-rooted conviction that God, the awful taskmaster was supervising him constantly. Naturally he aimed at perfection in everything he did. He derived inspiration for all his thoughts and actions from religion, especially the scriptures which he had devoured (studied) well. His unflinching faith in God and Divine providence made him strong, even, stubborn so as to accept all his suffering including blindness, poverty, depression and loss of mental peace.

Milton believed in individual liberty and freedom of frank ex-pression. Most of his prose writings contain his bold and liberal ideas. He was totally against despotism of any kind.

Milton was an epitome of deep and broad knowledge. He knew a number of ancient and modern languages; he was well versed in several foreign literatures: moreover he had read and assimilated the scriptures in the original.

Though he had a strong streak of Puritanism in his entire making, Milton was keenly susceptible to the influence of beauty. The Re-naissance elements is perceptible in his youthful creations.

Along with a deep sense of beauty, Milton displayed a sound ear for music, for rhythm and for pleasing effects.

Milton was naturally a very profound genius with his tremendous poetic gifts, the vastness and depth of his erudition, his sincere faith in God, religion and Puritanism, his staunch love of liberty and his keen sense of beauty and music.

However the poet was not free from weakness. In general he is said to have lacked a sense of humour. Secondly he was prejudiced against women. To some extent it was his ego and narrow mindedness that made him not teach his daughters except to read and write several languages so as to be of service to him.'

But then who exists that does not have faults and weakness? Our concern is more with Milton's genius. In our final estimate, Milton towers, with all his shortcomings as a gigantic literary and intellectual figure.

Writing about the drastic change that had come over Milton during his last years Moody and Lovett make the following observation.

"When we compare the figure thus suggested (by painter Richardson) with the portrait in his twenty-first year, we realize how far and under what public and private stress, Milton had travelled from the world of his youth. In making himself over from Elizabethan to Cromwellian he had suffered much and renounced much; he had lost many of those genial human qualities which had won him love, we can-not help feeling an admiration mixed with awe for the loftiness and singelessness of aim, the purity and depth of the moral moving times. The deep voice of Milton rolled out its interrupted song more than a decade after the chorus of romantic poetry had been hushed, and men had turned away to listen to the new "classical" message of Dryden and the poets of precision.

In her brilliant portrait of the great poet Rose Macaulay the En-glish novelist writes:

"As a man he was despite his disconcerting contradictions, of a fundamental simplicity. He possessed an undue share of sensitive; irri-table and vaunting egotism; the portion of poets, but concealed by some of them better than by this subjective;-almost humourless great man, who saw himself as God's nursling, as his country's prophet, and at last as a vanquished Titan."

One of Milton's biographers wrote about him in this mariner, -"I never heard that he was by any called morose:" Audrey's impression strengthens this view: "Of a very cheerful humour. He would be cheerful even in his gout-fits and sing". Milton was confident and proud in his soaring youth; but by middle life he was struck down to earth. He died a vanquished and embittered idealist, in a world with which he had never come to terms, nor could. "His final greatness consists both in the way he adjusted himself to the worst that fate could bring him." (E.M.W. Tillyard).

Read this Unit a number of times till you become familiar with Milton's age and personality.

Milton's Sonnets

2.0 Objective:

At the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

(I) understand what a sonnet is:

(ii) appreciate Milton as a sonneteer; and

(iii) realize that Milton's sonnet "On His Blindness" is a projection of the author's life and personality.

Before we proceed to study Milton's 'On His Blindness', let us become familiar with the sonnet, its feature and practitioners.

2.1 The Sonnet

The sonnet is a lyric, fourteen lines in iambic pentameter, gov-erned by certain prescribed rules in general and in the disposition of the rhymes. It derives its name from the Italian sonnet which means "a little song" or sound sung to the accompaniment of music. It is a form of subjective poetry particularly suited to the expression of a single idea or sentiment, since it gives an impression of unity and completeness.

Sonnet were written in Italy in the latter half of the thirteenth century and his form of poetic composition is associated with the name of Petrach thought the form had been used even by Dante before him A Petrarchan Sonnet, is composed of two parts, the Octave

comprising the first eight lines and the sestet comprising the last six lines. The octave employs enclosed rhyme abba, abba and the sestet rhymes in a variety of ways such as cde.cde or cdc.dcd, but never ends in a couplet. There was a clear break or pause at the end of eight lines called caesura followed by a turn in the thought called Volta. Milton composed some of his sonnets in this manner.

The sonnet was introduced in England by Wyatt and Surrey in the 16th century. They discarded the Italian form and adopted a new rhyme scheme. This form was later modified and used by Shakespeare with such success that it came to be known as Shakespearean Sonnet. It consisted of three quatrains and a concluding couplet with the rhyme scheme abab, cdcd, efef, gg. Romantic poets like Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and many others followed the Shakespearean pattern.

There are some good sonnets in English which do not confirm strictly to either of the two traditional patterns, Examples can be found in the sonnets of Milton and Wordsworth. Modern poets have tried other experiments such as inverting the order of the octave and the sestet; or extending the length of the sonnet to sixteen lines; but at seems unlikely that any new pattern of sonnet will become an established type. (B.J. Pendlebury).

The common or traditional theme of a sonnet is LOVE as in the sonnets of Shakespeare, Spenser, Sidney, Elizabeth Barrett Browning and others. However, the sonnet has no set range of subjects, and no prescribed manner. Several poets have used other themes also in their sonnets. Milton and Wordsworth have written sonnets on public occa-sions which have a distinct resemblance to odes. Donne wrote not only amorous sonnets but also "Holy Sonnets'. The composition of a sonnet is an extremely difficult one 'demanding exquisite skill, metrical beauty and compression.

A poem is either an expression of a mood, emotion temperament etc., or the outcome of an experience sometimes poignant, painful, touching, exclusive etc. Before we attempt to study Milton's Sonnet "On His Blindness" let us recall the tragic onset (attack) of Milton blindness which constitutes both the background and theme for this poem.

2.2 Milton's Blindness

To lose any of Our God-given faculties (powers or gifts) is sad; loss of sight is tragic indeed. One is reminded of Helen Keller, Homer and the famous Hindi poet Surdas and a host of such unfortunate mortals who were either bom blind or were struck blind later on in life. We may add Milton to this list. Milton's eyesight, though, quick, as he was a proficient with the rapier (sword, wit) had never been strong,. His constant headaches, his late study and over stress of work all concurred (joined) to bring the calamity upon him. Speaking in the connection, Mark Pattison observes; "It had been steadily corning on for a dozen years before, and about 1650 the sight of the left eye was gone. He was warned by his doctor that if he persisted in using the remaining eye for book, work, he would lose that too." Listen to Milton's own account of his response to the doctor's advice:

"The choice lay before me between dereliction (neglect) of a supreme duty and loss of eyesight; in such a case I could not listen to the physician.... I could not but obey that inward monitor, I know not what, that spoke to me from heaven, considered with myself that many had purchased less good with worse ill, as they who give their lives to reap only glory, and I thereupon concluded to employ the little remaining eyesight I was to enjoy in doing this, the greatest service to the common weal it was in my power to render". Milton strained his eyes so much in writing his "Defence of the English People" that in Mark Pattison's view, instead of receiving an honorarium (fee offered, but not claimed, for professional services), Milton paid for it a sacrifice for which money could not compensate him.

It was about the early part of the year 1652 that the calamity was consummated (completed). At the age of forty three. Milton was in total darkness, without even a ray of hope. The magnitude of the catastrophe can be fully understood only if we remember that

Milton's world was the world of books, the realm of learning. He was a scholar who had found the key to knowledge 'through years of patience, hard labour and a long apprenticeship. Secondly his magnum opus (master - piece) Paradise Lost had not yet been born; it was still lying dormant in the creative mind. "Milton had attained it only to find fruition snatched from him. He had barely time to spell one line in the book of wisdom, , before, like the wizard's volume in romance it was hopelessly closed against him for over". (Mark Pattison)

The nature of Milton's disease is not ascertainable form Milton's own accounts However he was deeply affected by the disaster and makes several references to it in his writings. Quite natural, you would agree. It is against such a background that we should study. "On His Blindness."

On His Blindness : Explanatory notes Line-1

My light my power of eyesight Spent:

Exhausted, used up, lost

Line-2

Ere : before a word no longer used

Ere half my days : Before I have lived half my life. That is, before he had lived even a half of the normal span of human life. Re-member that Milton became blind at the age of 44.

In this dark world, and wide:

To a blind man (particularly if he has seen the world earlier) the world naturally would appear all dark and gloomy, vast and boundless.

Compare:

"O dark, dark, dark, amid the baize of noon

Irrecoverably dark, total Eclipse.

Without all hope of day" (Samson Agonistes)

Line -3

that one talent,

Poetic talent, that is, the skill or gift to write poetry. The word talent suggests an allusion (reference) to the Biblical parable of the talents (Mathew XXV, 14-30). The Biblical meaning of the word 'talent' is 'a coin' or a sum of money.

Which is death to hide

To hide which is death: i.e. to hide or not make use of that talent, is equal to death

According to the Biblical story, only those who use their talents will live on after death. The parable refers to the second advent or the second coming (of Christ and is intended to serve as a warning to be followers of Christ that at His coming , He will take account of the way His followers have borne their special responsibilities Talent is like money (belonging to someone else) entrusted to him. He will thus be guilty of breach of trust.

Line - 4

Lodged with me useless.

Now kept idle and unused even in my lifetime on account of my blindness.

Million's fear was that because of his stark (total) blindness he would be unable to use his God-given poetic talent. However his fear proved baseless, for he composed some of his best poems including 'Paradise Lost' after he had lost his eye-sight.

Bent : anxious, desirous, keen, ready (like an athlete about to run).

Though my Soul more bent:

Though my soul is even more keen, and determined 'to serve therewith my master' (1.5)

Line-5

To serve therewith my Maker

To obey my lord and Master and my Maker with the one talent given by him. Milton wrote Paradise Lost to justify the ways of God to man.

My Maker: God, who created the "whole universe including man.

Line 5-6

Present my true account.

Give a true account of my gift.

The allusion to the parable of the talents mentioned in line 3 is continued. 'A master setting out on a journey, gave to his three servants, three two and one talent respectively. The third servant was rebuked for he had kept his talent, buried without making any use of it.

What the poet means is that his soul is eager to give God a proper explanation as to how he had utilized the one talent. God had entrusted him with. Milton's fear and respect for God are revealed here.

Line-6

lest: so that he should not

chide : blame, rebuke, scold (for having wasted his talent)

returning : on returning. Here is a reference to God's second coming and the Day of Judgement "After a long time the lord to those servants cometh and recko h with them"
(MathewXXV- 19)

lest He returning chide:

So that God on His return on the Day of Judgement, should not reprove me for not making good use of my talent, ie. My poetic powers.

Line?

Doth : does

exact : (verb require, demand)

day - labour : work that could be done only during day time, ie. When there is light.

Doth God Exact day labour:

Can God demand that labour for which light is necessary after taking away my light? The allusion is to St. John IX-" I must work the work of him that sent me while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work:

light denied: without providing light; after depriving me of the light of the eyes.

Line - 8

fondly: foolishly: pointlessly. Denial of light has significance and purpose.

Patience : God's gifts are free acts of Grace; god knows how and when to make use of his gifts; to make us instruments of His Will, We therefore must remain patient and not claim to know how to make use of them.

Line 8-9

To prevent that murmur: To root out the spirit of rebellion against God's dispensation. What Milton means is that his conscience or the spirit of unquestioned resignation to the will of God prevents him from making any such complaint against God.

Line 10

Either man's work or his own gifts

God is the symbol of abundance and generosity. He only gives; he does not take or need anything in return. Man's work : service of man. His own gifts : an account of the gifts given by Him to man.

Line 11.

yoke : The burden of misfortunes of sufferings assigned to man by God; burden or cross that God lays on every man, or the cross that man has to bear in life.

Line 10-11

Who best bear his mild yoke.

Christian patience and Christian idea of innocent suffering as redemptive are implied here. Reference and echoes from Luke X 83- 42, John IX-4, Peter 1 11-19, deserve to be noted.

Lines 11-12

His state is kingly: God is the monarch of all. He is the King of Kings.

Line 12

Thousands : numberless angels are there are His command to serve Him.

Bidding : commands, order.

Biddling speed : rush with haste at his command.

Line 13

post : hurry, travel fast (a common usage in Shakespeare)

O'er : over. Note that such elisions or omission of a letter or syllable are necessitated by metrical requirements.

Line 12-13

Thousands at his without rest

Milton is here adapting the verse from the Bible. (Daniel vii 10):-"Thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him."

Line 14

serve : serve God.

Stand and wait:

Those who, unable to do more on account of physical handicaps calmly submit themselves to God's purpose, also render (do) Him genuine service.

Wait: bear the God-given burden patiently and uncomplainingly, waiting for the fulfilment of His designs. Refer Psalm XXXVII- "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him."

They also serve who only stand and wait.

An oft-quoted line, expressing a right conception of God. It is not only those who do spectacular (wonderful) things that serve God well, but also those who perform their humble duties or endure patiently their lot in life. The imagery refers to the duties of

servants at a banquet, those who bustle about serving their master and those who only stand and wait for his commands, serve him equally well.

Read Milton's sonnet On His Blindness a number of times with the help of the above explanatory notes and try to understand the meaning well.

Let us attempt to summarize or paraphrase the poem. It will help to make the meaning clearer.

On His Blindness : A Paraphrase

I feel very sad when I consider that my eyesight has gone before I have lived even half my normal life span and that I have been left lonely and helpless in this gloomy vast world. On account of my blindness, even that one talent or gift that God has bestowed upon me most generously namely, my poetic powers, which should have remained active with me to the last day of my life, not to be snatched away from me by any power except Death, and which should have been utilized fully in the service of God, is now rusting with me, unused and idle. This is despite the fact * that my conscience is very eager and keen to serve my Creator, God with that one talent that he so nobly enriched me. In this way (by composing beautiful hymns) I should have proved my worth and presented a fair account of my talents to my Master so that He should not scold or accuse me of not properly using the talent given to me in all trust. I ask myself rather foolishly whether God demands proper utilization of talents after himself depriving me of my eyesight.

My conscience console me thus: "God does not require any returns or reward for his generous gifts bestowed upon man in the form of service or powers. All that he asks for is implicit obedience and sincere submission to his Will or his Rule which though it may appear harsh outwardly is indeed merciful and gentle. Those who serve Him faithfully in this spirit of uncomplaining self-surrender are to be deemed (considered) his best servants. The position of God is that he is the Su-preme of all Kings. He has thousands of angels and spirits at his com-mand who are prepared to fly over lands and seas at his bidding or order. They who do so untiringly, to render service in a spirit of humility and obedience are his best servants."

Read the poem a number of times along with the explanatory notes and the paraphrase, so that you understand its meanings well Let us now attempt a critical appreciation of the sonnet

2.5 On His Blindness : A Critical Appreciation

Three sonnets, the prologues in Paradise Lost, some choruses and speeches in Samson Agonists and a long passage in the Second Defence , furnish (supply) us with our chief knowledge of Milton's blindness and his attitude toward it. The first of these sonnets is On His Blindness. The poem is reflection of the poet's mood "which he experienced when he was encountering (facing) the calamity for the first time. He must have believed that stupendous (great) task for which he had been "called" would remain unfinished.

The sonnet begins on a note of deep despondency (despair) frustration and helplessness at the sadden deprivation of eyesight. When he considers how his eyesight has been blasted (destroyed) before even half his life i'- span has gone. Now he is left alone and helpless in this dark, vast world with his God-given poetic gifts lying idle and unused, though his conscience is only too eager to serve the Creator by composing fine poetry and thus present a fair account, lest he should be rebuked on the Last Day of Judgement, the poet foolishly asks whether God demands any labour from mortals deprived of sight.

Presently his inner voice stifles his doubts by observing that God does not require either man's deeds or his own gifts in return. They who submit themselves willingly and uncomplainingly to God's will serve him best. God being the Supreme of Kings is all powerful with thousands of angelic messengers willing to do his bidding untiringly. They also serve who merely stand and wait on God's commands.

The poem presents a reflection on the problem of Milton's personal tragedy and destiny as a true Christian and as a writer. As a strong pamphleteer and a supporter of the people's

party against the Royalists, Milton had several enemies and political opponents who held that Milton's tragic loss of sight was a sign of God's disfavour or displeasure. As a writer Milton experienced tremendous grief since his magnum opus (masterpiece) Paradise Lost had not even been begun. As a Christian he pondered whether he had incurred the wrath (anger) of God. Milton's dilemma (problem) is presented effectively in the octave.

The latter part of the poem, that is, the sestet resolves the conflict in the poet's mind. He faces and courageously accepts the bitter unpleasant facts of his tragedy as divine dispensation. In Christ's view, blindness was not a punishment meted out (given) by God, but a myste-rious means of making God's work manifest to mankind. Christ's words: "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work" replenish (refill) his reservoir of strength and conviction, Though his physical vision is lost, his mental vision, which is the true vision, is restored.

On his Blindness is explicitly Biblical in theme and also language. Biblical allusions abound in it. Three such passage are incorporated into the octet. They are: - (I) the question to Christ in St. John FX whether the blind man has sinned for his blindness (ii(the parable of the labourers in the vineyard and (ill) the parable of the talents.

In fact the metaphor around which the sonnet is developed is the parable of the talents in Mathew (XXV 14-30 in which the unprofitable servant, who buried in the earth the money his master had given him, was cast into darkness. J.S.Smart Amart points out (Milton's Son nets) the parable of the talents was in Milton's mind when he wrote that early sonnet on his birthday, since a letter of Milton's to a friend, with which he enclosed it, referred to "the terrible seizing of him that hid the talent" with Christ's command that all men should labour while it is light.

Marjorie Hope Nicolson has some illuminating remarks to make on this sonnet. "The sonnet on his blindness proceeds from grief through questioning to final resignation but both mood and meaning are far more profound than they had been in the youthful reflections on his birthday... We must remember that blindness was a far greater impediment (obstacle) to Milton than it might have been to say, a Romantic poet for whom poetry might literally have been the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. "Milton was not only a classical poet; he believed that one who would write a great poem "doctrinal to a nation" must be a 'learned' poet. When the calamity suddenly overtook him, he could only submit temporarily, uttering with Job (a Biblical character who was an epitome of patience): "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord". The comparison implicit in the last three lines of the sonnet is between the angels who serve God in Heaven and the religious, God-fearing men who in all humility and submission accept God's commands and patiently stand and wait with calm resignation and quite endurance for-the fulfilment of His plans and purposes. Thus On His Blindness, may be considered as both a con-templation and a resolution of a very personal problem of a sensitive and serious devotee.

In structure On His Blindness is a Petrarchan sonnet. The octave contains an expression of the poet's fears, complaints and frustration regarding his blindness. The sestet that follows describes his coming to terms with the inevitable and accepting his destiny with cool resignation. If follows the Petrarchan rhyme scheme namely abba, abba in the octave, and cde, cde in the setset. Usually there is a pause called caesura at the end of the octave, but as B.J. Pendlebury observes not conforming strictly to the Italian mode, On His Blindness tends to obliterate or eliminate the break after the eighth line. However the 'turn' in the thought at the beginning of the ninth line which is technically known as Volta is present.

Commenting on the structure of Milton's "On His Blindness", Majorie Hope Nicolson writes:

"In structure, this is one of the three most masterly of Milton's sonnets, reminding us of the architectonic expertness of Lycidas. I have said that Milton's basic principle in structure is the paragraph rather than the sentence, but in this case I find remarkable example of a

sentence that is a verse -paragraph or a verse paragraph that is a sen-tence."

She observes that if we read the sonnet using semicolons instead of periods, and reducing the capital letters to lower case we will find that the sonnet is really, "one magnificent compound complex sentence". The basic structure of the entire poem may be reduced thus: "I ask, Patience replies". All the rest will fall into place, sprung, from one father and mother, these two simple phrases.

Like Toru Dutt's Lotus, this sonnet too is in the form of a dialogue between the two selves of Milton, one rather foolish and the other enlightened. The poet displays a predilection (preference) for enjambment or run - on lines as for instance in lines 1,3,4,5,8,9,10 and 12. Enjambment helps to give a continuity to the poet's thoughts. The intensity and turbulence of emotion underlying his personal destiny (blindness) is effectively brought out through the tangled and meandering syntax and the metrical irregularities of the octet, whereas the famous concluding line:

They also serve who only stand wait'

clinches all arguments and doubts bringing us to a point of rest and calm resignation the repose of a true devotee or believer waiting in readiness to carry out the will of God.

On His Blindness may be studied relating it to Milton's second sonnet on blindness namely To Cyriak Skinner which was apparently written in 1655 on the anniversary of the day on which Milton had been forced to realize that his blindness was total, three years earlier (in 1652). Similarly, it is related to another sonnet of his, namely "How soon hath time" in that, both sonnets are intimate personal observations where the poet is concerned about the proper use of the special talents bestowed on him by God:

All is, if I have grace to use it so,

As ever in my great Taskmaster' eye.

In the final analysis^ On His Blindness is an intensely moving, technically brilliant, autobiographical sonnet.

2.6 Milton as a Sonneteer

Most readers associate Milton with his great epic Paradise Lost. almost oblivious (forgetful) of the fact that he was a sonneteer too. In fact he is rated as second only to Shakespeare as a sonnet writer. He was fifty one when he went into hiding; after the Restoration of His Majesty Charles II (1660). While he may have been working on Paradise Lost, the only poetry that can definitely be assigned to these middle years. (1640-1660) is the small group of sonnets. Some of the early ones had been published in the Poems of 1645. Nearly all the others remained unpublished until 1673 the year before Milton's death, while three or four, for obvious political reasons, did not appear until 1694, posthumously (long after the author's death). In all, Milton composed 24 sonnets only in contrast with Shakespeare who wrote 154. Of these five are in Latin and one sonnet, strictly speaking, does not conform to the sonnet mode. The most important evidence for the order in which Milton wrote them and for their dating is to be found in the manuscript in which Milton preserved them, the Trinity or Cambridge Manuscript, in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge.

We know that Milton was a staunch classicist and composed his epic. Paradise Lost, his tragedy Samson Agonistes and other poems following ancient Greek and Latin masters. The Sonnet is one of the few forms he used for which he had no classical precedent or model thought it is possible that Miiton like some modern critics considered it to be a variant upon the classical epigram which it resembles in succinctness and compression. Marjorie Hope Nicholson thinks that Milton would have been attracted< to the sonnet by the limitations, which the form imposed upon any poet who used it. She observes:

"It is one of the few English forms in which the poet's craft is taxed to the full to keep

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within boundaries and limitations yet chal-lenged to transcend those limitations by adoption of materials to the metrical rules. The form requires the terseness Milton admired in Greek poetry, the opportunity and the challenge to say much in little."

Despite his admiration for both Shakespeare and Spenser, Milton adopted the Petrarchan mode and adapted the tighter and more difficult of the various rhyme schemes. His octave is a always abba, abba, his sestet often limited to two rhymes, although he uses combinations of cde' in 5 English sonnets including Oh His Blindness. The paragraph rather than the sentence seems to have been Milton's unit and we find ourselves thinking of his best sonnets as beautifully articulated paragraphs rather than as series of couplets, quatrains or tercets. Unlike various earlier and later poets, Milton did not feel a necessary separation between octave .and sestet. More and more, he tends to enjambment carrying over the sense from either the eighth or the ninth line. In some of his finest sonnets, for example the two on his blindness, the one on Cromwell and the sonnet on the massacre of the Piedmontese we notice that a new sentence introducing the theme of the sestet begins in the middle of either the eighth or ninth line, sometimes implying a dramatic change in mood. Milton's sonnets fall into three groups namely conventional, personal and political. The conventional sonnets follow time honoured traditions, though in Milton's case the themes are not those most frequent in Italian and English sonnets - love. They are largely tributes to particular individuals. Examples are "Lawrence of Virtuous Father...." "Lady that in Prime" etc.

Milton's personal sonnets constitute a small group of private reflections of Milton's part concerning either his blindness or his dead wife. "When I consider " 'and "To Cyriack Skinner" are his two memorable sonnets on blindness. E.M.W. Tillyard observes that if his prose writings tell us certain thing about Milton, so do his sonnets writ-ten like the prose mostly between Lycidas and Paradise Lost. "What most adds to our knowledge of the man are the feelings he displays in the personal sonnets -his tenderness towards his second wife, now dead; his uncomplaining humility in the sonnet on his blindness; the urbanity with which he invites his friend Lawrence to dinner". (Tillyard)

Being politically motivated it is hardly surprising that Milton 'wrote sonnets to Fairfax, 'Cromwell, and other Parliamentary leaders. Milton's sonnets possessed ^ certain literary qualities and threw much light on the poet's nature. "They also, when taken in sequence, tell the story of how his hopes of national betterment through high action came to grief, arid of his own personal disasters or disappointments" (Tillyard)

Milton's fame as a sonneteer rests on a handful of sonnets. Against him, Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats among the Romantics wrote several more. Yet by common consent, Milton occupies a higher position than the Romantic poets. Milton composed sonnets at intervals throughout his career as a pamphlet writer. They were mostly "occasional" outpourings, dealing with personal matters or circumstances, or some contemporary event or eulogizing (praising) been adduced (stated) in the foregoing paragraphs. As David Daiches notes, while some of his sonnets show us Milton in undress, and the utterance is personal and even intimate, these are all format poems in which for the most part a deliberate dignity of tone is sought and achieved through a careful handling of devices he had largely learned from the Italian sonneteers.

J.S. Smart describes Milton's sonnets as "essays on a small scale, in the magnificent style". Milton's sonnets are far from epigrams they are complexly balanced and steadily flowing utterances. In the control of the cadence, the handling of the pauses, and drawing the sense out variously from line to line, Milton in his sonnets was developing a kind of skill which was to stand him in good stead in his epic blank verse. On account of all these virtues despite his scanty output, Milton has come to be acknowledged as the second greatest sonneteer in the English language.

MILTON'S POETRY: SOME ASPECTS

3.0 Objectives

At the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

(i) form a general idea of the salient features of Milton's poetry: and

(ii) estimate Milton's worth as a great poet.

Please read the two previous Units carefully. It will help you to appreciate the several characteristics of Milton's poetry better. Let us begin.

3.1 Puritanical elements in Milton's Poetry

You will recall from Unit I that Milton's age was called the Age of Puritanism. The typical Puritan was God-fearing, high-principled, bold, serious, sincere, possessing strength tenacity, persistence uprightness and integrity. Milton was a staunch Puritan and an active member of the Puritan movement, a person who spent the best years of his life in upholding and defending the Puritan ideals. But he was a liberal Puritan and this influence can be traced even in his earliest writings. Though it is in his Paradise Lost that it comes to the forefront. This epic is Milton's poetical offering on the altar of God. Milton was strongly convinced that God his 'Maker' had bestowed on him "that one talent" namely his poetic abilities with which he had vowed, "to serve the Maker". (Refer Milton's Sonnet: On His Blindness, Unit II). In 1642, Milton wrote:

"Poetical powers are the inspired gift of God rarely be stowed and are of power.... to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns, the throne and equipage of God's almightiness...." That is why he con-sidered himself an inspired mouthpiece or spokesman of God, and his poetry as the voice of the Deity he observes, in the true spirit of a Puritan that his primary purpose in composing Paradise Lost is to "justify the ways of God to Man." It was in fact Milton the Puritan poet living in a puritan environment who selected the Fall of Man as the theme of his magnum opus (masterpiece) because his avowed purpose was to condemn the mental and moral levity of human beings who often under-estimate the significance of their own actions. Through the great epic he tried to exemplify the central philosophy of Puritanism: Man ought to take care of every little action lest he should stray on the wrong path and invoke eternal damnation on himself.

As a Puritan, Milton believed in the supremacy of God Almighty. He upheld and justified the Divine order infallibly prevailing in the entire universe. In his sonnet On His Blindness, he observes about God's position that "his state is kingly". Tillyard aptly points out "Milton's belief in the traditional world - picture was emotionally the most powerful theological element in his poetry, and it finds expression without the least sign of conflict".

Milion's concept of poetry and the poetic art was to a large extent coloured by his Puritanical outlook. His poems were hardly effusion of spontaneous powerful feelings, rather they were created after much labour, toil and care to approach at least a near perfection since as Milton says in On His Blindness.

My soul more bent

To serve therewith my Maker, and present

My true account, lest he returning chide.

"Fortunately Milton's Puritanism was broad liberal. He held no truck with the shortcomings of dogmatic Puritanism-its hypocrisy, fanaticism, extreme austerity and above all an inflexible narrow mindedness. His poetry gained considerably under the positive impact of Puritanism by virtue of its fortitude and temperance. Though Puritanism was a strong element of Milton's poetry it is wrong to describe Milton as "not only the highest, but the completes! type of Puritanism". It is because the greatest of England 's Puritans was also the

greatest of her artists". It goes without saying that Milton could not have attained eminence and high excellence as a master poet if he had sadly confined himself to the sphere of influence of strict Puritanism.

Like most other English writers of the 15th 16th and 17th cen-turies, Milton too was influenced by the spirit of Renaissance, that great revival of art and learning and the Classics, of which you must have read in other units (on 'Bacon' for instance) Please read more about the Renaissance in some standard text book on A history of English Litera-ture'.

3.2. Renaissance Elements in Milton's Poetry

Milton was the child of Renaissance and Reformation, just as he was a product of Puritanism. Many of the fine qualities of this movement of revival can be traced in his poetical works:

(i) Renaissance Learning and the Classic

Milton's grand epic Paradise Lost is a blending of Renaissance art, learning, philosophy and metaphysics, Classical allusions aptly and abundantly enrich his works. The Renaissance element is singularly evi-dent in his two early poems namely L' Allegro and II Penseroso. While there are echoes of romance, chivalry, pastoral, music and dance in the former, a love of Pagan learning and music are revealed in the latter. Even his masque Comus a serious moral and religious work, has literary affiliations with the Renaissance. Lycidas is a Christian pastoral elegy, but the tradition, form and method Milton followed are those of classical pastoral poets like Virgil, Bion and Moschus. The entire theme of his powerful verse -play Samson Agonistes is ancient Greek. Examples be' multiplied to illustrate how great a Renaissance scholar Milton was. His poems are indeed steeped in the Renaissance temper.

(ii) Humanism

Humanism, which stressed the essential dignity of mans as man, was an important aspect of the Renaissance. Milton found a very deep spiritual and intellectual kinship between the Renaissance ideal of human liberty and his own. His portraitures of both Adam and Satan in Paradise Lost with their independent, unbending resolute nature testify to the poet's belief in Humanism; Also the Renaissance man had an insatiable thirst for knowledge, adventure and exploration. We see such a delineation in Satan.

(iii) Love of Beauty

The Renaissance artists were great lovers of beauty- both of nature and of the human form. Their depiction of beauty was sensuous, intellectual and spiritual. Though a staunch Puritan, Milton was an equally ardent worshipper at the altar of beauty. A brilliant example is to be found in Paradise Lost Book. IV in the fine graphic descriptions of Paradise, the Garden of Eden, and of Adam and Eve in the natural world of beauty. The Hellenic sense of beauty can be perceived in L' Allegero and II Penseroso also. Thus it is to Milton is credit that his poetic works are a happy fusion of the Puritan and the Renaissance.

3.3. Milton's Sublimity

Sublimity is the hallmark or the most distinguishing quality of Milton's poetry. He has the ability to enlarge the imagination of the reader both thought and expression. His poetry elevates and uplifts us out of our petty selves. Very early in life Milton felt a "call" for poetry and he resolved to dedicate his entire life to the poetic profession. In order to equip himself for this noble task he led a life of purity and austerity; he spent years of patient labour devouring knowledge from various sources. Naturally the outcome was lofty poetic utterances-weighty thoughts clothed in the language.

Voltaire is of the view that Milton's poetry is the grandest thing in the English language. He writes about God and Satan, the triumph of good over evil but never does he stoop to cheap, low or even mundane themes. His manner of writing is characterized by stateliness and dignity. Majesty and loftiness are qualities Milton imparted to English poetry. Even his

personal ..sonnet On his Blindness possesses his characteristic grandeur and sublimity. The poet's lamentation over the tragic onset of blindness, his frustration at not having even begun his great poetic endeavour and his final acceptance of God's will as supreme in every matter. Everything is stately and sublime. As he "dwelt apart", Milton's themes are remote from the trivialities and he chose a stately mode of utterance too.

Milton was endowed with a rich and fertile imagination and that too contributed to his sublimity. A lesser poet would certainly have staggered unde*r the colossal scheme of his epic. In his heroic poem the poet's imagination glides from heaven to hell through the intervening chaos; it even soars above time and space and can be at home in infinity.

Let us pass on the technical aspects of Milton's' poetry.

3.4. Milton's Technical Excellence

The "high seriousness" the moral fervour of Milton's poetry and his sublimity go well with his lofty conception of the calling of a poet. Naturally the poet paid great attention to the technical excellence of his poetic works. He was never casual in his expressions; on the other hand he was a most conscientious artist aiming at perfect harmony between matter and expression, John Bailey remarks. "Poetry has been by far our greatest artistic achievement, and he is by far the greatest poetic artist"

Let us consider the various aspects of Milton's technical excel-lence.

(i) Versification: Blank Verse

In his early poems like Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity. L'Alegro and Il Penseroso as also in his sonnets like In His Blindness. Milton employed rhymed verse with supreme skill. For instance be employs the Petrarchan rhyme scheme of two enclosed quartains abba, abba in the octave and two tersest rhyming cde cde in the sestet of his sonnet on blindness. But presently he discarded rhyme in favour of Blank Verse that is continuous lines of unrhyming iambic pentameter. Thus he came to be the first poet in English to employ blank verse to non-dramatic poetry and also to use it with consummate skill. Some of the important of Milton's blank verse are as follows:

(i) There is an "overflow" of sense from line to line, as in Marlowe's, blank verse, but Milton goes much ahead, naturally the lines are enjambed or 'run-on'

(ii) Milton exercises perfect command over the language he uses. He selects onomatopoeic words, that are words whose sound expressed their meaning, and this results in greater rhythmic flow.

(iii) The music of Milton's verse is superb. Most critics agree heartily that mellifluous, sonorous music is one the most pleasurable features of his verse. Hazlitt's opinion is that "Milton's blank" verse is the only blank verse in the language (except Shakespeare's) that deserves this name of verse" but Dr. Johnson could not find any music in Milton's blank verse which he considered to be harsh and unequal.

Milton's blank verse possesses *an architectonic quality which has been highly praised. The individual lines do not stand disjoint or separate but blend together to form a harmonious pattern. The beauty of his verse often does not reveal itself in a single line. It is the period of the sentences, and still more the verse paragraph that constitutes the unit of Milton's verse. It is only in the period that the wavelength of Milton's verse is to be found the most conclusive evidence of Milton's supremacy as a metrist lies in his ability to give a perfect and unique pattern to every paragraph, so that the full beauty of the line is found in its context. The best examples of all the features of Milton's blank verse are to be found in Paradise Lost.

Milton's poetry abounds in exquisitely modulated passages where the verse floats up and down as if it had itself wings. Milton himself has given us the theory of his versification in the following lines: '

'Such as the meeting soul may pierce

In notes with many a winding bout

Of linked sweetness link drawn out'

Milton indeed built a China

Wall with Marlowe's mighty line.

Several poets have paid beautiful tributes to the mighty harmonies of Milton's verse. Matthew Arnold perceived in it the 'sure and flawless perfection of rhythm and diction'. W.S. Landor considered the harmony of Paradise Lost as "the noblest specimen in the world of eloquence; harmony and genius; perhaps the greatest testimony to Milton's techni-cal perfection came from Tennyson himself one of the greatest masters of harmony in the English language, who wrote in a sonnet entitled 'Milton'

O mighty - mouthed inventor of harmonies

O skilled to sing a time or Eternity,

God - gifted organ - voice of England

Milton a name to resound for ages

(ii) Diction

A special feature of Milton's technical excellence is his diction which has attracted much controversial, often negative response. In Addison's view 'Milton's English is English but it is Milton's English. In fact it is Latin English or Greek English. He added that our languages sinks under him. 'Dr. Johnson criticized Milton for 'he formed his style by perverse and pedantic principles' Even Keats, a great admirer of Milton's poetry felt that Paradise Lost though so fine in itself was ' a corruption of our language.'

The fact is that Milton's diction is unique, a style peculiar to his genius. Though the basis of his style was thoroughly English idiom which he had acquired from his close study of Elizabethan dramatists,' Milton was profoundly influenced by his classical studies. The rhythms of Virgil and the phrases of Cicero ever lingered in his memory. Latinism abounds in his poems and these add to the complexity of his style. Milton tried to make the English language obey the logic of passion as perfectly as Greek and Latin. naturally it led to occasional harshness in construction and artificiality as T.S. Eliot condemned. The truth about Milton'-s controversial diction is that it is exclusively Miltonian and inimitable T.S. Eliot has some illuminating remarks to offer. 'As a poet, Milton seems to me probably the greatest of all eccentrics. His work illustrates no general principles of good writing...! Repeat that the remoteness of Milton's verse from ordinary speech, his invention pf his own poetic language, seems to me one of the marks of his greatness.

(iii) Milton's Grand Style

What Arnold meant by observing that Milton is a master of the grand style is that, there is sublime thought and sublime expression in his poetry. The main attributes of the grand style is the perfection of ex-pression that transmutes the subject and transports the reader to a sub-lime experience. In Milton the grand style exists in all his work particu-larly in Paradise Lost. Milton effects the grand style through several devices such as the use of classical, Biblical and literary allusions, em-ployment of Latin and Greek constructions, and the use of Homeric similes and Homeric epithets. Other devices conducive to such a style are repetition of words, arrangement of adjectives, rhetorical questions and alliteration. The rhetorical questions in On His Blindness.

"Doth God exact day - labour, light denied?

And use alliterations like 'this dark world and wide? (1.2) 'my Maker' (1.5) etc. in the same sonnet may be cited as examples Moreover the poem contains several .Biblical

echoes and is a metaphor of the scriptural parable of the talents. Milton's masterly use of blank verse and the melody of his line also contribute to the grand style.

The main characteristics of the grand style are imagination of the highest degree high seriousness and restraint, aptness of expression, loftiness of thought and sublimity of tone. The Puritanical and the Re-naissance elements jointly favoured the evolution of Milton's grand style. Arnold (and long before him, Longinus) observed the grand style in a handful of masters like Homer, Dante and Shakespeare.

To quote Stopford Brooke

"Milton's style is always great, It lifts the glow, gives life to the commonplace and dignified even the vulgar. Equality of power over vast spaces of imagination, sustained splendour, a majesty which fills it with solemn beauty, belong one and all to Milton's style.

3.5 Other Features

Besides the above mentioned qualities some other features of Milton's poetry too may fee noted.

(i) Erudition and Learning

Undoubtedly Milton was a great scholar poet. His knowledge was both wide and deep. He was- well-versed in Latin as well as English. He was a staunch classicist like Ben Johnson and Sir Philip Sidney. His classical propensity (inclination) is apparent in the following matters:

(a) His choice of classical and semi-classical forms of literature such as the epic, the classical tragedy, the pastoral and the sonnet:

(b) The elaborate descriptions, long-tailed epithets and Homeric similes which abound in his epic.

(c) The profusion of classical allusions which often impart an overcharged character to his poems: and

(d) The stateliness and .dignity of his style, a carefully chosen precise and effective diction, Latinism and blank verse.

All these tend to make Milton a difficult poet.

(ii) Religious fervour

If Milton is a great classicist on the one hand, he is stronger believer in God too. Indeed one singular feature about him in his un-flinching, steady religious passion. His entire life, his vocation, his work everything is a dedication of God. This fervour is clearly seen in On His Blindness where the poet's fear and frustration about his sudden attack of blindness is that he has not used his God-given talent properly. The aim of Paradise Lost is to justify the ways of God to men. Milton's re-ligious bent is manifest in the following.

(a) The choice of religious themes particularly in his later poems.

(b) His weakness to preach and moralize on the least" pretext:

(c) A certain narrowness, of outlook and prejudice, vehemently (strongly) puritanical, apparent in his outbursts against his opponents: and.

(d) The plethora (plenty) of Biblical allusions with which his poetry is often burdened.

(iii) Autobiographical Note:

Milton is a highly subjective poet and his poetry is a transparent record of his life experience, his struggles and his problems. All that he wrote is a projection of his personality. L' Allegro and Il Penseroso represent two facets (aspects) of Milton's personality. In his sonnet On his Blindness as in several other pieces, he bemoans his personal calam-ity- loss of sight.

Likewise the titular hero of Samson Agonisles is a re-flection of the blind, helpless poet fallen on evil days. However, it is in his Sonnets, that his emotions find a more direct expression.

Read the above sections slowly and understand the different aspects of Milton's poetry. You should now be able to form an estimate of Milton's in general.

3.6. Milton, the Poet: A general Estimate

In the view of W.H. Hudson: 'After Shakespeare, Milton is the Milton is the greatest English poet outside the drama. Moreover, in the almost unanimous judgement of the critics he is to be regarded as one of the three or four supreme poets of the world.

In sublimity and dignity either of thought or of expression, Milton, is inferior to none. Touching on this aspect, Compton Rickett observes:

Variety, flexibility, lyrical passions; these are qualities for which we may search Milton in vain; and in these matters, Shakespeare is supremely great. But in loftiness of thought splendid dignity of, ex-pression and rhythmical felicities, Milton has few peers, no superiors. Wordsworth owed much, Landor and Tennyson something to his prosodic and significance, but three has been no finer exponent of the grand manners and it is impossible to exaggerate the influence of his wonderful diction the history of poetry from his own day down to the day of William Watson. Rose Macaulay, the English novelist has written a brilliant account on the great poet wherein she remarks:

He was, in fact, an Ancient. An Ancient and, in some sort, a learned foreigner himself; the least English, the most alien, of the English poets, One approaches him dubiously, as one approaches Dante or Michael Angelo, rather in fascinated surprise than in love, for he seems a phoenix, that self-begotten bird, that knows no second knows nor third, an exotic bird from afar Milton's was hatched on the nest of seventeenth century England, bred by Renaissance, Elizabethan out of the Ancient world, nursed by Puritanism and fed by a thousand foods. Ancient and modern English and foreign, yet still he wheels and soars before our dazzled eyes, still seems a self-begotten bird.

Most critics emphasis the uniqueness of Milton's personality and genius and their inevitable impact on his writings. According to Legouis: 'Milton, the only poet who identified himself with Puritanism, had so strong a personality that he cannot be taken to represent anyone but himself. He was a conscientious writer with a strong character and never penned anything casually. All his writings are the fruit of his hard labour, accompanied by a sense of his own strengths and limitations too.

Of humour he knew little except in its unamiable form of heavy and coarse sarcasm. Of the varieties of human character he knew less; he saw people not in the round, but as types, or else as projection! °f some experience or passion in himself. His verbal dexterity is used to make beauty, to give us an English renovated and richer, to pierce us with an intellectual and sensuous delight but never as a medium for that felici-tous (graceful) rapier (keen) play of mind and speech that the dramatist of human being has at command.

The sustained scholarship and dedications of Milton's whole life had been a preparation for the writing of Paradise Lost. As Nissim Ezekiel notes: "This work brought into play his extensive classical learning, passionate moral energy and spiritual conviction, dialectical skill in argumentation, anguish and loneliness in his state of blinded in his state of exile and political defeat. Brilliantly holding all these in synthesis, the impassioned narrative sustains the sublime manner even as it explore to justify the ways of god to man. Whether he succeeds in his avowed aim is questionable; what cannot be doubted is the greatness of the work in which the task is essayed. Milton as an epic poet is indeed serious and sober.

It is true to impart an 'epic grandeur' to his verse Milton uses words unusually, coins polysyllabic terms, and Latinised diction. Similarly he often does not conform to the ideal of concreteness held by 'Imagist' poets, including rather massive abstractions. Besides he favours vague obscure allusions (references). But the striking fact about all these exercises is that he

executes them all successfully. His verse remains a flexible medium effectively projecting disparate points of view and opposing attitudes. His narrative often yields a dramatic interest of the highest degree 'Whatever may be said of Milton's imitators, the grand style does not in his hands degenerate into bombast. Bi-syllabic expressions, a Latin diction, abstract phrasing and literary allusions co-exist in his verse with touches of moving simplicity and intense drama' (Ezekiel)

In the final analysis, Milton's poetry is the expression of a pure and noble mind enriched by knowledge and disciplined by art. His poetry has an elevating and ennobling influence on the mind of his readers and this influence is exercised not only by his lofty thought, but also by the grand manner of its style.

As W.H. Hudson observes

In him we have a wonderful union of intellectual power and creative power both at their highest. He is also consummate (perfect) lit-erary artist whose touch is as sure in delicate detail as in vast general effects. While many qualities thus go to the making of his work, however, the one which we most naturally think of and which indeed we have come to denote by the epithet " Miltonic' is his sublimity. He is the most sublime of English Poefs, and our one acknowledged edged master of what Matthew Arnold calls' the grand style.' In sustained majesty of thought and diction he is unrivalled"

Milton is not without defects. He lacks humour. It is also said that his poetry lacks the element of love. Narrow he often is; he is often too hard and austere. But his sterling qualities are enough to cover up these shortcomings. Though the epic form, theoretically speaking is impersonal Milton's epic is throughout instinct with the spirit of the man himself. To conclude with the words of Hudson:

There is an intensity of individuality in everything he writes which is singularly impressive; and the loftiness of his temper and passionate moral earnestness make us feel as we read that we are indeed in the presence of one 'whose soul was like a star, and dwelt apart'

We now come to the end of our discussion on the genera} aspects of Milton's poetry.

Study the material prepared for you diligently. Try to secure extra books on Milton' as well as the poet's original works and read them. You can improve your knowledge and equip yourself to write your own essays.

3.7 Important Topics for Essays

1. Milton's works are a projection of his character and personality Do you agree?
2. Attempt a critical appreciation of Milton's Sonnet: On his blindness
3. Estimate the worth of Milton as a sonneteer.
4. Bring out the salient characteristics of Milton's poetry.
5. How far is Milton's poetry a fusion of the Puritanical and Renaissance ele ments?
6. Attempt a general evaluation of Milton as a poet.
7. Elaborate on the technical excellences of Milton's poetry.

Prepare some quiz type questions for the Viva Voice as well as for the Objective Type exercises.

I shall list below a few useful books for your extra reading.

Suggestions for Further Reading

1. Milton: E.M.W. Tillyard
2. Milton : A Reader's guide to his Poetry: Marjorie Hope Nicolson.

3. Milton: Mark Pattison
4. Milton: The critical Heirtage : J.T. Shawcross
5. Milton: Rose Macaulay
6. Lives of the poets : Johnson
7. A History of English Literature: Harry Balmires
8. A History of English Literature: William Vaughn Moody and Robert Morse Lovette.
9. An Outline History of English literature: William Henry Hudson
10. A Glossary of Literary terms M.H. Abrams.

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ANDREW MARVELL

AN HORATIAN ODE UPON CROMWELL'S RETURN FROM IRELAND AN INTRODUCTION

1.0 Objectives

At the end of this Unit you should be able to:

(i) from a general idea of Andrew Marvell the man: and

(ii) appreciate his character and temperament.

1.1. Introduction

Before you embark on the study of Andrew Marvell, please refer to my notes on George. Herbert: Unit I have given there in a detailed picture of the seventeenth century, that is, the age of Herbert, Marvell and other Metaphysical poets. The interest shown by pour own age in this period especially in the poetry of Metaphysical wit, amounts almost to a rediscovery. The experience of flux and transition in the present century seems to have given us an understanding denied to the eighteenth century of the Romantics and the Victorians. When John Donne, the key figure of the Metaphysical School of poets began to write about 1592, Milton had been dead four years. And Dryden was almost halfway through his literary career. Given that all periods of literature are to some extent arbitrary divisions, that they inevitably over lap and are blurred at the edges, there seems a reasonable case for considering the intervening decades, as a separate age. In other words, the difference between the age of Spenser, Sidney, Marlowe and Hooker and that of Herbert, Marvell, Milton and Browne seems sufficiently marked.

Let us now turn to Marvell's life.

1.2. Andrew Marvell: A short Biographical Sketch

1.2 Andrew Marvell (1621 -1678) was born on 31 st March, 1631 as the son of a clergyman of Calvinist views, preacher and master of the Almshouse at Hull in Yorkshire, England, He was the fourth chiid and the first son of his parents: thus Marvell grew up in the company of his three sisters, Marvell was initially educated at Hull Grammar school which had strong connections with Cambridge University. At the age of twelve, the boy proceeded to Cambridge where he matriculated as a sizar of Trinity College, (A Sizar, by the way is a student at Cambridge or Dublin paying lower fees.) In 1638 he was admitted as a scholar of his college and in 1639 he took his B.A. Degree.

At Cambridge, Marvell is believed to have written some poetry An interesting fact that we know about his university career is that about 1639 he was converted to Roman Catholicism until his father discovered him in London bookshop and sent him back to Cambridge where he seems to have remained until about 1641. Regarding this incident Helen Gardner writes; "his father was drowned while crossing the Humber in 1641, having survived long enough to rescue his son from a brief period of Catholicism.

Earlier in 1638, Andrew's mother had died and after a few months his father remarried. Now that his father had too had died, he left Cambridge in 1641, itself and the next ten years of his life are obscure. It is believed that he did not return to his studies, in 1642, he is supposed to have taken up residence in London, and having come of age, inherited some fortune (money) from his grandfather.

From 1642 to 1644, Marvell is believed to have travelled widely over the continent

visiting Holland, France Italy and Spain. Though the details of this European tour are not available we know one thing for certainly besides Greek and Latin which he had already studied he now went on to learn Dutch, French, Italian and Spanish devoting a year each to the four languages. This fact is testified by the words of John Milton that Marvell spent these years "to very good purpose and the gaining of those four languages."

According to Leishman, it is not certain when exactly left England, but it was probably in 1642, at the very beginning of the civil war, two years after Milton had returned from his travels. However it seems certain that, until the execution of Charles I on 30th January 1649, Marvell Was a loyal subject of his King and kept Royalist company, sharing his companion's distrust of Cromwell and Fairfax. Eighteen months later, the whole climate had changed. When Cromwell rode into London as the conqueror of Ireland. Marvell admired the new leader. (You will learn more about this in the Ode written by Marvell A upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland in the next Unit.)

Marvell spent part of his time in France tutoring in 1651. He became tutor to the daughter of Lord Faifax at Nun Appleton House in Yorkshire. Fairfax, the victor of Naseby, had retired to his Yorkshire es-tate, owing to his disagreement with Cromwell's Policy. Helen Gardner writes: "The career and friendships of Marvell up to this time, suggest that his sympathies were with moderate men, even with Royalists. But he came to an acceptance of Cromwell's "forced power", and finally to -whole hearted admiration for him"

In 1653 Marvell became tutor to one of Cromwell's wards at Eton. The same year Milton recommended him to be his assistant in the Latin Secretaryship although he was not appointed until 1657. Milton's nephew reports that Marvell protected Milton at the Restoration (1660). As member for Hull from 1659 until his death, Marvell was a staunch defender of constitutional liberties.

On 16th August 1678, Marvell died of malaria ("a certain ague") in London on 18th August, he has buried inside the church of St. Giles in Hull. The Miscellaneous Poems (1681) (from which his Horatian Ode is taken were published ostensibly (apparently) by his widow Mary Marvell. This was some kind of legal fiction, as Marvell never married!

Let us briefly enumerate the important works of Andrew Marvell

1.3 Principal Works of Andrew Marvel

Marvell's contribution to literature may be classified as follows:

(1) Poems written predominantly during the period 1650-1652

(ii) Satires: which he wrote on public men and public affairs during the reign of Charles II

(iii) News - Letter which he regularly addressed to his constituents in Hull after his election as Member of Parliament.

(iv) Controversial Essays on ecclesiastical questions; that related to Church and religion.

Marvell's literary reputation chiefly rests upon his poems. Ironically, these were hardly known at all to his own contemporaries. Some of them were circulated in manuscripts as was then the practice and were probably read by Milton and other personal friends. Excepting a few, Marvell's poems were made available to the reading public in printed from three, years after his death. Marvell's poetic output was very small. He composed only around forty poems in English and a few in Latin.

Unfortunately. Marvell's poetic talents, went unrecognised during his own life time as well as the succeeding centuries. But subsequently, particularly in the twentieth century, his status and reputation as a poet soared to eminence. Critics like H.C. Beeching Sir Herbert Grierson and T.S. Eliot wrote brilliant prefaces and critical accounts which contain systematic surveys of the Metaphysical poet in question. After Eliot's appreciative essay in which Marvell is described as a classic, there has been profile critical writing on Marvell's poetic works.

We shall now try to find out what sort of person Marvell was his character and temperament, his political and religious attitude and so on. All these details are necessary since a poet's works are a projection of his personality.

1.4 Marvell The Man

a. Marvell's character and temperament

Andrew Marvell's character was paradoxical to a certain degree. He was a supporter of the Puritan cause, but there was nothing of the narrow minded killjoy or spoilsport about him. Some of the opponents criticized him for being a Puritan, yet it was a well known fact that he was frequenter of coffee-houses and a town wit; he had fashionable manners and used French phrase. The only authentic (real) sketch of the man by a contemporary is provided by John Aubrey who writes thus in Brief Lives:-

"He was a great master of the Latin tongue: and excellent poet in English: for Latin verses there was no man who could come into on with him. He was in his conversation very modest and of words and though he loved wine he would never drink hard in .. He kept bottles of wine at his lodging and many times he and liberally, by himself to refresh his spirit and exalt his muse"

Jack Dalglish observes that the above account corresponds with the Impression one receives from Marvell's poetical works-of liveliness tempered by reserve and conscious control. Marvell seems to have been ? cither selective in the matter of friends. His circle of friends was quite a small one and it included John Milton and Richard Lovelace and a few other men of intellectual distinction.

Yet there was another aspect of Marvell's character. He was quite empered and on many occasions he was involved in quarrel which eventually came to blows. His speech when he was provoked and roused seem to have been picturesquely forcible. The dual temperament of Marvell had its impact on his style and diction. Though his poems are remarkable for their elegance and urbanity, his satire contained along with subtle irony, robust and even obscene abuse of his opponents" [Dtilplisti)

Not only his loyalty but his courage is attested by his defence of Milton from persecution in 1660. His pamphleteering, though done anonymously involved considerable risk and it seems characteristic that the only time he published a satire under his own name it was in defiance of threats against his life.

Marvell seems to have conducted himself admirably well in public alfairs. In general his principle seems to have been to make the best of the currently existing from of government, to support whatever seemed conducive (favourable) to the welfare of the country; to strive for sanctity of conscious and to oppose bigotry and corruption. Marvell stood for integrity and his standards were not partisan but moral. To (that) quote Jack Dalgish again. "The character that emerges, then is that of a man who,though a hot tempered and redoubtable fighter, was sane and judicious over important issues and in whom, were united, in fact the best qualities of the Cavalier and the Puritan.

B) Marvell's Humour

Christopher Hill remarks that one of Marvell's qualities which is most sympathetic to us is his humour. His refusal to take his agonies too seriously, is in itself one of the aspects of the "double heart", to use thepoet's phase; implying his ability to perceive both sides of an issue. But is also signifies his attempts to come to terms with, and to control thecontradiction between his desires and the world he has to live in, his ideas and the brutal realities of the Civil War. Humour is for Marvel one way of bearing the unbearable: it is a sign of his enviable maturity, beside which Waller, Cowley, Dryden, and the other ex-Royalists and future Royalist panegyrists of Cromwell look shabby.

Thus we see that Andrew Marvell was a well developed personality but with a lot of complications, paradoxes and conflicts embedded in his temperament. It was a mature

disposition ideally suited for composing Metaphysical poetry. You may refer to my notes on George Herbert for a detailed account of the salient features of Metaphysical poetry.

Revise the above sections thoroughly. We shall study about Marvell's "Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland elabo-rately in the next Unit.

AN HORATIAN ODE UPON CROMWELL'S RETURN FROM IRELAND

2.0. OBJECTIVES

At the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

(i) Define an ode:

(il) understand the various aspects of Marvell's,Ode: and

(Hi) appreciate the salient features of a Horatian Ode

Let us spend some time trying to understand what an Ode is.

2.1 THE ODE

The Ode is a long lyric poem that is serious in subject and treatment, elevated in style, and elaborate in its stanzaic structure. The prototype was established by the Greek poet Pindar whose odes were modelled on the songs by the chorus in Greek drama." His complex stanzas were patterned in triads or sets of three: moving in a dance rhythm to the left, the Chorus chanted the strophe: moving to the right, the antistrophe and standing still, the epode.

The regular or Pindaric ode in English is a close imitation of Pindar's form, with all the strophes and antistrophes written in one stanza pattern, and all the epodes in another. The best example for this typical construction is Thomas Gray's The Progress of Poesy (1757, Pindaric odes were encomiastic, that is, they were written to praise and glorify someone in war or sports.

A second important form of the ode is known as the Horatian ode. This was originally modelled on the matter, tone, and form of the odes of the Roman, Horace. In contracts to the passion, visionary boldness, and formal language of Pindar's odes. Horatain odes are calm, meditative, and colloquial, they "are also usually homostrophic, that is written in a single repeated stanza form and shorter that the Pindaric ode. Examples are Andrew Marvell's "An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland" (1650) (which you are-going to study in detail shortly) and John Keats Ode to Autumn (1820).

Let us try to understand the historical background of the poem. Please refer to my notes on Milton's. On his Blindness for an elaborate account of the growth of seventeenth century. Also try to secure some standard text book on British History and read up the relevant portion.

2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE POEM

While the uncompromising spirit of the Puritans spread steadily during the reign of James. I, its was not until the time of this successor Charles 1 that Puritanism emerged as a great national power A combi-nation of causes now led to its practical success. Following the fast growing flippancy (disregard, disrespect) and profligacy (shamelessly immoral behaviour of the appear classes came the monstrous encroach-ment of Charles I upon the rights of the commons and the constitutional privileges of the English people. Their keen sense of the supremacy of God as the ruler and of the prerogatives (special rights) of the individual conscience, made the Puritans intolerant of earthly tyranny in any form. Thus Puritanism became a political as well as moral and religious force and, at a very critical time. The great custodian and defender of people jeopardized liberties. After a stormy period of civil war, it triumphed with the triumph of Oliver Cromwell, and during the few years of the Commonwealth it was supreme.

Marvell's Horatian ode was composed in June-July, 1650 after Cromwell had won a victory over Ireland in May, 1650 and was expected to invade Scotland. General Fairfax had resigned his post in mid June as Commander -in-chief of the Parliamentary forces, and Cromwell was promoted to that position. As the title shows the poem is an "occasional " ode, that is written to commemorate a special occasion. However it may be pointed out that while the poem does have a certain his topical value and must greatly have interested Marvell's contemporaries, it does not have much interest for the modern reader.

Let us now proceed to study the Ode stanza by stanza.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND PARAPHRASE

Lines 1-8

The forward youth: The progressive young man. According to Dalgish "the youth who wishes to appear forward" that is one who is read for the requirement of the time. The reference here is not to Cromwell, but to Cromwell, either to the poet himself or to an imaginary young man who is now expected to give up his studies and his writing of love poems in order to go and fight in the wars.

Forsake: Give up, abandon, relinquish, Have you heard of MatthewArnold's poem "The Forsaken Merman"?

Muses: The goddesses of the fine art, they are daughters of Zeus, nine in number. Poets usually invoked the muses before they started composing. Refer to Milton's 'Lycidas'.

In the shadow sing: Compose love lyric sitting in sheltered places.

Numbers: verses, lines of poetry.

Languishing: Printing, full of longing, wasting away A

His numbers languishing:

The young poet describes the plight of lovers as pining on account of their disappoint ment in love.

Tis time : This time has come

Indust : in dusty university rooms

Oyl : to oil

Unused : not having used for a very long time.

Armour : protective covering worn in war.

Removing : taking off

Corslet : tight fitting coat of a armour, especially a breast, plate: a protective shield.

PARAPHRASE

The eager or forward-looking young man who would like to emerge on the public arena (scene) must now relinquish or give up writing soft love lyric very close to his heart, poems in which lovers are described as pining away for their beloveds. The time has come to leave the books in the dusty university rooms, to oil the unused armours which have become rusty, and to remove the shield from the wall of the hall in order to get ready it take an active part in the war.

LINE 9-16

Restless: Impatient to wage war

Cromwell : Oliver Cromwell

Could not cease: could not remain idle or, at rest.

Inglorious arts of peace Peaceful or peace time activities which do not bring glory to a

person. Here inglorious does not mean infamous or notorious but merely without glory. In terms of notions of chivalry glory is regarded as resulting from bravery and prowess in war.

adventurous war: Not the highly romantic notion of war as something adventurous and contrast it with the present ideas of war as something evil, causing terrible loss of life and property.

Active Star: star of destiny

Urged his active Star: Spurred by his star of destiny, Cromwell worked actively to fulfil the part which he was destined to play or, for which fate had designed him.

Three forked: three pronged, resembling a *Trisul*

Three forked lightning. The reference is to Jupiter's equipment.

nurst: nursed or brought up

through : (old usage) through

Fiery way divide: Cromwell was forced to oppose the party to which he belonged first/

Like the three...own side.

The cloud is thought of as the body of the lightning so the emerging lightning bursts through its own side. Similarly taking side to mean party the line mean that Cromwell rose swiftly to eminence from his place among the other Parliamentary leaders.

PARAPHRASE

That was the reason why Cromwell felt restless and why he could not continue to feel comfortable in peaceful activities, which bring no glory to a man. He spurred his fortunes and plunged into the war which demands from a man the spirit of adventure. And just as the three-forked lightning opens its way with great violence through the very clouds in which it was bred or produced, so did Cromwell win his way through the parliamentary leaders who became his rivals (in the process)

Note: The imagery of the three - forked lightning piercing through the clouds is very effective. The comparison to Cromwell's action is equally felicitous (beautiful and effective)

LINE 17-24

The emulous the jealous (members of his own party)

Emulous or energy: Cromwell felt restricted by his supporters who were secretly jealous of him this fact is historically true.

Inclose: restrict

more: worse

oppose: confront enemies

And with such....to oppose (2 .lines)

A person of the calibre (quality) of Cromwell felt that it was much worse to be restricted by the rivals in his own party than to be confronted by the opposite side. An open enemy is certainly less dangerous than an insincere friend.

Burning through the air

Exactly like a flash of Lightning

rent: (verb, past tense) tore apart, pierced

And palaces and tempies rent

Cromwell demolished (destroyed) political institutions and religious organisations. Rent

is the past tense of the verb to rend.

Caeser's head: The head of King Charles I.

Note: In line 101 Caeser is mentioned again, but it refers to the historical Caeser, that is Julius Caeser.

Laurels: evergreen shrub with smooth shiny leaves, used by ancient Romans and 'Greeks as an emblem of victory, success and distinction.

Did through his laurels blast.

Struck down king's head even though it was a crowned head, The word laurels' here is metaphorically used to mean a crown

Laurels blast

The laurels was popularly supposed to be immune to lightening

and hence blasting it would be extraordinary.

PARAPHRASE

He did so because it is as necessary for a man of high courage to suppress his jealous rivals as to overcome his enemies. In fact, re-straining one's rivals or enemies is a greater achievement than to con-tend with either of them. (Another paraphrase is : it is worse to be kept in check by one's partly. Then he made his way through the air in a fiery manner, destroying the authority of the State and the Church; and eventually he struck down the crowned head of King Charles I.

LINES 25-32

force of angry Heaven's flame: divine wrath or anger

If we would speak true: To speak honestly the man Oliver Cromwell

Private Gardens: Metaphoric way of referring to Cromwell's secluded, calm, private life.

Reserved: calm and silent, away from the limelight or public eye,

austere: plain and simple living.

Beragamot: A fine pear introduced like many new varieties of fruit in the seventeenth century. It is known as the pear of Kings.

highest plot: greatest mission

As if his....the bergamot (line 31-32)

The idea here is that while Cromwell was leading a quiet and austere life, his highest activity consisted in planting fruit like the bergamot. And yet subsequently he brought about a revolutionary change in the political system of his country.

Plot: The word "plot" is used in double sense: (a) a plot of land and (b) action, scheme or actively. The idea is that after working in his plot of land planting the bergamot Cromwell became a real plotter who plotted against the King and killed him.

PARAPHRASE

It is an act of madness on anybody's part to resist, or to blame the violence of the divine anger, when God feels annoyed and wishes to punish a ruler like Charles I. And if we were to speak honestly, much credit is due to man Cromwell, who came away from his private gardens, where he had been leading a reserved and simple life as through the highest mission of his life had been to plant and nurture fruit trees like the bergamot.

Note: The poet implies that Cromwell became a revolutionary only due to chance and new opportunities. He gave up his secluded life -in order to fight on the side of Parliament.

CUP/5069/1000/SDE—10

LINES 33-40

Could : Cromwell was able to

Industrious valour : Hard work and bravery

Climbe: rise in position, life etc.

ruine: destroy

The great work of Time: The British political system of absolute monarchy which had been in practice for ever so many centuries, and hence are the works of Time.

Cast: reshaped, changed.

Into another mold: into a different pattern or system.

Though justice against Fate complain....in vain.

Although what Cromwell did might be called unjust, yet such was the will of fate. Thus Fate ignored even the demands of justice as interpreted by the King and his supporters.

Plead: demand

ancient rights: Divine rights of Kings which had been accepted for long.

In vain: of no use in the face of Fate that is. Cromwell's onslaught (attack)

But those strong or weak (lines 39-40)

The fact remains that rights can be held only if kings are strong and will be taken away perforce if the kings are weak. Survival of the fittest is implied here.

PARAPHRASE

By means of his hard work and heroism, Cromwell achieved so much power that he was able to destroy the English political system of monarchy. A product of several centuries, and he was able to replace it with entirely different political system for his country. Although a king, taking stand on justice might complain against the cruelty of fate and al-though he may vainly assert the rights which kings have exercised since antiquity, the fact remains that rights can be held by kings if they are strong and will be snatched from them if they are weak.

LINE 41-48

Emptiness: (here) Vacuum

Penetration: "Occupation of the same space by (two bodies si-multaneously, a thing more abhorrent (hateful) to Nature than vaccum" (Helen Gardner)

Allows: tolerates, permits

Nature that hateth Petietration less (lines 41 -42)

Although Nature is averse to (hates) a vacuum, she is even more averse to the occupation of the same space or position by two bodies or persons at the same time. In other words only one man can rule the world at a time.

The word penetration used here is with reference to a 17th century physical law known as the "penetration of dimensions" according to which no two bodies can occupy the same space at the same "time.

And therefore....greater spirits come (lines 43-44)

Reference to the toppling of Charles I by Cromwell on the basis of the law of 'Survival of fittest". You may compare the defeat of Ptolemy the Great by Julius Caeser. "Big dog eats small dog" (Shaw's "Creaser-and Cleopatra").

Greater spirits: greater men like Cromwell

The deepest scares: The deepest wounds. The wounds may refer to those which Cromwell inflicted on his enemies, or those, which he himself sustained in the course of the fighting. In other words, he in-flicted more serious injuries than he received in every battle or he bore the brunt (major portion) of every battle, there is ambiguity (vagueness) in meaning.

Hampton: Fowler comments: "Hampton court where Charles I in 1647 was for a time in the hand of Cromwell and the Army, who were afraid that the Presbyterians (members of the Church) in Parliament might make peace with him that would sacrifice the fruits of victory. The army negotiated which Charles; but he escaped to Carisbrooke Castle in the Isle of Wight and began corresponding with the Scots and Royalists: To this Daligish adds the following note:

Marvell in referring to the theory that Cromwell deliberately frightened Charles into fleeing from Hampton Court for his own ends, since the king's flight was one of the causes of his dethronement and execution.

Wiser Art. Higher degree of state- craft which Cromwell possessed.

PARAPHRASE

It is true that Nature hates a vacuum but more than that it is true that Nature does not permit two human beings to occupy the same seat. That being so, a weaker man (like Charles) must vacate his seat when a greater man (like Cromwell) appears on the scene. There was no battle in the course Of the entire Civil War in which Cromwell did not inflict the maximum possible losses on his enemies, (or sustained several wounds) And the incident of Charles is flight from Hampton Court to Carisbrooke shows, the high degree of state-craft which Cromwell possessed Note: The episode of the King's flight from Hampton Court shows the role of policy and diplomacy in Cromwell's actions.

LINES 49-56

Twining feiars: subtle, cunning fears. This phrase refers to Cromwell's cunning in encouraging the king to entertain more and more fears about his safely at Hampton Court.

Scope: magnitude, dimension

Narrow Case: narrow cage

Carisbrooks narrow case: "Charles I fled from Hampton Court on II November 1647 to take refuge in Carisbrooke in the Isle of Wight. Contemporary writers ascribed this fatal step to Cromwell's guile (cun-ning), working on the King's fear's (Helen Gardener). Thus the place where he sought refuge became Charles prison or cage.

Thence: from thee

Royal Actor : Charles I

That theme the Royal Actor....Scaffold might adorn (Lines 49-50).

Two meanings may be given to "Tragic scaffold" (i) the tragic stage of the theatre and (2) the gallows on which King Charles was executed. The first meaning harmonies with the word 'actor' in the preceding line. The king is here called the royal actor who played his part in tragic drama presented on the stage of life. The dramatic nature of the King's capture and execution are aptly conveyed through these lines.

Scaffold: Note how Marvell plays on the two meanings of the word, as a stage in the theatre and as a place of execution.

armed Bands; the Soldiers of Cromwell carrying weapons. By a stretch of imagination "bands" could mean the-band of musicians ac-companying a dramatic performance.

Did clap their bloody hands: Showed their cruel, sadistic pleasure at the king execution. By a similar stretch of imagination as in the above case, "clap" could mean the applause of the audience watching the play.

PARAPHRASE

On this occasion Cromwell played or worked on the King's fears and hopes in such a subtle manner and prepared such an effective trap for him that the king himself departed from Hampton Court in a great hurry to take refuge in Carisbrboke which proved to be a narrow cage for him, Such was Cromwell's stroke of policy that Charles, the born king had to go from there to the gallows to be hanged, like an actor who appears on the stage to the immense delight of the spectators, As the "Royal actor" Charles climbed to the scaffold, armed soldiers under Cromwell stood around the place and clapped their bloodstained hand in joy (either in what they had accomplished or as though they were watching a tragic drama).

LINES 57-64

He : King Charles

mean: low and cheap

common: unlike or unsuitable to his royal status

memorable scene : the scene of the execution of King Charles

But with his . did try (line 59-60)

The eye of Charles was keener than the edge of the blade of the axe. The Latin word of eye mean also "blade: Charles seemed to be testing the sharpness of the blade with his eye.

Valgure spight: low or cheap malice or bad feeling

Vindicate : justify or defend

helpless Right: Though by right he was a king. He was now in a helpless condition unable of defend himself.

PARAPHRASE

On that memorable occasions, there was absolutely nothing cheap or mean in the way Charles conducted himself. On the other hand, his eyes tried to test the sharpness of the axe. Nor did he address the gods with any vulgar malice in his heart in order to invoke them to defend his kingly rights in the helpless condition in which he found himself. On the contrary, he bowed his handsome head down, as though he were going to * rest it on a pillow or a bed.

Note: This stanza brings out some of the truly regal trait (qualities) of Charles such as his nobility, courage in the face of death, self control and cool and calm resignation while accepting the inevitable.

LINES 65-72

memorable hour: execution of Charles I assur'd : assured, confirmed forced pow'r : The power got by force

first assur'd the forced pow'r: the power that Cromwell snatched or got by force by capturing and executing Charles I

Capitol : temple of Jupiter in ancient Rome

Fright : Frighten

Foresaw: predicted

A bleeding head happy Fate.

"Pliny relates the discovery of the human head, which was said to give the Capitol its name and that a famous Etruscan seer declared it to be a good omen" - Helen Gardner.

In these lines there is an allusion to the discovery of a human head by the excavators

when they were digging the foundations of the temple of Jupiter Capitalism, in ancient times. The architects got scared on finding a bloody head there and ran away. Subsequently, however a prophet explained to the excavators that the human head which had been found was a lucky omen. In the same way the beheading or execu-tion of Charles I might be regarded as good for England.

PARAPHRASE

This was that memorable hour which first confirmed in Cromwell's hands the power which he had won by force. In this connection, one is reminded of the manner in which the ancient Roman architects, ran away in great fear or finding a bloody head in the course of their digging operations which had been undertaken in order to start the 'construction of the temple of Jupiter Capitolium, thinking that the bloody head was an evil omen. And yet the authorities viewed the discovery of the human head as a happy augury about the future at Rome.

LINE 73-80

Now	: Now that Cromwell has merged victories
the Irish	: Cromwell subdued the Irish during 1949-50
tamed	: subdued, reduced to subjection
One man	: Cromwell
They	: The subdued Irish
Affirm	: state positively, announce
Overcome	: defeated
Confest	: confessed, admitted
highest Trust	: the responsibility of the commonwealth or the country.

They can affirm his praises best (line 77)

A strong piece of evidence for the existence of virtues (goodness, justice, trust etc) in Cromwell is that he is praised even by the Irish people whom he defeated.

PARAPHRASE

And now the Irish people are ashamed to find themselves utterly defeated by Cromwell in just one year. Such is the high achievement of one man who has the required knowledge and capacity to act. The best people to give testimony to Cromwell's virtues are the Irish. Though they have been defeated by Cromwell, they readily admit how, good, how great and how worthy of trust he really is.

LINES 81-88

Stiffer	: more strict, more harsh
Command	: Power
Sway	: rule
Common Feet	: House of Commons
rents	: annual tribute

He to be Common feet ...rents (lines,85-86)

Cromwell conquered a king namely Ireland and offered in to the House of Commons for their governance or for them to rule. We might as well say that in doing so, Cromwell paid to the House Commons, a considerable amount as rent for the first year of his tenancy.

And what he may make it theirs (lines 87-88)

Cromwell attributed to the house of commons the full credit for the victory over Ireland which really he alone had won.

forbears: not mention (as his personal victory)

PARAPHRASE

Nor has Cromwell become more proud or harsh on account of his army command; he is ever obedient to the Parliament. Such a man who can obey the higher authorities so willingly is also highly eligible to govern. He placed a kingdom (Ireland) at the feet of the House of Commons (Parliament) as though it were his annual tribute for the first year, Moreover he attributed to the parliamentary leaders the victory which was truly his alone.

Note: Marvell has painted a highly complimentary picture of Cromwell in these lines.

LINES: 89-96

Spoyls	: spoils or booty of war
ungirt	: opened (for offering)
Publik's skirt	: At the feet of the people. Note that the word skirt is rather strangely chosen.
Falcon	: A small bird of prey trained to hunt ...ad kill other birds and small animals.
Perch	: to settle down (on the branch of a tree),
Lure	: In connection with hawks and falcons the words lure refers to a bunch of feathers with a long cord attached. Within it would be kept food for the falcon. The trainer would swing the cord round his head there by luring or tempting the bird to come down and eat the piece of meat being offered.

PARAPHRASE:

Cromwell even removes his sword and his medals in order to lay them before the public, (as though it were an offering of love). In doing so he follows the example of the falcon which comes heavily downwards from its flight into the sky, after having caught and killed its victim, and which does not search for any more victim but settles down on the green branch of a tree in response to the command of its owner who tempts it with food.

LINE 97-104

Our Isle : England (British Isles) Presume : Be bold expect

his crest does plume: adorns or crowns his efforts. If thus he crown each year.

If Cromwell keeps on winning such victories year after year. A Caesar: Julius Caesar who invaded France and instilled terrible fear in the hearts of the French.

Hannibal: a powerful general of Carthage who defeated the Romans at Cannae in 216 B.C.

Clymacterick : "critical, marking an apoch" (Helen Gardner)

PARAPHRASE:

This being the case, England can now expect great things from Cromwell while victory crowns his efforts as it has done in the case of Ireland. And if he wins a victory in the same way, every year other na-tions will stand in great awe or fear of him. Presently his efforts will in-augurate a new chapter in the history of mankind when he equals the achievements of Julius Caesar who defeated France or Hannibal who invaded Italy: .He will play a critical or epoch making role in liberating all those countries which are not free but ruled by autocratic kings.

LINES 105-113

Pict : Scot "Pict was falsely derived from pingree. The derivation was used by other

writers to support the charge of falseness and treachery against the Scots." (Helen Gardner)

Party - coloured mind: his variegated or multi coloured mind. The implication is that the people of Scotland had treacherous minds. The poet intends a jibe (mock, jeer) at the Scots for the untrust worthiness and treachery which their recent history was held to demonstrate.

Valour sad : steadfast courage the word sad means both stead fast and dark in colour, in contrast to party coloured.

Plad : the National costume of the Scottish people.

Shrink : Withdrew in fear on seeing the valorous act of Cromwell. Here however the expression refers to the national costume in which the Scots would dress themselves in order to escape detection by the English hunter, namely Cromwell.

Mistake : not recognise or fail to detect him because his plaid would camouflage (hide) him. acting as an animal protective colouring does.

English hunter : Cromwell is metaphorically represents as English hunter trying to hunt out and destroy the Scots.

Caledonian deer: It refers to the Scottish who, like the deer would try to escape from the English hunter Cromwell.

PARAPHRASE

Now the Scottish people will find no place of shelter within their treacherous minds, but will hide themselves from the steadfast heroism of this man (Cromwell). They will consider themselves lucky if Gromwell the English hunter makes a mistake and does not find them, hidden as they will be within their costumes which may serve like a-thick wood in which an anirnal hides itself. They will be fortunate if the English hunter does not put his hunting dogs on scent after those people who are like deer to be hunted down.

Note the predominance of the hunting imagery in this stanza. You will find similar imagery in Shakespeare's plays such as Twelfth Night' As you. like it' etc.

LINES 113-120

thou : you Cromwell

Wars and fortunate son: The favourite of wars and battles. Cromwell is praised as one who is the favourite of the Goddess of Luck and is hence the winner of wars. Compare Valours minion and Bellona's bridegroom in Shakespeare's Macbeth.

Indefatigably : Without getting tired.

Last effect : final result

erect : Straight, ready for action

Fright : frighten ,- terrify

force : power or authority.

It has to fright/ The spirits of the shady Night.

"The cross hilt of the sword would put evil spirits to flight" (Helen Gardener" probably because of the shape of a crucifix.

spirit of the shady night.

The conspirators who plotted in the secret, or the evils spirits or the ghosts of Charles I and his supports who had been killed by Cromwell.

Arts : diplomacy or skill

gain a pow'r : enable Cromwell to secure power over England

maintain : preserve

PARAPHRASE

But you Cromwell, are the lucky winner of Avars, and you are the favourite of fortune, Go on marching without feeling tired and always keep your sword erect in your hands in order to achieve the final result because in addition to the authority which it has to wield, this sword has to put the evil spirits of flight with its suggestion of this the crucifix in its hilt. The same force and the same diplomacy by means of which you achieved this position of authority will be required also to preserve this authority in your hands.

Well, we have come to the end of a very long section of explanatory notes and paraphrase of Marvel Fs Horatian Ode. Study the poem stanza by stanza and grasp the meaning fully.

In the next Unit we shall study more about the Ode.

MARVELL THE POET AND HIS HORATIAN ODE

3.0 Objectives

At the end of this Unit you should be able to:

(i) attempt a critical appreciation of Marvell's Horatian Ode: and

(ii) understand the salient of Marvell's poetic skill Let us start Ode.

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous Unit you studied Marvell's 'Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland' to some extent; that is, you learnt the overall meaning of the poem. Let us now concentrate on the various as-pects of the poem.

3.2. CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF MARVELL'S HORATIAN ODE

a) Synopsis or Summary of the poem

Marvell's "Horatian Ode celebrates the military triumphe of Cromwell, first over King Charles I, then over Ireland, and then it goes on to anticipate more and more victories to be won by Cromwell, as also the stability of his rule over England.

The people begins by saying that Cromwell relinquished (gave up) "the inglorious arts of peace" like gardening and study in order to fulfil the demands of the time. He was forced by the star of his destiny to put on armour and come to the aid of his beloved country as a warrior. He succeeded in forcing his way through rivals belonging to his own party and also through his legion (large numbers) of enemies and destroying the existing political and religious institutions of the country Eventually he was able to capture King Charles I and have him beheaded.

Cromwell's victories did not make him arrogant (proud) or boastful. He remained obedient and loyal towards the Republic. The country could repose complete trust in him. He would never allow the Scots to regain the confidence they had lost. He would ever keep his sword in readiness to defend and preserve what he had accomplished for the sake of his country.

B) CHARACTERISATION

There has been much critical discussion regarding the characterisation in Marvell's ode. The two main characters who adorn and fill the poem are Charles I and Cromwell. Some critics feel that the Ode is a tribute, to Cromwell, while others opine (having the opinion) that Charles too has received his due. Let us analyse the two figures.

(i) The Character of Charles I

Though the subject of the Ode is Cromwell, Marvell has showered due praise on his adversary (enemy) Charles particularly for the dauntless (fearless manner in which the King faces death. He does noth-ing cheap or mean, unbecoming to his regal status nor does he

rave and rant at the Gods or try to vindicate his helpless Right. On the contrary he tries to judge the sharpness of the executioner's axe with his sharp eye, when the memorable moment approaches, the king bows his "comely head down as upon a bed" indeed in just this one marvellous scene. Marvell manages to rouse our pity for the King's treacherous plight as well as admiration and awe (respect) for his dignity.

(II) The Character or Cromwell

In the characteristic manner of an encomiastic ode (full of praise) Cromwell is praised for the initiative and readiness he displays in forsaking (abandoning) his life of reserve and austerity in the civil war. Besides defeating King Charles I, he scores a victory over the Irish thereby putting them to shame. The Irish people themselves accept the fact that Cromwell is good, just and fit for the highest truth.

Cromwell is spoken of in high terms for being loyal and obedient to the House of Commons and for his generosity and magnanimity in attributing all his self-won victories to them. He is compared to Caesar and Hannibal, two great world conquerors.

However here is a slight lacing of irony and sarcasm when the poet describes the flight of Charles to Hampton Court and oblique accuses Cromwell of Cunning and trickery.

And Hampton shows what part

He had of wiser art

(you may quote other relevant lines, phrases etc, to support your points)

fIII) CROMWELL AND CHARLES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Referring to the personal qualities of the two historical figures Douglas. Bush observes that the more closely we look at the Ode, the more clearly apparent it becomes that the speaker has chosen to empha-sis Cromwell's virtues as a man and likewise, those of Charles as a man. The poem does not debate which of the two is' right, for that issue is not even in question. In his treatment of Charles then, the speaker, no more than Charles himself, attempts to vindicate his helpless right. Instead he emphasises his dignity, his fortitude and what has finally to be called his consummate (perfect) good taste. The portraits of the two men beautifully supplement each* other. Cromwell is to use Aristotle's distinction - the man of character, the man of action, who "does both act and know". Charles, on the other hand is the man of passion. The man who is acted upon, the man who knows how to suffer. The contrast is pointed out in a dozen different ways.

Cromwell, acted upon by his star, is not passive but actually urges his star. Charles in "acting"-in chasing away to Carisbrooke - actually is passive-performs the part assigned to him by Cromwell. Even in the celebrated stanzas on the execution there is ironic realism as well as admiration. In this fullest presentation of Charles as king, he is the player, king. The king is acting in a play. He is the Royal Actor-who knows his assigned part and performs it with dignity. He truly adorned the "tragic scaffold."

Some critics find Marvell guilty of adopting a double -edged attitude in so far as the poem, ostensibly a panegyric (song of praise) in honour of Cromwell, also brings into focus the Kings' dignity and he fact is that Marvell has tried to maintain a balance between the two men, drawing out attention to the sterling (fine) qualities of both. It is not easy to say with any degree of certainly what the poet's final attitude toward Cromwell is, Even when Cromwell does emerge as the real hero in the poem, he does not escape Marvell*s irony in certain lines. Altogether there is a unified total attitude, which is so complex that unnecessary analysis and probing may oversimplify and disort its complexity.

C, IMAGERY AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Marvell's Ode is characterised by rich imagery and abundant use of figurative language, both of which serve either to stress an idea or to make it more clear, Thus Cromwell is compared to the "Three forked lighting" which pierces through the clouds where it was

nursed; this simile is developed into metaphysical conceit when we are told that Cromwell went burning through the air and that it is madness to resist or blame the force of angry Heaven's flame. Another striking simile is used for comparing Cromwell to a falcon which in spite of its fierceness, obeys its trainer or owner, the image of the Scots shrinking from Cromwell in fear is also rendered through figurative language.

Stage metaphor is used to describe the execution of Charles when the Royal Actor Charles alights the tragic scaffold the armed bands clap their bloody hands there is much ambiguity in this description and Marvell is too good a poet to resolve it. All these similes and metaphors enrich the quality of the poem and create a dramatic effect.

D. ROMAN TOUCHES

Marvell softens his delineation or description of the King by imparting a few Roman touches. There is a general Roman cast given to the Ode. The poet has taken care to make no specifically Christian ref-erences in the poem Charles is Caesar, Cromwell is both Caesar and Hannibal; on the tragic scaffold Charles refuses to call with "vulgar spite" not on God or Christ but on "the gods" (probably of Roman mythology)

Secondly, metaphors drawn from hunting pervade the poem. Charles chase himself to Caribrooke. Cromwell is like the falcon. Cromwell will soon put his dogs in "near /The Caledonian deer"

It is curious to note that Marvell calls both Cromwell and Charles "Caesar." Both men are Caesar, Charles the wearer of the purple regal robes, and Cromwell the invincible (cannot be defeated) general the inveterate campaigner, the man "that does both act and know" Cromwell is the Caesar who must refuse the crown for the sake of popular support and thereby cannot enjoy the reward and the security that a crown affords the tension between the Shakespeare and admiration for the kingliness which has won Cromwell power and his awareness that the power can be maintained only by a continual exertion of these talents for kingship is never relaxed Cromwell is not of royal blood - he boasts a higher and a baser pedigree. He is "the Wars and fortunes son " He cannot rest because he is restless Cromwell. All these implications enrich and qualify an insight into Cromwell* which is a heavily freighted with admiration as it is with a great condemnation. But the admiration and the condemnation do not cancel each other. On the contrary they define each other and reinforce one another.

E) POETIC ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURAL FEATURES.

Marvell's Ode is generally acclaimed as a masterpiece of poetry in this general. Besides being a narrative of some of the historical events of Marvell's time, the poem is a panegyric of a great political figure Cromwell who is the real subject of the poem, and whose character, conquests, accomplishment and potentialities constitute the main body of the poem. Speaking in terms of structure we may say that there are three ingredients or elements of poetic organisation a Chronicle of events, character portrayal and moral reflection. These three elements are skillfully fused in the poem to form a harmonious whole which strikes the readers by its unity of construction. All the similes, metaphors, illustrations and precedents cited by the poet are closely related to one or other of these three elements.

THE THREE GREAT MOVEMENT OF THE ODE

We can recognise three important movements in Marvell's Horatian Ode. They are

(i) The fiery purpose of Cromwell in waging war against the King and in effecting King's ultimate destruction (lines 9-72)

(ii) Cromwell's triumph over Ireland (lines 73-96)

(ill) Cromwell's imminent invasion of Scotland, his victories to come subsequently and the glory awaiting him and England (Lines 97-120)

The first eight lines are in the form of an introductory prologue the salient traits of Cromwell's character are highlighted in the first movement. His courage and spirit of

adventure are recognised and his entry into the English Political arena (scene) explained.

The second movement of the Ode tells us of Cromwell's decisive victory over Ireland and the reaction of the Irish people to their crushing defeat as also their dread of their, conqueror. Allusions and imagery drawn from various sources bring out Cromwell in good light.

The third movement of the poem is more or less in the form of prediction of what Cromwell is capable of doing shortly, (you may elaborate the movement by citing details given in the paraphrase.)

Concentration of Meaning and Economy of Style

Typical of him, Marvell displayed a tremendous ability for compression of meaning, in this ode. Like Bacon, he loads his line with meaning thus there is a remarkable concentration of meaning. A large number of historical events have been compressed. Two eminent histori-cal personalities have been depicted. All this is rendered in just one hun-dred and twenty lines. Indeed Marvell displays a marvellous economy in the use of words

RHYME, RHYTHM AND METRE

The metre is iambic throughout. In every stanza an octosyllabic couplet (pair of lines each having eight syllables) is followed by a shorter hexsayllabic (having six syllables) one Consider the first four lines of the poem:

"The fo r/ ward Y ou h/t hat wo uld/ appe ar

Mu st n ow/forsak e / his m u/ s es dea r/

N or in/ the sh a/do ws sing/

H is Num/b ers la n/g uishing

If you count the syllables, you will find that the first two lines contain eight syllables each: so they form an octosyllabic couplet. You will further note that they rhyme (appear-dear). If you count the syllables of lines three and four you will note that they contain six syllables each. Those lines also rhyme (sing languishing).

In the same way you may scan the entire poem. You will find that the general pattern is a rhyming iambic tetrametric couplet followed by a rhyming iambic trimetric couplet. Of course certain variations will occur here and there.

Regarding the lines you will also note that the poet combines enjambment or run on lines. (Refer lines 1 and 3) with end stopped lines (Refer lines 2 and 4)

Thus we see that there is absolutely nothing superfluous or un-necessary in the poem. It is a close knit and compact composition in which the poet's attention is riveted (fixed) on his theme. There are not digressions or irrelevant insertions. The Ode bears testimony to Marvels immense capacity for compression and concentration of meaning employing and economy of words. Altogether the structure of the poems is as an admirable piece of craftsmanship.

From the above mentioned points it will become clear to you that Marvell's poem under consideration has all the features of an Ode. more especially a Horatian ode. Please read up the section dealing with the features of an Ode before moving to the next section (Refer Unit II 2.1) shall enumerate the main points. You can easily elaborate them.

3.3 MARVELL'S POEM AS AN ODE

(i) Theme: The rising of Cromwell from his secluded life to capture and kill king Charles I and thereby to destroy the age-old political and religious institutions of England constitutes the main theme of the peon. The twin portrayals of these two eminent historical personalities as well as general moral reflections add to the seriousness and gravity of the theme.

(ii) Treatment: Throughout, the tone is serious and stately; no digression or irrelevant insertions are allowed to mar the general solem-nity of the poem. The poem is made up of three greet movements in-cluding a prologue and an epilogue and there is a logical development from one to" the next.

(iii) Style: The poem is marked by an elevated style characterised by a marvellous economy of words, thus resulting in compression and concentration of meaning. The words are carefully chosen from a wide range of sources including history, hunting, Roman mythology etc., the result is an enrichment of style.

(iv) Imagery: Rich imagery and abundant use of figurative language are noteworthy features of Marvell's ode. The similies and metaphors drawn from different sources enhance the dramatic quality of the poem.

(v) Other features "Rhyme, rhythm and metre add to the lyrical quality of the ode and enhance its narrative quality. Although the poem was originally printed as a continuous narrative. It is divisible in to short stanzas of four lines each. This is in keeping with the Horatian stanza form. Altogether the Ode is characterised by calm meditative quality which we find in Horatian odes.

(Note: You may expand the above mentioned points with the help or relevant details, examples, quotations etc. taken from the poem and the previous section.)

Let us briefly through a few critical estimate of Marvell's ode.

3.4 MARVELL'S HORATIAN ODE: SOME CRITICAL ESTIMATES

Marvell's Horatian Ode is a widely commented upon poem. It has attracted the attention and won the approval of several critics. Moody and Lovett remark that 'in the noble' Ode to Cromwell" Marvell set. an example, worthy of Milton himself, of simple dignity and classical restraint in the treatment of political theme. And it is to this theme that we owe the description of Cromwell's opponent Charles I. on the scaffold in lines which more than anything ever written, make him unforgettably the royal martyr.

He nothing common did or mean.

Upon that memorable scene.

George Williamson observes : "The ode is not merely a political poem but a transition from his view of the times to the new order, which must be explained metaphysically. For the ode raises the problem of fate in Marvell, especially as it involves the providential view of history current in his time. History was a kind of national drama deter mined by men under the providence of God. of which "the usual order of nature' was the ordinary law, As Milton said in the Christian Doc trine.

Thus fate may appear in the order of nature and the providence of god or in the geometry that measures or describes earth and space. These are important clues to Marvell's use of nature as metaphysical imagery the metaphor or extension in space or physical properties for metaphysical realities.

Williamson remarks that the beginning of the Ode is certainly unusual, He has a few enlightening remarks too to make on Charles and Cromwell.

As an actor in this drama of fate Charles plays in part with regal decorum, makes no vulgar appeal to the Gods to defend his helpless right, but accepts his fate with dignity. To emphasise this act of insurance (the regicide) Marvell repeats "memorable" and makes "forced" carry the implication both of force and of fate. The Roman parallel con-veys and mixed reaction to the event. The "Happy fate" is then extended into the fortunate consequences of the event, and virtues of the new instrument of fate who pays his rents or royalties In kingdoms, an as far as possible makes his fame theirs"

"As a servant of the Commons, he is given a new similitude which resumes the celestial

figure of power in a more obedient form than that of a falcon. As a bird of prey he may be directed to enhance the national prestige. Now the Pict or Scot shall find no cover in his variegated mind; but from this sober coloured valour shrink underneath the plaid happy if he can escape physical detection. In conclusion. Marvell mixes admonition with praise because Cromwell owes his power to war and fate, his virtues must maintain his destiny. His sword must be kept up light both as a force to ward off evil (because the cross hilt suggest the crucifix) and in the arts to sustain its power.

(You can use these estimates suitably while answering different questions).

Let us now try to analysis the fine aspects of Marvell's poetry in general so that we may assess his worth as poet.

3.5 ANDREW MARVELL'S POETIC ABILITIES

Andrew Marvell is included in the school of Metaphysical poets. But he was not a great poetic, originator such as Donne, or even technically inventive as Herbert was, though his handling of verse is masterly. Rather his work reveals the successful assimilation and fusion of the two great poetic influences of the early seventeenth century. It combines the passionate, probing intellectuality of Donne, with the clar-ity and poise of Ben Jonson (Dalglish)

In the nineteenth century, Marvell was admired for his delight in nature and his skill in natural description. As Pierre Legouis remarks: "He gave poetic expression to some aspects of Nature so happily or in-tensively that for most readers...he will remain the forerunner of Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats...and if a man is defined by his supreme gift and achievement, this image of Marvell, however simplified, may well be the most faithful".

Several metaphysical traits can be seen in Marvell's poetry. T.S. Eliot describes Marvell as undoubtedly "a very conceited poet" To understand his conceits one has to read the whole of Marvell. What makes much of Marvell's poetry distinguished and memorable, which abound in Metaphysical conceits is not the conceits themselves but the phrasing and rhythm of their contexts and sometimes the shapeliness, tightness, and continuity given by that semi scholastic kind of argumentation which he learnt from Donne. (J.B.Leishman)

Gold win Smith has a high opinion of Marvell's poetic abilities particularly his conceits. He observes.

"As a poet Marvell is very unequal. He has depth of feeling de-scriptive power, melody, his study of the classics could not fail to teach him form. Sometimes we find in him an airy and tender grace which remind us of the lighter manner of Milton; But art with him was only as an occasional recreation; not a regular pursuit. He is often slovenly, sometimes intolerably diffuse, especially when he is seduced by the fa-cility of the octosyllabic couplet. He was also eminently afflicted with the gift of "wit' or ingenuity, much prized in his day. His conceits vie with those of Donne or Cowley.

Referring to Marvell's descriptive genius, Pierre Legouis remarks that Marvell possesses the power of giving life not only to one plant or one animal but even to an ensemble (as a whole). What strikes us is not so much this or that picturesque touch as that sympathy with universal life seen in his ecstasies in wood or garden. Yet some critics have attributed a certain degree of vgueness to his descriptions. But in the view of Pierre Legouis, the alleged vagueness of Marvell's feature poetry need not be regarded as a drawback. Probably he deliberately avoided concreteness in his descriptions of nature for the sake of effect, "and it must be acknowledged that the charm of his descriptive poetry does not reside essentially in its precision since those passages where he does not particularise are not the least delightful." (Legouis),

Marvell displays a high level of craftsmanship "His skill is such that he is able to combine the idiomatic speech-quality of Donne with an elegant polish, a balanced ease, which points forward to Pope. The technical assurance, however is not mere facility: It expresses a

remark-able urbanity of tone-a sense of assured critical detachment which has nothing to do with complacency, but is based on firmly held values. Marvell is assured in manner because his spiritual and cultural standards are sure" (Dalglish)

> One reason for Marvell's approachability is that his subject matter is neither obscure nor exotic. His themes are not romantically re mote or intellectually recondite. Yet his poetry is more searching and intellectual than most Elizabethan lyrics, and it is more worldly wise and witty than most romantic poetry. The poems of Marvell are, for the most part, productions of his early youth. "They have much of that over-activity of fancy, that remoteness of allusion which distinguishes the school of Cowley, but they have also a heartfelt tenderness, a childish simplicity of feeling, among all their complications of thought which would alone make for all their conceits ....." (Hartley Coleridge)

Like most of the other Metaphysical poets, Marvell was not read or appreciated much during his own life time. Thanks to the efforts of T.S. Eliot and others, there has been favourable revaluations of the poet. Today Marvell is admired for several characteristics, which were totally ignored or misunderstood in the past.

We thus come to the end of our study of Andrews Marvell and his "An Horatian Ode Upon Cromwell's Return Ireland" Study the notes diligently and master the poem. You may next attempt to answer the following essay questions. I am confident that you will be able to tackle them well.

3.6 MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Attempt a critical appreciations of Marvell's Horatian Ode.
2. Comment on Marvell's depiction of Cromwell in the Horatian Ode.
3. Comment on the simultaneous presence of royalism and admiration for Cromwell in the Horatian Ode.
4. Examine the structure of Marvell's Horatain Ode.
5. Assess the value of Marvell as a poet.
6. Bring out the metaphysical elements in Marvell's poetry.

Read the entire study material carefully and precisely, grasping all the minute details. That will help you to answer the objective type questions and also the Viva Voce.

I shall *give below a list of books for further reading. Please try to secure them and read them.*

3.7 SUGGESTED READING

1. The Metaphysical Poets: edited by Helen Gardner
2. A Reader's Guide to the Metaphysical Poets: George Williamson
3. The Art of Marvell's Poetry: J.B. Leishman
4. Eight Metaphysical Poets : Jack Dalglish
5. Andrew Marvell: Poet Puritan. Patriot: Pierrt Legouis.
6. English Literature in the Early Seventeenth Century: Douglas Bush
7. The Pelican Guide to English Literature Vol. 3: edited by Boris Ford.
8. An outline History of English Literature: W. H. Hudson

9. A History of English Literature: William Vaughn Moody .& Roberts Morss Lovett.

10. A Glossary of Literary Terms: edited by M .H. Abram

I wish you good luck in your studies.

Prepared by
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JOHN DONNE - HOLY SONNET XIV BETTER MY HEART

Introduction

Life and Works

John Donne was born in 1572. His father was an iron-monger and his mother was the daughter of Heywood and the grandniece of Sir Thomas More. The parents were Roman Catholics and Donne was brought up as a Roman Catholic. He entered Hart Hall, Oxford at the age of eleven and went to Cambridge, late, but he did not take any degree from either of these universities. In 1592 he entered Lincoln's Inn to study Law, Here also he did take* any keen interest in studies, He spent his time writing verses.

In 1596 Donne joined as a volunteer in the expedition to Candix and then to Azores the next year. During the second voyage, be became friends with Sir Thomas Egerton the younger. Later he was appointed private secretary to the latter's father. Sir Thomas Egerton the Elder. But this career was spoiled by Donne himself by his secret marriage to Anne More, his master's niece. He and his wife had a miserable life: he had no means of livelihood.

At this time he gained the favour of Sir. Robert Druy. During their stay with Sir. Robert Druy. Donne wrote Memorial verses on the death of Druy's only daughter. These were the first of Donne's poems to be printed in his life-time. Most of his poems, though widely circulated in manuscript, were not published until 1633, two years after his death.

In 1615 Donne entered the Anglican Church. His financial dif-ficulties came to an end. In 1616 he became divinity reader a Lincoln's Inn and in 1621 he was made Dean of St. Paul's. He held this position until his death in 1631. He was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral. He made himself famous through his sermons which have come down to us as excellent specimens, not only of sermons, but also of English prose.

Donne's Poem consist of five satires, twenty elegies, the songs and sonnets and nineteen Holy Sonnets.

Bibiliography

Poems of John Donne: Ed. by H.J.C. Grierson 2. volumes. Oxford Izaac : Life of John Donne

Helen Gardner : Ed. John Donne - A collection of Critical Essays. Joan Benner : Five Metaphysical Poets.

H.J.C. Grierson : Cross currents in English Literature of the 17th century.

H.J.C. Grierson: The Metaphysical Poets.

J.B. Leishman: The Monarch of Wit

T.S. Eliot: The Metaphysical Poets, (in the Selected Essays).

Metaphysical Poetry

It was Dryden who used the term 'metaphysical' in connection with Donne's poetry. He remarked in his essay. "The origin and Progress of Satire' that Donne, "affects the Metaphysicals" It was in an condemnatory sense that Dryden used the term. He explains that Donne " deliberately artificially applies or poses to apply" what looks like metaphysics "He perplexes the minds of the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy", when he

should entertain them with the softness of love"

Dr. Johnson in the 18th century observed in his life of Cowley (Lives of the. poets) "about the beginning of the seventeenth century there appeared a race of writers that may be termed the metaphysical poets....The metaphysical poets were men of learning and to show their learning, and to show their whole endeavour" It was the intellectual subtlety of Donne's poetry that seems to have invited this criticism form Dr. Johnson, who also commented on the metaphysical conceits that heterogeneous images were violently yoked together.

Coleridge at the beginning of the nineteenth century remarks. "The wit of Donne the wit of Butler, the wit of Congreve, the wit of Sheridan how many disparate things are here expressed by one and the same word wit: wonder exciting vigour, intenseness and peculiarity of thought, using at will the almost boundless stores of a capacious memory and exercised on. subject where we have no right to expect it -this is the wit of Donne".

Certain that one who is a man like as all, has seen God" T.S. Eliot describes the sensibility of the metaphysical poets as "direct sensuous apprehension of thought into feeling, which is exactly what we find in Donne" He goes on to point out. "Tennyson and Browning are poets, and they think, but they do not feel their thought as immediately as the odour of a rose. A thought Donne was an experience, it modified his sensibility. When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly, amalgamating disparate experience, the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary. The latter falls in love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking and these two experiences are always forming new "wholes...The poets of the seventeenth century.. .possessed a mechanism of sensibility which amalgamated and unified the disparate experiences." This sensibility amalgamated and unified the disparate experiences. It did not yoke them together by violence. Eliot calls this " Unified sensibility" He goes on to show how in the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in from which we have not yet recovered. Professor H J. C. Grierson's books 'Poetical Works of Donne' and ' The Anthology of Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century' and T.S. Eliot's review of this book in the Times Literary Supplement (reprinted in his Selected Essays- 1932) caused a revival of interest in "Metaphysical poetry", which provided a stimulus to much of the eccentricities of form and matter and a great deal of the obscurity of twentieth century poetry.

Characteristics

After the above bird's eye view of Metaphysical poets and poetry by a succession of poets and critics, all of them great in their own way and have a right to compel our attention, it will be worthwhile to take stock of the characteristic features of this kind of poetry.

1. It is largely lyrical. In subject matter its religious or amatory. It explores the remote aspects of human consciousness.
2. It is analytical. It is noted for Its wit. " a combination of dissimilar images or discovery of hidden resemblances in things apparently unlike," saying what had never been said before. Alexander Pope de fined wit as "what oft was thought but never so well expressed" Leishman calls Donne" the monarch of wit"
3. Griesrson says that the distinctive note of metaphysical poetry is "the blend of passionate feeling and paradoxical ratiocination"
4. The use of contemporary language is another major feature of metaphysical poetry. The so called poetic diction is avoided.
5. The style is vigorous, harsh and packed with conceits.
6. The rhythm emerges from the meaning, not from the classical heritage or recreation of thought into feeling or the emotional apprehension of thought.

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Metaphysical Coneits

This is far - fetched comparison Involving heterogeneity of material compelled into unit. A smile, is a comparison of two dissimilar things with a point of comparison. Dr. Johnson says that in metaphysical conceits *the* heterogeneous material is yoked together by violence. T.S. Eliot points out that " a degree of heterogeneity compelled into unity by the operation of the poet's mind is omnipresent in poetry" and that we can find it in Johnson's own poetry. The souls of two lovers are compared to the legs of a pairs of mathematical compasses.

"If they be to they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two,
Thy soul the fixt foot, makes no show
To move, but both, if *the* other doe
And though it in the centre sit,
Yet when the other far doth to me,
It learned and hearkens after it,
and grows erect, as it comes home"
"Our two souls, therefore, which are one
Though I must goe, endure not yet,
A breach but an expansion
Like gold to a very thinnesse baete"

The poet says here that the lovers' two souls are really one.

They do not undergo separation if he goes to Pairs leaving her in London. It is liked a sheet of gold beaten thin. The two opposite ends of the thin sheet are not separated but only undergo expansion. The two things compared are so dissimila- that their bringing together in a com-parison seems farfetched and violent. Such an unusual far-fetched com-parison is called a metaphysical social conceit.

The above serves as a cross - reaction of necessary background material to appreciate Donne's poetry. The students are advised to refer to the books in the bibliography given above.

Donne's Poetry - some salient Features

Donne's poems can be broadly divided into three classes-love poems, religious poems and Satires. With Donne began a new epoch. Learning and intellect brought about a blend of passion and thought, of the abstract with the concrete, of the remote with the near, of the sub-lime with the commonplace. His language belonged to his own times, his conceits and images were out of the ordinary and far fetched. His wit was modern. There was logic, analysis, mysticism and even medievalism in his modernism. Donne was child of the renaissance. He lived in a period that saw a confluence of three streams, (1) the medieval scholastic thought, (2) the ancient pagan culture revived and brought to focus by the renaissance and (3) the modern age. The last mentioned has not received the attention due to it Copernicus and Galileo in the field of astronomy, Napier's logarithms, Harvey's discovery of blood circulation, Davy's safety lamp, the First Folio of Shakespeare's plays, all these come within a brief period of time. No wonder there was an intellectual ferment in the very air. No wonder that the poets who had a unified sensibility were affected by this ferment and they produced a combination of thought, feeling and imagination.

Donne is essentially a metaphysical poet, His poetry is witty, obscure and full of far-fetched conceits. It fuses thought and emotion. It is lyrical, analytical and mystical. Passion

and feeling are subjected to wit. Donne's poetry exhibits learning and scholarship. There is always in Donne an antithesis between natural and divine knowledge. His poetry is often harsh, obscure and puzzling.

In his love poetry too he is metaphysical Love for him is not merely sensual but spiritual. It is eternal. Donne's conception of poetry and his technique are essentially dramatic. They have the effect of a speech, not that of a song, Yet there is a subtle harmony in his verse. In short, Donne's genius was metaphysical. His metrical roughness, his obscurity, his bewildering allusiveness. his soaring imagination, his taste for metaphysics and his occasional bursting into simple song all these mark him out as a metaphysical poet, (see also last section containing textual and critical essays.)

Critical analysis of the Poem and Explanatory Notes

The Sonnet Form

The sonnet as a poetic form arose in Italy. Its progenitor was Petrarch who wrote a sequence of sonnets addressed to his lady love Laura. Soon it became a recognised and popular form. The Patrarchan sonnet was a lyric poem of fourteen lines in iambic pentameter. Its rime scheme was a b b a, a b b a, c d c, d c d. It fell into two parts: the octave of eight lines, and the. sestet of six lines, There was a caesurea or definite pause at the end of the octave. The emotion rose in the octave and came down in the sestet. And the poem ended with a note of reconciliation. Wyatt and Surrey introduced the sonnet into English and it soon became the vogue to write sequences of love sonnets. Sidney and Spencer tried variations in the rime scheme. Shakespeare changed the structure of the sonnet entirely, In his hands it remained a poem of 14 lines in iambic pentameter but the rime scheme was altered to ab ab, cd cd, ef ef, gg. There was no octave sestet division. The emotion gradually rose through the whole poem and was clinched in the final couplet. This is known as the Shakespearean sonnet or the English sonnet. The earlier form was known as the Petrarchan or Italian sonnet.

Donne's sonnet's are basically Petrarchan. The rhyme scheme in the octave is abba abda. The setset shows variations. In one the sestet repeats the abba pattern. In one it is c d c d e e and so on. In the Holy Sonnet X1V i.e. Batter My Heart the rhyme scheme is a b b a, a b b a, c d e, e d d.

Donne's Holy Sonnet

In 1615 Donne became an Anglican Divine. (He was born a Roman Catholic) In 1619 he was made Dean of St. Pauls Cathedral. Even earlier he had decided to accept a religious life. Some of his holy sonnets were written immediately before he became an Anglo Catholic. Others were written afterwards. These sonnets were written immediately before be became an Anglo Catholic. Others were written afterwards. These sonnets do not profess Catholicism. Anglicanism or Protestantism. They express the cry of soul in agony yearning for salvation and at the same time unwilling to renounce the world. These sonnets constitute a record of his fears, anxieties, hesitations, his intense faith and his intimate relationship with his God, as intimate as his relationship with women. Faith and doubt, joy and. fear, sensuousness and the thought of death, such conflicting thoughts and feelings plague him doggedly and find expression in these sonnets.

All critics are agreed on one thing viz. that the best of his poems are his love poems and his religious poems.

We have spoken hitherto only of the secular poems of his youth. They are the best. Moreover, his religious poems differ from them only in theme, their spirit is the same. Legouis and Cazamian observe in: "History of English Literature."

"The nineteen Holy: sonnets contain the core of Donne's religious poetry, and most of its finest examples. Here are not only Batter My Heart "but" Death Be not Proud' etc...Exactly the same combination of passion and argument as is found in the songs and sonnets can be found in these poems...The passion here is, however, more complex; it is the mixture of hope

and anguish that characterizes the religious man searching for the right relationship with God, aware both of his own unworthiness and God's infinite greatness. There are, too many tradi-tional devices of Christian devotional literature exploited in these poems, though in Donne's own way. Donne's religious style is perhaps less absolutely novel than his secular style: the metaphysical mode thrives on paradoxes at the heart of religious experience"

David Diaches: A Critical history of English Literature

Vol. II Holy Sonnet XIV

"Batter My heart" is the XIV Sonnet in Donne's Divine Sonnets. The poet prays to God in his triune capacity as the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost to shatter him and recreate him. He feels that he is a sinner and that a harsh treatment alone can set him right. God till now has been knocking at him like a tinker, blowing his breath and polishing him. Such gentle modes have not worked. The poet begs God to bend him so that he may stand upright, to destroy him using all force and make him new. The poet compares himself to a town usurped by God's enemy- the Devil. He tries hard to admit God to whom he, the town, rightly belongs. But he doesn't succeed. Now the poet compares himself to a woman. She loves God but she is betrothed to God's enemy, reason is that God's viceroy who should protect her but the viceroy himself is held captive by the devil. The beloved would willingly be loved by God. She cries out to him to break the knot with the evil and imprison her in his (God's) heart. Unless he makes her his slave she will not be free. Unless he ravishes her. she will not be chaste.

God's grace can come to man in two ways, as mastery and as mercy as G.M. Hopkins has pointed out to us. One method is kind and gentle; it is God's mercy. The other is harsh, unpleasant and almost cruel. In this case God seemingly hurts us; inflicts pain but the result is purificatory and ennobling. Suffering purges the dross the sin and error and draws us to his bosom. Donne in this sonnet cries out to God to shatter him and re-mould him nearer to his hearts desire. Till now he has been tapping, breathing, polishing him as a tinker mends a pot. But he the poet, the devotee is sinful and he cries out to his maker to break him and to recreate him; no matter how painful the battering is. Suffering is redemptive. Then he institutes another comparison. He is like a usurped town. Though the poet himself is labouring to admit God, it is of no use. His reason which should protect him from Gods enemy is weak or faithless to God. He is beleaguered by sin and error. Thirdly the poet uses the simile of a lover (God) and a beloved (poet). She loves God and is eager to be loved by him. But she is betrothed to God's enemy-Satan- i.e. to sinful nature. So the beloved cries out to her, to imprison her and make her his slave. Unless He enthrals her she will never be free; unless He ravishes her she will never be chaste.

The third simile is conventional one in Christian devotional poetry as it is in the Bhakthi cult of India, but not very common. All the three images in the poem-the tinker, the usurper and the lover bring out the idea of God's grace. The sincerity of owning up one's own sin and the yearning to fly to God's bosom are brought out very vividly and ef-fectively. The play of metaphysical wit can be seen in these three similies. It is further seen in the paradoxical contradictions in the poem. 'Bend me so that I * may rise and stand erect, "Reason the defender being captivated, liberate me by imprisoning me, make me free by making me your slave, make me chaste by ravishing me' these are apparent contra-dictions but such as are resolved in the light of the context of Grace and redemption.

Explanatory Notes

1. batter : break or shatter as with a battering ram; break into pieces.

three -personed God: God conceived as three the father, the son and the holy ghost conceives as three but really one.'

2. God is conceived here as a tinker and the poet as a pot. A tinker's gentle treatment won't do. Something harsher is necessary. The pot has to be broken -*ip* and made

anew, mend: repair.

3. That: so that...bend your force: exert all your force.

5. to another due: belonging to another

6. Labour : work hard, try hard to no end: to no purpose it is of no use it is futile.

7. Reason: man' .faculty of reasoning or thinking correctly. Reason is man's greatest asset and it should protect him. But it often leads him away from faith. It is thus the prisoner. Viceroy. An agent or representative of a ruler who carries on the administration in place of the King or Emperor.

8. Captived: made captive, held prisoner untrue: faithless (to God)

9. faine: willingly, eagerly, I would be very eagerly (I am eager to be) loved by you.

10. betrothed: given in marriage. (I am wedded to sin)

divorce, unite, break that knot: unite me or liberate me from that union (with sin and error).

12. imprison me: imprison me in your heart

13. Except : Unless enthral: make (me) a slave. (Thrall= slave)

14. Chast : Chaste ; pure, ravish : rape: subdue by force.

Textual and Citical Essays (Major Questions and Answers)

1. Donne as a Poet - General Estimate

Donne lived and wrote in a period which saw the confluence of three streams, the middle ages with its scholastic philosophy, the pagan culture as revived by the Renaissance and the modern age with its breath-taking discoveries and inventions. It is but natural that such a period generates a great deal of intellectual ferment and such ferment finds expression in the poetry of the times.

The poetry of Lucretius and Dante was metaphysical or philo-sophical in the sense that they set forth an ordered system of the uni-verse. That system was breaking up in the light of the new discoveries of Donne's times. But Donne is called a metaphysical poet in a different sense. The metaphysical poets sought to express new thoughts in a new way. The poetry styled thus is often analytical, witty, a blend of feelings and reasons. Its style is somewhat harsh, waning contemporary language and conversational idiom. Often there is a great deal of argumentation. The chief characteristic trait of metaphysical poetry is wit. Leishman has entitled his book on Donne. The Monarch of Wit, This quality of wit comprises the bringing together of dissimilar images and the discovery of their hidden resemblances. Donne and his successors are noted for their direct sensuous apprehension of thought or the recreation of thought into feeling. This unified sensibility enables them to blend the dissimilar images into conceits that are satisfying to the intellect. Metaphysical poetry is intellectual, obscure, odd, subtle, analytical and complex. It is these qualities which caused a revival of interest in the metaphysical poets and provided an analogue and a model to the poets of this century.

Donne's poetry can be broadly classified into two secular and religious. His secular poems comprise his elegies, his satires and his love poems. The elegies and the satires belong to his early years of poverty, failure and frustration. The elegies are twenty in number. They have youthful ebullience and vitality. They share some of the characteristics of his satires. Donne wrote five satires. These have a note of harshness. They are somewhat harsh, witty, scornful. But Donne's humanism blunts the edge of the scorn.

By far the best of Donne's works are his love poems. "His religious poems differ from them only in theme; their spirit is the same" (Legouis and Cazamian). They have been

described as an uninhibited record of many love affairs before marriage and of many lifelong friendship. His love poems are not based on poetic conventions but on his own experiences. This gives them the element of sincerity which is the true test of all lyric poetry, especially love poetry. All the various manners and .phases of love find expression in these poems, sensual, conjugal and platonic, sometimes even mystical. It is startlingly unconditional. All the moods of a lover find expression here such as mutual contended love, the sorrow of parting, the gentler pathos of temporary separation unmarried life, the mystical heights and depths of love etc. Sometimes a cynical element also is seen about the inconstancy of women as in 'Go and Catch a Falling Star'. Donne's love poetry is very complex. It portrays the passion vividly experienced; it is argumentative; it displays" wit and learning, it is, often highly realistic; it is passionate and philosophical.

Donne's religious poems reveal a grave divine exploring the traditional devotional attitudes with a new subtlety and directness. The nineteen Holy Sonnets contain the core of Donne's religious poetry. The same combination of passion and argument as is found in his love poetry is found here also. These poems express the cry of soul in anguish yearning for salvation and yet unwilling to give up the world. His rela-tionship with God is intimate and as intense as his relationship with his beloved. The same play of wit, argumentation and paradox can be seen in these religious poems as in his love poems. The themes are sin and error, penitence, death, redemption etc. (see also next essay)

2. Donne's Religious Poems

Or Donne's Holy Sonnets with special reference to "Batter My Heart"

Many of Donne's poems have religious themes. But his nine teen Holy Sonnets contain the core of his religious poems. Some of these were written immediately before he became an Anglo Catholic and most of the others later. But they have no denominational colouring or flavour. They are a cry of an anguished soul torn between the worldly passion on the one hand and an equally compelling craving for redemption on the other. Here is a record of his fears, anxieties, hesitation and faith. His relationship with his beloved. His is a personal God, not Spinoza's or Einstein's God who is an impersonal presence expressed in the harmony of the universe.

As David Diaches points out "Here are not only Batter My Heart" but "Death, Be not Proud." "At the Round Earth's Imagined Corner's Below" and "what If this Present Were the World's Night?" Exactly the same combination of passion and argument as is found in the Songs and 'Sonnets' can be found in these poems' (Donne uses the spelling sonnets for the love poems and sonnets for his religious poems because perhaps that latter are sonnets proper) But the passion in the religious poem is more complex. It is a mixture of hope and anguish, a mixture of a sense of his own unworthiness and of the greatness of God. These opposites are characteristics of all deeply felt religious poetry. Donne draws on many traditional devices of Christian devotional literature though we can find Donne's own individual touch here also. Such a one is the lover - beloved relationship in Batter My Heart. 'Donne's religious style is less absolutely novel than his secular style: the metaphysical mode thrives on paradox, and three have always been paradoxes at the heart of religious experience' (David Daiches: A critical History Vol II)

The themes are sin, error death, penitence, redemption and things associated with these. With the narrow compass of the sonnet's fourteen lines, Donne manages a very wide variety of themes, images , diction and rhythm.

To take-an example: 'Batter My heart' is Donne's fourteenth Holy Sonnet. It is a fervent, passionate appeal to the three-personed God (The Father, the son and the Holy Ghost) to redeem him from his sins. The poet conceives of God in three ways in the poem, as a tinker, as a usurped town and as a lover- he himself being the woman loved. The tinker so far has been dealing with his pot gently, tapping knocking, brightening, the poet (the poet) is too

gone to be mended gently. Mercy is not what is required but mastery. He asks the tinker to batter him and re-mould him, to use all his force and redeem him through suffering (The image of the pot is conventional in Eastern religious literature.)

Then the poet introduces another simile-that a town attached by a foe. The poet is the town, God is the true ruler, the devil is the usurper and reason, God's viceroy who should defend the town from the foe is made captive by the foe. Reason is man's best asset and should protect him from sin and error but man uses fallacious reasoning to justify his sins and errors. The poet asks God to redeem him from the foe.

The third simile is that of a lover and his beloved. God is the lover and the poet is the beloved. The woman is betrothed to the foe. She is eager to be saved by the lover. God, She cries out to imprison her in his heart; that would bring freedom to her. He should ravish her and she would be chaste then. These paradoxes are part of religious experience and they are part of the metaphysical mode in poetry. The sinner here freely confesses his sin and yearns to be redeemed. He is in the grip of worldly passion and he is unable to break himself free. The passionate cry to his creator comes from his heart and he is willing to be shattered in order to be redeemed.

3. Donne as a metaphysical poet

The chief features of metaphysical poetry are seen in Donne's poems. In fact Donne wrote a kind of poetry different from conventional Elizabethan poetry and these distinctive features came to be known as metaphysical poetry'. In the first place metaphysical poetry is essentially lyrical i.e. it is subjective, it is the poetry of self-expression. In subject matter it is amatory or religious. Donne is at his best in his love poems and his religious poems. It explores human consciousness.

Another aspect of Donne's poetry is its analytical nature. It is famous for the free play of wit. Leishman describes Donne as the mon-arch of wit in the title of his book on Donne' Wit is combination of dis-similar images or discovery of hidden resemblances in things that are apparently unlike each other. Thirdly the blend of passionate feeling and paradoxical reasoning is the distinctive note of metaphysical poetry. This precisely is what stands out prominently in Donne's love poetry and religious poetry.

Another feature of metaphysical poetry, is its of contemporary language. What is called poetic diction is avoided. The style is vigorous, sometimes even harsh and packed with conceits. Metaphysical conceits are far-fetched comparisons. Dr. Johnson took these poets to task for yoking together heterogeneous images by violence. This discovering of esoteric resemblances was praised by critics of this century as the play of wit referred to earlier. Comparing a pair of lovers to the two legs of pair of compasses or to a fly *end* taper and many such far-fetched comparisons go by the name of metaphysical conceits and they abound in Donne's poems.

The rhythm in Donne's poetry emerges from the meaning; not from the poetic conventions or requirements of music. This is distinctive of all metaphysical poetry. Lastly Donne has unified sensibility. This enables him to recreate thought into feeling. This has been described by T.S. Eliot as a direct sensuous apprehension of thought. These were the characteristics features of Donne's poetry. A few poets who came after him were influenced by the mode of these poems and they constitute a school of poets now known as the metaphysicals. Donne and the other metaphysicals had a profound influence on twentieth century poetry. The complexity, the obscurity, and the cleverness, especially their allusions became the hall-mark of T.S. Eliot and his successors in the twentieth century.

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JOHN KEATS
ODE TO THE NIGHTINGALE

Introduction

Life and Works of Keats

John Keats was born in London as the son of Thomas Keats, a stable man, on October 31, 1975. Thomas Keats fell from a horse and died when John was a baby and the mother died of tuberculosis. Thus the boys John, his brothers George and Tom and their sister were under the care of their grandmother. She also died in 1814. They boys were then put in the school of the Rev. John Clarke at Enfield. Here John re-ceived a good general education. He often quarrelled and fought with other boys and did not show any precocious talent in studies. But to-wards the "end of his school life he became very studious. He was espe-cially interested in classical mythology. Charles Cowden Clarke was his school master's son. Keats and Cowden Clarke became good friends and their friendship continued even after their school days. Keats is said to have received great encouragement from this school friend.

Keats became an apprentice to a surgeon but he did not complete the term of apprenticeship. But at the St. Thomas hospital' he passed an examination and became a dresser at Guy's hospital. He hadn't much interest in his job. He read Spenser's Fairy Queen and developed great interest in poetry. Cowden Clarke introduced him to Leigh Hunt, the poet and critic and Keats admired him as a Champion of liberty. He had been imprisoned for a short period for ridiculing the Prince Regent. Leigh Hunt's influence on Keats early poetry and Keat's association with the cockney school of poetry earned him a great deal of virulent criticism. Through Leigh Hunt Keats became acquainted with Haydora the painter, Reynolds the poet and Oilier the publisher, Hayden introduced Keats to the English Marbles, a collection of ancient Greek sculpture, to Which we owe his Ode on the Grecian Urn. Keat's first volume of poems was published in 1817. While living at Hampstead he visited the Ise of Wight, Margeret, Oxford Starford on Avon, Leatherhead, Dorking and Teignmouth. He was engaged in writing Endymion, a long poem during this period. A publisher had advanced a considerable sum of money and he was not poor as the usually believed by some. Nor was he a poor cockney poet.

Endymion was published in 1818 and it was severely criticised by The Quarterly Review and The Woods Magazine. The same year Keats went on a walking tour with a friend Charles Armitage travelled through the Lake District, the Burns country Belfast and the western Highlands. His brother George had left for America to settle down there. The tour told heavily on his health. He was ill and he came back to find his (brother Torn ailing from tuberculosis. Though he nursed him devotedly Tom died and Keats was left in deep anguish.

Living with Armitage Brown at Hampstead, Keats devoted himself wholly to writing poetry. He fell in love with Fanny Brawne, and became engaged to her. Though the girl was attached to him she could not respond to his fierce passion and bring happiness to him. He was very sensitive and irritable and also jealous, -which made him unhappy. Perhaps his ill-health was partly responsible for this. In 1819 he was writing many of his best poems though he was in the grip of the same deadly disease that stole his brother from him. His third volume of poems was published in 1820. It contained Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, Hyperion, and the odes To Autumn, Ode on a Grecian Urn. To a Nightingale, To Psyche and on Melancholy Little else was written after this and nothing more published before his death. The other works written during 1818-1919. a period of profuse creativity, were published

after his death.

Keats' health broke down in February 1820 but he seemed to recover for a time, Fanny had cancelled her engagement and the virulent attacks by the* critics added to his misery. In September of the same year he left for Italy accompanied by a student painter names Seven. Shelley was then at Pisa and invited Keats to go and stay with him. Keats was going to Rome with a letter of introduction to Dr. Clark and he went there instead of to Pisa. He settled down in Rome and was nursed devotedly by Seven. He knew of the coming of death and it did come on 23rd February 1821. He was buried in the English cemetery in Rome. He had written his own epitaph and it was inscribed on his tombstone as desire by him; Here lies one -whose fame was writ in water" His circle of friends included Shelley, Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt and Cowden Clark among others. The house at Hampstead in which he lived from 1817 to 1820 in now a museum dedicated to him.

Keat's Poetry

From such a short life and leaving aside his adolescence we get very little to help us to form an idea of his personality and character. What we do know of this is through his poems and letters. They reveal a singularly vivid and consistent impression of a genius in the making.

What strikes us most about his poetic personality is his exquisite delight in a world of sensations-of colours and forms, of sound and smells and tastes. It is said that he used to paint his throat with cayenne pepper in order to make the wine taste better. This may or may not be true but what maters, to us, the students of his poetry is not the sensu-ality of his life but the sensuousness of his poetry. He has gone on record in one of his letters 'O for a life of sensations rather than thought' A whole book KEATS by H.W. Garrod is devoted to show Keat's concern with and his delight in sensations, it is not merely sights and sounds, tastes and smells that are captured in vivid images in his poetry. A critic has counted more than thirty different sensations, not merely the five that we commonly think of, for example weight images, tension images etc. A few examples will give an indication of the vividness and immediacy of Keat's sensuous imagery:

'O for a breaker full of the warm South

With beaded bubbles winking at the brim.

And still she slept an azure - lidded sleep'

'a bunch of blooming plums'

Ready to melt between an infant's gums'

'Joy with one finger on his lips

Ever bidding adieu

'Sometimes whoever seeks aboard may find

three sitting careless on a granary floor,

They hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind'

These are only a few snatches out of several hundred present in Keat's poems. An all embracing sensuousness is the determining element of the distinctive individually of Keat's poetic genius. (See unit III also)

His delight in moral and intellectual beauty was not less intense than his sheer sensuous delight. A thing of beauty is a joy for ever/ Its loveliness increases, it will never/ Pass into nothingness..." The thought of death does recur in his poems often and it shows that he did not be-lieve in immortality. The world of reality around him is transient but the world of art symbolised by the nightingale's song and the Grecian urn would remain for ever in a world of change and impermanence, bringing consolation to man beset with the grief of life. , Thou [illegible] bird!

No hungry generations tread thee down

(Nightingale)

When old age shall this generations waste,

Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe. Than ours" (Grecian Urn)

So Keats worshipped beauty and almost made it his religion saying "Beauty is truth, truth beauty"

Keat's romantic imagination is another aspect that stands out prominently in his works. This enables him to identify himself with the thing the contemplates. Once he said "When a sparrow comes to my window I take a part in its existence and peck away at the grave. In this he is unique among the romantics. In a manner he abdicates his person-ality. This negative capability (a phrase coined by Keats himself) places him-with Shakespeare. Matthew Arnold concluded his chapter, on Keats in his Essays in Criticism (II series) with the words: " He is with Shakespeare'. The Ode to Autumn brings this out clearly. There is no trace of the poet's personality in the poem. There is only the Autumn season.

Keat's was a poet of inspiration and could express himself in unpremeditated verse as he did in writing the ode to the Nightingale. But he supplemented this gift of inspiration with diligent study and severe self criticism. He sent himself deliberately to learn and copy the best effects of the best masters in his craft, he polished and re-polished his verses, and some of his most famous phrase were painfully evolved, after repeated alteration, from an originally common place line' Instead of being over whelmed by the attacks of critics, he did not yield to despair but went on writing, profiting by everything useful and sensible in the hostile criticism.

This restraint and discipline mark him out from his contempo-raries. While sharing their love of liberty (Shelley, Byron, Leigh Hunt), Keats avoids their excesses. Though he participated in the romantic revolt against the artificial discipline of the neo-classists, we find him a classicist in a different sense. He has much of the spirit of the ancient Greeks, a desire for perfect formal finish, great feeling. His sensuous delight too is pagan. He never saw Greece and never read Greek. But no other English poet was so Greek in spirit as young Keats described as a cockney by his critics. It was this Hellenic spirit in him which enabled him to discard some of the excesses of his early models such as Leigh Hunt.

Some critics have described Keats as an escapist. According to these critics the romantic poets escape into a world of make believe, a worldly of poetry when they find the world in which they live full of misery. This view is untenable in the light of Keat's intense delight in sensuous and intellectual beauty. F.R. Leavis shows how Keats desire to escape from this world but comes back to the reality of the sensuous delight in this world. He realises that if he dies he will become a mere sod insensitive to the nightingale's song. Leavis shows that there is constant swinging between these two positions, which constitutes the complex intellectual structure of Ode (Keats in English Critical Texts- Enright and Chickera).

Early influences of Keats were those of Spenser and Leigh Hunt. But the severe attacks of critics were not really due to the influence of these poets but due to the fact that Keats and Leigh Hunt were friends. Such attacks were held responsible for Keat's early death. Shelley's poetic utterances in the famous pastoral elegy. Adonais have strengthened his belief, But a close study of his life shows that he en-dured such things with fortitude and turned to account what he found sensible in the criticism.

The best of Keat's Poetry was composed in less than two years (see Robert Gitting: *Keats; The living Year)* The bulk, the variety and the level of excellence of the output of this productive period is amazing. He was imitative like all young poets but no one was so successfully imitative and original at the same time. From Chaucer he learnt his narrative skill,the mastery of the Ottva rhyme, the pathos of Isabella and the medieval atmosphere of

the Eve of St. Agnes. From Milton he learned the sublimity of his reverberant blank verse and the titanic conceptions of Hyperion. From Coleridge he learnt the eerie magic of La Bella Dame Sans Merci. From Dryden he took the heroic couplet and added to its ease and clearness and restraint all the splendour and imaginative feeling *of* the Romantics. From Spenser he took the Spenserian stanza and a taste for sensuous imagery. It will not be out of place if the reader sometimes wonders who is more sensuous. Keats or Spenser and whose Alexandrines are more smooth and more beautiful. But he was always individual and his great odes bear the stamp of his individuality more than anything else. There are no imitative echoes in the odes and the style is truly individual. His view of life finds supreme expression in these masterpieces.

Keat's attitude to nature is worth noting. Nature gives him some of the best moments of his life. It brings him delight and it brings him sorrow. It leads him to serious thoughts some times and sometimes he just immerse himself in the sensations as in the, "Ode to Autumn."

The characteristics of Keat's poetry can be summed up as follows rich sensuousness, ^he worship of beauty, beautiful romantic imagi-nation, Hellenic clarity and chiselled beauty of form and above all this his peculiarly exquisite melody. He gave us in four years more than what others have given in their much longer life times. To describe Keats as a poet of unfulfilled renown is truly appropriate.

Critical Analysis of The Poem and Explanatory Notes

Introduction:

Charles Armitage Brown, with whom Keats lived at Wentworth place, Hampstead, has given the following account of the circumstances of composition of The Ode to a Nightingale.

In the spring of 1819 a nightingale had built her nest near my house. Keats felt tranquil and continual joy in her song, and one morning he took his chair from the breakfast table to the grass - plot under a plum three, where he. sat for two or three hours. When he came into the house, I perceived that he had some scraps of paper in his hand, and these he was quietly thrusting behind the books. On inquiry I found those scraps, four or five in number, contained his poetic feelings on the song of our nightingale. The writing was not well legible, and it was difficult to arrange the stanzas on so many scraps. With his assistance I succeeded and this Was his Ode to a Nightingale."

A brief summary of the poem:

The poet, listening to the nightingale's song feels oppressed by its beauty and joy. He longs to escape to the world of the forest with the aid of a cup of wine and longs to be far away from the cares and sorrows of life. Poesy shall bear him to the woodland world. He finds himself transported to the woodland in all the beauty of early summer. The power of pure beauty makes him long for death. Then he contrasts the immortality of the bird's song with his own mortality. The world forlorn at the end of the stanza calls up a train of other associations in his mind, which wake him from his reverie. He finds he cannot escape as easily as he has thought. The song of the bird fades far away in the distance and the poet returns to wakeful life half-dazed.

Stanza-wise paraphrase

I. I feel painful and my sense become numb as though I had taken' some sleep - inducing drug only a minute ago and have been overpowered by forgetfulness. My pain is not due to any envy of your happy fate to my joy at your happiness. I am happy that you, soft-winged spirit of the forest, are singing of summer, loud and free in some spot, green with beech and full of their innumerable shadows.

II. If only I can have a drink of wine that has been cooled underground for a very long time, wine that brings to mind the flowers and dance and sons t

the joyous south, a beak full of red Hippocrene with beaded bubbles winking at the brim of the purple - stained mouth, so that I might drink it and leave the world unnoticed by any one and disappear into the forest along with you!

III. Let me fade away and dissolve in your song so that I can completely forget what you have never known, sitting amidst the leaves, Let me forget the weariness, the fever and the fret of the world where men groan in misery, where the old shake with palsy and the young grow pale and thin like ghosts and die, where even a little thoughts is full of sorrow, where beauty is as short -lived as the love that yearns for it.

IV. Keep on flying! I will fly to you not with the help of wine but of poetry, though the intellect hinders my imaginative flight. I am already with you. The night is young and lovely and perhaps the moon is one her throne surrounded by her attendant fairies, the stars. But there where I sit, there is no light except what is blown down with the breeze through the foliage of the trees though leafy darkness and winding mossy paths.

V. I cannot see what flowers bloom around me. But in the perfumed darkness, I can guess each sweet flower that grows in this season on the grass, on the bushes and on the wild fruit-trees. I can recognise the scent of the white hawthorn, the eglantine, the violet and the musk rose full of sweet honey and dew, which attract the bees and fill the place with their murmuring sounds.

VI. I am listening to your song in the dark. Often I have wished to die, and in my poems I have called upon death to take me away quietly. Now this seems to be the best moment for me to die quietly when you are pouring out your soul in such an ecstasy. But if I die now, youwill be singing on and I will not be hearing your great song because I would have become a piece of lifeless clay.

VII. You were not born for death. Your song is immortal. The selfish struggle of men will not trample it down and destroy it. The same song that I hear tonight must have been heard by all people great and small. Ruth, the Moabite when working in the field of a foreign country far away from her home must have listened to a similar song and wept for her far-off home. The same song must have charmed magic casements of enchanter's castles in fairy land forlorn in than ancient days.

VIII. The word "forlorn' rudely awakens me from my reverie. My imagination is not able to sustain the illusion of my dissolution in the birds song. Good bye to the vision. The song fades in the distance and is now heard no more. Was it all real' or merely a dream?

Explanatory Notes

Stanza -1

1. Drowsy: Sleepy numbness: absence of sensation, a drowsy numbness pains my sense, this is an apparent contradiction Numbness is want of sensation. How can it pain the sense? It is the poet's heart that is pained by the numbness that is coming over his sense, the numbness of his sensibility. It is a momentary feeling, nothing like the loss of sensibility described in Wordsworth's Ode or Coleridge's Dejection.

2. Hemlock: A poison often used by the Greeks to kill their condemned prisoners. It is said that it induces numbness and then kills.

3. Emptied: drunk to the last drop.

   Opiate: a drug that inducers sleep to the brains: to the dregs or less; to the very last drop and the impurities that remain after it.

emptied...to the drains: as though I had drained the cup till it was empty.

4. One minute past: only one minute ago.

Lethe wards: Into oblivion or forgetfulness. Lethe is the river of the underworld in Greek mythology. The spirits of dead persons while crossing over to the nether world, drank from this stream and forgot their past.

Lethe wards had sunk: sunk into oblivion

5. Lot: fate. It is not though envy of thy happy lot:

The poet's sadness is not because he is envious of the bird's happiness.

6. Being, .happiness: It is because I am too happy in your happiness that I feel this pain. Throughout the poem there runs the idea that men are not made to bear that excess and purity of joy that the creatures of the woods have.

7. That: the thought that light - winged : swift. Dryad: tree nymph; spirit which .was born and died with the trees which were their dwellings, according to Greek mythology. Only the song is heard while the bird itself is invisible. So the poet hailed it a spirit. Compare Shelly's Skylark: 'Hail to thee blithe spirit! Bird thou never wert'

8. In some melodious plot: some place (plot of ground) filled « % with the .melody of the nightingale's song.

9. beechen green : the green of beech trees.

10. Summer: the season typifying youthfulness and joy in full throated ease: at high pitch and without effort. Compare Shelley's Skylark' purest thy full heart in profuse strains of unpremeditated art'

Stanza II

The poet wishes that he had some excellent wine so that he could drink, it forget the world and escape from it into the world of the bird's song.

11. draught: a sip of drink; a mouthful, vintage: wine

12. a long age: a long period. Wine is stored in underground cellars. The longer it is kept thus, the better it will be deep - delved; deeply dug.

13. Flora: Roman goddess of flowers and of the spring sea son. Tasting of Flora and the country green etc, bringing to the mind, thoughts of flowers and the spring season the country green the village green-the grassy plain in a village where men and women gather to sing and dance on festive occasions.

14. Provencal song: a reference to the troubadours or wandering singers of Province in Southern France in the Middle Ages. Sun burnt mirth: the mirth of sunburnt people in the in south. Their skin is sunburnt i.e. made brown by exposure to the host sun while dancing and singing in the open spaces. The south of France, all southern Europe (The Mediterranean region) is comparatively warm and pleasant and associated with mirth and joy. Northern Europe (including England) is extremely cold and not congenial to such a joyous life. The images of lines 3 and 4 suggest such joy.

15. beaker: goblet: drinking cup, the warm south: the wines of southern Europe are famous. The Mediterranean coast is famous for its fruit. The poet feels that the very joyous warmth will be caught in the flavour of the wine;

16. Blushful: blushing red. Hippocrene: The fountain of the Horse sacred to the Muses in Greek mythology. It is said to have been produced by a blow from the hoof of the winged horse Pegasus. It was

believed that anyone who drank from the fountain would be inspired Keats combines the thought of wine with that of this inspiring water.

Full of the...Hippocrene: the red wine which would inspire anyone who drinks it with poetic ardour.

17. winking: quickly breaking beaded: clustered together like a string of beads. It is said that Keat's actually wrote clustered' at first but revised it later to 'beaded'. Note specially the winking of the bubble. Some editors explain the word as glittering. One of the bubbles breaking up seems to be the idea. This is one of the most felicitous lines in the poem. The vividness and immediacy of the visual image is striking.

18. Purple-stained mouth: the mouth of the beaker (or of the person drinking)

19. and leave the word unseen, escape quietly from this miser able world.

The poet wishes to disappear with the bird into the dark forest, to escape quietly from this miserable world of sorrow. F. R. Leayis has shown how the poem is an extremely subtle and varied interplay of emotions, directed now positively, now negatively, now towards escape or death and now towards the sheer sensuous delight of living. Also note the beautiful sensory images. On the concrete images in Keat's poetry Leavis remarks: The rich local concreteness is the local manifestation of the inclusive sureness of grasp in the whole. What the detail exhibits is not merely an extraordinary intensity of realisation, but also an extraordinary Tightness and delicacy of touch; a sureness of touch that is the working of a fine organisation.

Stanza III

The poet gives a picture of the world i.e. our life, from which he wants to escape.

21. Fade far away: The wish expressed in line 20 to fade away is continued. Such a repetition can be seen at the beginning of the last stanza., (forlorn...) But these are not mere mechanical connections between the stanzas, 'fade' is a key word just as forlorn' is. The poet wishes that this existence in this miserable world should fade and dissolve in the nightingale's song. He wants to become part of the song because it is beautiful and immortal.

dissolve: not to vanish into nothingness but to dissolve in the birds song and become one with it.

and quite forget: he wants to forget the horrors of light.

22. What thou...hast never known: the sorrows and miseries described in the subsequent lines, which the nightingale has never known.

23. The weariness, the fever, and the fret:

the curse of loneliness concisely expressed. Note the following

parallel passages.

The fruitful stir unprofitable, and the fever of the world's

(Wordsworth: Tintern Abbey)

This strange disease of modern life

with its sick hurry, its divided aims.

It heads overtaxed, it palsied hearts'

(Matthew Arnold: The Scholar Gipsy)

This mad unrest which men miscall delight' (Shelley)

25. Palsy : paralysis, which sometimes makes the limbs shake and tremble.

Where palsy... .hairs: Where old people shake with palsy and drag the last days of their lives miserably to the grave.

Where youth...dies...not only old people but also young men and women are full of misery. They too are in the grip of deadly dis-ease[1].

26. Spectre thin: so thin that he looks like as spectre or ghost Perhaps Keats recalls the state of his brother Tom before he died.

27. Where but to think.... despairs: Where even to think is to be full of sorrow. The moment you start thinking your heart is filled with sorrow. Not only can't you be gay, You cannot even think without be-ing sorrowful at once.

but: only

28. Leaden -eyed despairs : despair with the eyes dull grey in colour and cast down heavily like lead*This should be read with full of in the previous line: "full of leaden eyed despairs'

29. Where Beauty...eyes: Where beauty cannot be permanent.

30. Or new love tomorrow: Where love can no more be firm and constant than beauty can be permanent. Pine at them: yearn for the lustrous eyes of beauty. Beyond tomorrow: for a long time Beauty can keep her lustrous eyes and new love pine at those eyes for a short time A

Notice the contrast between the human condition on the one hand and the beautiful world symbolised by the Nightingale's song. Note also the same contrast in Shelly's Ode to the Skylark'

Stanza IV

The poet wishes to reach the world of joy of the Nightingale not on the wings of wine but of poetry. And at once he is there. He has been transported thither by his imagination. The moon and stars shine in the sky "but it is dark on earth where he sits (this too is imagined) except streaks of moonlight that are scattered through the quivering leaves. It should be remembered that the poem was composed in the morning. But the poet imagines the time to be throughout the poem.

31. Away, away: The poet is going back to the earlier 'fade away' and fade a way' of stanza 2 and 3. He is asking the bird to con-tinue its flight; he would catch up with it.

32 Not charioted....pards....I will not be transported to you by wine as I wished earlier (stanza II). Bacchus and his pards: an allusion to Titan's picture of Beachus and Ariadne, which Keats had seen in the National Gallery. Bacchus is the god of wine in Greek mythology. His chariot is drawn by leopards. Keats describes the chariot in greater detail in 'Endymion'

pards: leopard

33. viewless wings of poetry: the invisible wings of poetic imagination. He wishes to be intoxicated and transported not by wine but by poetry.

34. Though the dull brain retards: Though reason or intellect hinders the free play of imagination.

35. Already with thee: I am already with you. Imagination has taken him to the bird in a second, tender is the night: the night is young and lovely. It is not gloomily dark as it is around me.

36. haply: perhaps It is dark where the poet sits but perhaps the moon is shining bright in the sky. He cannot see because of the thick canopy of leaves.

37. Fays: fairies

38: here: Where the poet sits

39. Save: except heaven sky save what...blown: (here there is no light) except what is blown down with the breeze from the sky through the thick foliage of trees. Light is described as blown with the breeze. This is no mere poetic fancy but a piece of very clear observation. When the breeze blows the l eaves move and a little of the moonlight passes through. The light that thus penetrates the moving leaves appear to be blown like the wind or scattered like leaves. The effect is accurately and vividly captures.

40. Verdurous: rich in vegetation, gloom : darkness. Through verdurous gloom: Through the darkness caused by the leaves at night, winding mossy ways: Winding paths overgrown with moss.

Stanza V

The poet is not able to see the flowers around him but can feel the fragrance of the various flowers. In the dark he tries to guess the presence of each flower its fragrance, flowers in the grass, in the thickets and in the wild fruits trees. He gives us a rich feast of varied sensuous imagery.

41. I cannot see: because of the darkness.

42. Incense: sweet smell boughs: branches, what sweet Incense, boughs: what sweet smell pervades the place.

43. Embalmed : Sweet -Scented; the very darkness is sweet scented. Note, the word embalmed is suggestive of death, guess each sweet: guises each flower from its smell without seeing it.

44. Where with: with which seasonable month: the month that brings forth the flowers in their season; the spring season endows: gives; presents. The seasonable n onth endows the grass, the thicket and
the fruit trees with certain sweet smells, the poet guesses each of
these
flowers through its smell.

45. thicket: bush

46-49 The hawthorn, the eglantine, the violet and the musk rose are different flowers, pastoral eglantine: properly the sweet briar but here it is used, as often, for honeysuckle. It is described as pastoral be-cause it is commonly mentioned in pastoral ""poetry. Compare 'Though the sweet briar, or the vine, or the twistedeglantine' Milton: 'L' Allegro.

48. Mid-May's eldest child: First among the flowers that bloom in mid-May.

49. musk-rose: Keats means the wild rose, 'the mid forest brake, rich with a sprinkling of fair musk, rose blooms 'full of dewy wine: filled with dew drops, sweet like wine, Perhaps a reference to the honey in the flower.

49. The numerous haunt of files on summer eves: a memorable line in the poem; memorable for its alliteration and Onomatopoeia (sound echoing the sense).

Stanza VI

51 Darkling: (adv) on the dark. The word is rarely used. toru Dutt uses it in the same sense in 'Our Casuarinas Tree' "Sung darkling from our tree, while men repose'. Matthew Arnold uses it an adjective in 'The Dover Beach' we are here as on a darkling plain' for whereas.

52 Haf in love with easeful death: the wish to die has often been expressed by Keats in his poems e.g.

'I know this being's lease;

My fancy to its utmost blisses spreads;

Yet could I on this very midnight cease

And this world's gaudy ensigns see in shreds;

Verse, Fame and Beauty are intense indeed

But Death intenser -Death is life's high mood

Keats: why did I Laugh Tonight"

easeful death: death which would bring me ease and relif from the miseries of life

53 Called him....rhyme: addressed death in endearing terms, mused rhyme: poetry which was the outcome of thought and reflection

54 To take...breath: to take his life quietly

55 rich; precious or pleasant

56 to cease: to die

57 While thou...ecstasy: While you are singing ecstatically abroad: out side.

Ecstasy: intense joy; rapture

58 You will continue to sing but I will become a sod and not

be able to hear you. I have ears in vain: I would not be able to hear you

to thy high requiem become a sod: I would become lump of earth insensitive to your song. Requiem: a song or dirge sund for the response

of the dead: Sod: a piece of earth

Stanza VII

Which the poet wishes to die he feels that the nightingale's song would be immortal.

61 thou was not...Bird: Keats tells the bird that her song is immortal in a world of impermanent things. It is a thing of beauty that is a joy for ever. In the 'Ode on a Grecian urn' Keats sees art alone that will last for ever in a transient, changing world.

Fair youth beneath the trees, thou canst not leave

Thy song, not ever can those trees be bare' also

'When old age shall this generations waste

Thou shalt remain in midst of other woe.

Than ours, a friend to men...'

Some critics hare, quite unnecessarily, argued about who was immortal-this particular nightingale or the species. Keats had the song in mind which was beautiful and would continue to be beautiful always. .

cup/5069 - 12

When men pursue their unhappy lots, such beautiful things alone will continue to bring him joy for ever.

62 No hungry generations down: selfish men in their

cruel conflicts trample down their fellowmen, But the bird's song will not be trodden down like that. It will be Immortal and it will not be subject to the destructive cruelty or selfish men.

63 The poet goes on to show how such beautiful songs have charmed people at all time, this passing night: this that is passing off quickly

64 emperor and clown: every one great and small, the high and the low.

65 The self-same song: this very song which I hear now. Just Like I am listening now and Ruthin in her sorrow must have listened to a nightingale's song, found a path: went straight to the heart.

65-67 Perhaps the self-same... alien com: The poets

imagination here conjures up a scene around Ruth, a Biblical character. She was a Moabite (one who belonged to a place called Moab) the widowed daughter-in law of Nasmi of Bethlehem, who gleaned in the fields of the wealthy Boaz and became his wife and the ancestress of King David. The lines mean: When Ruth stood amidst the corn in a foreign country far away from home, the Nightingale's song must have entered her heart and brought sweet thoughts of her own home, but the Bible story does not represent ruth as homesick. She follows her mother-in-law out of her sense of duty.

67 alien: foreign, not one's own; of another country,

68 the same: the same song; such a song as I hear now; Of times:often.

69 casements: windows, charmed: thrown a magic spell over foam: the forth o'r spray made when waves dash against each other

70 forlorn: lonely; lost and alone

68-70 charmed forlorn: the same song that often in days of

old has unlocked magic casements which look out over the foam of perilous seas in the solitary countries of fairy, 'fairy lands; legendary countries of romance Perhaps Keats had in mind the fairy land of Spenser's Fairy Queen. The very lines have a magical charm about them the characteristic romantic quality that invests an utterance with fascination. Perhaps Keats has in mind some princess who has been taken captive by a wicked enchanter and kept imprisoned in a lonely castle overlooking the sea. Such stories abound in Medieval Romances. Sidney Colvin traces the lines to the poet's memories of Claude's picture of the 'Enchanted Castle'. The vagueness and the magical charm are characteristic of Romantic poetry. The master magic is in the word forlorn says Lambom. Keats wrote in his first draft Charmed the wide casements on the foam of keelless seas in fairy lands forlorn see what a transformation has been brought about by the slight change.

Stanza VII

The word 'forlorn' wakens the poets from his reverie. His imagination is not able to sustain the illusion of his dissolution in the bird's song. He bids good-bye to sthe vision. The song fades in the distance and is now heard no more wonders whether it was real or just a dream.

71 forlorn. The last word of the last line of the previous stanza is repeated at the opening of this stanza. Some critics have seen it as a poor mechanical devise. But no sensitive reader will miss the singificance of the word. It represents the essence of the mood of the poet as pointed out by F. R. Leavis. Like a bell: It sounds again like the repeated ringing of a bell.

72 Sole: Solitary; lonely, thee: you toll: the word signifies the sound of the bell but there is the suggestion of a bell tolled on a persons death, of. The curfew tolls the knell of parting day"- Gray's Elegy. A melancholy note is present in the word. Adieu: fare well, fancy cannot cheat so will, he had imagined himself transported to the region of ecstatic joy. He had been with the bird in the imagination (See line 35-Already with thee")But the imagination is not able to sustain the illusionlong. Reality in trudes and drives away the illusion.

74 She: fancy she is famed to do: fancy is famed to cheat people into states of illusion. But she cannot cheat as will as she is famed to be able elf: fairy.

75 plaintive: sad; mournful, anthem; song fades: becomes less loud.

76 now it is buried deep: now it (the song) is not heard

78 glades: clear, open spaces in a forest valley glades: glades in the valley.

79 vision: reality revealed in a flash or perception, waking dream; a reverie, a dreamy state when one is not asleep.

Do I wake or sleep? The poet is puzzled whether he was awake or asleep. Some critics even see a deeper question here. Is life real or a dream?

Textual and Critical Essays

1. Sensuousness

The outstanding characteristic of Keats poetry is its rich and varied sensuousness, H. W. garrod remarks Not in political thinking, nor in tears given to human suffering but insomething which, though it seems easier, is in fact, far harder, lies Keats' real effectiveness, in the exercise,I mean of the five senses. Mathew Arnold reminds us of Milton's remark that poetry should be simple, sensuous, impassioned and points out that Keats as a poet is abundanitly and enchantingly sensuous. Keats himself exclaims in one of his letters O for a life of sensations rather that of thought!"All these go to show the eminence ifn Keats' poetry of the quality of sensuousness. There is a certain confusion in this connection in 'some quarters, Hyden has gone on record saying that Keats used to paint his throat with cayenne pepper in order that the claret may taste the better. This is a matter of sensuality on the part of the poet in his life. i.e. pleasures of the senses. But a students of poetry we are interested in the quality of Keats' poetry, not his habits.

By sensuousness is meant the presence of sensory images i.e. images of sensations or sense impressions such as sight, sound, smell, touch etc. Visual images show us colours and forms. Most poets hae presented images in their poems. Spenser is an illustrious forerun-ner of Keats, but even he is not as successful as the latter. In "The Eve of St. Agne" Keats describes Madelame's sleep as azure lidded sleep. 'Her going to sleep is described as though a rose should shu and be a bud again.' On another occcasion Keats describes human joy, with one finger on his lips/ever bidding adieu. Ode to Melancholy.

The Ode to a Nightingale gives us several visual images, beaded bubbles winking at the brim', purple stained mouth, here there is no light/save what from heaven is with the breezes blows ' etc.

..... here is a vivid picture from ;Ode to Autumn'

'Whoever seeks abroad may find/Thee sitting careless on a granary floor/Thy hair soft - lifted by the windowing wind' Another instance from the same poem:

And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep.

Steady thy laden head across a brook'

The noteworthyu quality of these poetic images it is their vividness and immediacy. The above are only a few samples out of several hundred visual images in Keat's poetry. We have also other kinds of poetic images such as sound images, touch images, taste images and many more than the usual five kinds that we associate with sense impressions. Here are some sound images.

"And full-grown lambs loud behalf from hilly bourn:

Hedge crickets sing, and now with trebles soft

The red-breast whistles from a garden croft;

And gathering swallows twitter in the skies' Ode to Autumn.

'The murmurous haunt of files on summer eves - Nightingale

'Like a bell to toll me back ..... Nightingale

Here is a tactile image (touch):

To feel for ever its soft fall and swell'

A wonderful sensous image of Keats has no parallel in the whole range of English poetry.

'a bunch of blooming plums/Ready to melt between an infant's gums'

Coleridge at his best, Shelley sometimes and even Wordsworth occasionally do succeed in presenting vivid and beautiful images. Keats in one of his letters criticizes Coleridge and Wordsworth for not caring for imagery. The romantic revolt was not merely for restoring the living language of ordinary men in poetry but also for restoring imagery to their rightful place in poetry but also for restoring imagery to their rightful place in poetry. But these two leaders of the revolt themselves are satisfied with visual images, and after a while they lose sight of the question altogether, for this calls Wordsworth and Coleridge. "The renegades of their own gospel!'

2. Keats Religion of Beauty

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever;

Its loveliness increases; it will never pass into nothingness.

These are the opening lines of Endymion, Keat's first long poem. Here he proclaims his gospel of beauty. "With a great poet' he said, 'the sense of beauty overcomes every other consideration' Some shape of beauty moves away the pall' The mighty abstract idea in all thing's he mentions in a letter to his brother George. We can gather innumerable statements like this from Keat's poem and letters. His mind was constantly preoccupied with this passion for the beautiful. Other poets also were charmed by beauty in all things and they have tried to capture and immortalize it in their works. Not only poets but all artists have done in this. All art is the expression of beauty. But Keats has raised to the level of a religion. He was the worshipper of beauty par excellence.

Keats sees the best expression of beauty in art, which captures it and gives it permanent form. He discovered that, art is eternal while life is changing and ephemeral. What is short lived is delusive and what lasts for ever is true. Therefore he draws and equation between Beauty and Truth and states it in the concluding lines of The Ode on a Grecian Urn. 'Beauty is truth. Truth beauty, that is all ye know in earth, and all ye need to know'. These lines have

proved to be the most controversial of all.

Critics have called it a blemish, a meaningless statement, apseudo, statement etc. In a letter of Bailey Keatds has said "I am certain of nothing, but of the holiness of the heart's affections and the truth of imagination. What the imaginations seize as beauty must be truth. the whole poem is an elaboration of the idea that art captures the eternal in the temporal and the universal in the particular. This eternal quality or never changing quality is what we mean by truth. Much of the adverse criticism about those lines is therefore beside the point.

A mind that is ever preoccupied with such a pursuit is bound to discover much significance in things and events that are ignored by others or are noted but lightly or casually by them. Such is the case of Keat's cry to the Nightingale or the species. Such critics betray their ignorance and their obtuseness through such statements. While Keats saw beauty in art, he saw the same beauty in a thousand things of nature as in the Nightingale's song. Such songs are beautiful and they bring consolation and comfort to generations of men and women who are subject to the sufferings and miseries of life. Emperor and clown of the hungry generations. Ruth of old and the maiden imprisoned in the enchanter's tower, must have drawn consolation from the nightingale's song each in his own or her own time. Thus understood, the nightingale's song is the symbolic analogue of all art, which Keats, considered to be expressions of truth. What the imagination seizes as beauty must be truth. In terms of imaginations we describe it as beauty; in terms of the intellect we call it truth. To avoid confusion a word about what is meant by beauty. It means what gives delight. An actual murder horrifies us but when it is captured in art as in Othello it delights us; otherwise we will not go to see it again or read it again.

The quality by which Keats stands apart is his religion of beauty. In 'Hyperion' Keats equates beauty with might also, out of beauty and truth identified comes power.'

For it is the eternal law.

That first in beauty should be first in might

In no other poet do we see such a persistent quest as in Keats.

3. Keats as a Writer of Odes.

Keats lives in our memory as a brilliant narrative poet and as a writer or odes. Though we will never forget "La Bella Dame Sans Marci" or The Eve of St. Agne's. It is the odes that compel our attention and admiration. The word 'Ode means song' in the Greek language. As a literary from the Ode arose in ancient Greece from the choric odes in Greek drama and it passed on to the Romans who came on the heels of the Greek civilization. In its development two types evolved, the Greek ode or the Pindaric Ode and Roman or Horatian ode. While these two classical odes had certain formal features, in the sense that they do not follow any set pattern. Apart from Gray and Collins who followed the clasical models the great paractitioners of the Ode in English are Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats - the last two have been acclaimed as the twin stars of the 19th century song. Shelley had described Coleridge's delection and Ode as a dirge of infinite pathos sung over the grave of Coleridge's creative imagination Shelley's own Ode to the Skylark has drawn similar sup[erlative praise. Robert Lynd in his essay The Unexpected relates how an American poetess went to England to hear the song of a skylark, went back home and wrote a poem in which she exclaimed to the skylark:

Thou didst not sing to Shelley half so sweet a song

As Shelley sang to thee'

The Ode is defined by the O.E.D as rhymed Lyric (rarely unrhymed) often in the form of an address, generally dignified or exalted in subject, feeling and style. W.H. Hudson explains that the Ode is not specifically differentiated by any one feature or combination of

features from other kinds of lyrics. The term is an elastic one he lists the following as the usual features of an ode: dignity or exaltation of matter and manner, logical evolution of thought, a certain amount of complexity and elaboration, a quality of a poetical oration. Hudson includes Nightingale and Grecian Urn among regular odes.

While editors have classed eleven poems of Keats as odes six of them are deserving of the highest merit. Ode to the Nightingale Ode on the Grecian Urn Ode to Autumn. Ode to Psyche. Ode on indolence. Ode in Melancholyh.

The Ode to a Nightingale' has charmed and captivated the readers more than his other poems for the past one hundred and fifty years or more. It voices the romantic discontent and is vibrant with a melody that is Keat's own. The poet's rapture over the bird's song, the contrast between the world of the nightingale's song and the human condition, the poet's wish to escape from it all into the world symbolized by the bird's song, a world of ideal beauty, and become immersed in it are brought out in the perennial language of poetry. His vision of beauty as a joy for ever also finds expression in the exclamation . Thou wast not born for death immortal bird" His sanity is not lost in the rapture. He realises only too well that if he died he would be a mere so insensitive to the song. In other words he realises that life is too beautiful to be given up. The song has always brought comfort to the ailing world.

Looking at the Grecian Urn and the pictures engraved in it Keats realise that art is eternal while life, is ephemeral and changing. Time that destroys everything preserves a work or art. This enables him to arrive at his famous dictum 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty'.

The 'Ode to Autumn' is in a sense supreme among his odes. It is the best example of what Keats calls 'negative capability', the poet's ability to abdicate his personality and become one with the thing he contemplates. There is only the autumn season personified through the various images one commonly comes across in the season.

These odes reveal a strange combination of romantic fervour and classical restraint, they are distinguished by their poignancy of feeling, their richly meditative texture, their Hellenic clarity and their chiselled beauty, their brooding sweetness and long-drawn out melody. Prof. Selincourt declares' in the odes, Keats has no master.

4. Helenic Influence

Of all the romantic poets Keats been noted as the most Hellenic. His celebrated sonnet. On first looking at Champan's Homer shows how he was profoundly affected by Homer's poetry. He was led to the study of Greek literature. The literature and art of ancient Greece exercised a profound influence or him. This shows itself in his poems in two ways. In the first place Keats choose for his themes stories, incident and characters from Greek mythology. Such are his long poems Endymion and Hyperion. His observastion of and hi contemplation on the Elgin marbles led to the composition of The Ode on a Grecian Urn. His poems contain several allusions from Greek mythology.

But what stands out in his poetry more that these is the Greek temper. The romantic poets generally were ill at ease on account of modern life depriving nature of its beauty and of life. Their worldliness had robbed men of the child's unconscious love of the beauty of the universe.

Wordsworth too exclaims:

'O god I'd rather be

A pagan suckled in a creed outworn'

He longs to have glimpses the lost glory of the world whoich would make him less forlorn. Keats too longed for the vital universe of the Greeks full of beauty and wonder. This pagan sense of beauty and joy of the apprehension of a universe peopled with vital, living forces, which they personified in their mythology, their literature and their art it was this

pagan temper that Keats inherited from the Greeks more than any of his fellow poets of the period. A thing of beauty of Keats is a joy for ever. 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty', he declared. He exclaims passionately to the nightingale. Thou was not born for death, immortal Bird!'.

Apart from the pagan wonder and joy and the sheer delight in life Keats got something more valuable to his art. It was the clarity and chiselled beauty of form for which the Greeks were famous. The romantics generally were rather careless of form. Keat's poetry is free from this blemish of the period.

Once Shelley advised Keats in a letter: 'Load your rift with ore' meaning pack your poem with the gold of poetry. Keats in his reply asked Shelley to take greater care of his art rather than give advice to young poets.

In formal perfection no poet of the period comes near Keats.

5. Keats as a poet a General Estimate

Keats was one of the finest flowers of the romantic revival in English poetry. The movement was essentially a revolt against the artificial rules of the neoclassical period of the 17th and 18th centuries. The Romantics chose to write about ordinaty people and about nature instead of great men. The emotions and imaginations had a far more prominent place in romantic poetry than thought. The emotions were not meant for public in poetry according to the neoclassicist. The Romantics were introspective and often had a strain of escapism. A certain vagueness and formlessness were characteristics of all romantic poetry. Keats shares all these properties with the other poets of the period excdept the last mentioned. He took great care of formal perfection and in that he stands apart.

Profusion of sensuous imagery is the major characteristics quality of Keats poetry. The variety, the vividness and the immediacy of these images make Keat's poetry extremely delightful. (See introduction and essay No. 1 on sensuousness) Another notable thing is Keats religion of beauty. A thing of beauty for Keats was a joy for ever. He asserted 'beauty' is truth, truth beauty' and invited much adverse criticism. He raised the principle of beauty to the level of a religion and worshipped it. What the imagination seizes as beautiful must be truth according to him. (See essay No. 2 Keats worship of beauty).

A rare merit in a poet, especially a lyric poet is his ability to abdicate his personality and lose his identity in the object of his contemplation. When a sparrow comes to my window. I take part in its existence and peck away at the gravel' said Keats once. This is no mean achievement. This is very height of romantic imagination. Keats himself gave it the name negative capability. 'Wordsworth displayed it opposite quality namely 'egotistical sublime'- being always concerned about himself.

Two major influences on Keats were those of Greek literature and the medieval romances. From the latter he took romantic stories of love and adventure. The Eve of St. Agnes' is an exquisite poem containing a story or triumphant love. The poet has captured the very atmosphere of the period in his poetry. 'La Bella Dame sans Merci is another beautiful example. The Greek influence is deeper. Keats not only drew his stories and innumerable allusions from Greek mythology but caught the very spirit and temper of the Greeks. This pagan spirit finds expression in his cult of beauty and his delight in his sensuous imagery. What he inherited from the Greek was sometimes more than this pagan delight. He caught their concern for formal perfection and chiselled finish. In these characteristics he stands apart from his contemporaries (see essay on Greek influence).

Keats has also made his mark as a narrative poet. La Belle Dame Sans Merci. Latmina. The Eve of St. Mark Isabella and The Eve of St. Agnes are his narrative poems. The first is a brief poem, narrative in form but lyric in intention. The last is notable for the richness of its sensuous imagery and its melodies rhythm and form. The Spenserian stanzas in this poem outdo Spenser himself. Some of the images in the poem and the alexandrianes will arrest out attention and delight us for ever.

The sonnets of Keats deserve mention in a general estimate like this. On First Looking into Chapmap's Homer. The Hush. Hush Sonnet. The Bright Star Sonnet and the Sonnet on Fame Are worth mentioning among a total of ten. Keat's odes mark his supreme achievement in poetry (see essay on odes)

Keat's escapism has received a great share of critical attention. This is a trait shared by all the romantics. The weariness, the fever and the fret of modern like make them all wish to escape into a world of imagination free from these ills. It has been shown that though Keats did wish to escape he did also realise that this life with its joys and delights was more precious. Keats has bequeathed to the world some of the richest poems in English and he achieved a total output of lifetime in less than four years. Mathew Arnold's concluding sentence in his essay on Keats is a measure of the greatness of this poet unfullfilled renown: 'He is with Shakespeare'.

6. The Ode to a Nightngale - A Critical Analysis or the Evolution of thought in the Poem

The poets' friend Armitage Brown has given an account of how the poem was written. A nightingale had build her nest near his house at Hampstead, where Keats was living with him. One morning Keats took his chair from the breakfast table in the garden to a grass plot under a plum tree and sat there for two or three hours. Then he came into the house with several scraps of paper in his hand. With the poet's assistance Brown arranged the scraps in proper order. This was the Ode to a Nightingale. As usual with him Keats did give a few finishing touches here and there. The song was heard in the morning. This was the inspiration to write the poem. But as the poem stands, Keats conceives a scene in which he is listening to the nightingale's song in the dark-night.

The poet, listening to the bird's song feels oppressed by its beauty and joy. He feels a drowsy numbness spreading all over his body as though, he had drunk hemnlock or some dull opiate. He feels sorry for his numbness. He is not envious of the bird's joy but too happy in its happiness. He longs to escape to the world of the bird's song with the aid of a cup of wine tasting of the joyous scenes of the warm south, scenes of song and dance and unmixed joy. He longs to escape from the weariness, the fever and the fret of this world and fade for away into the dim forest with the nightingale. Even beauty and love in human life are transitory and full of sorrow.

Then the poet decides that instead of wine, poetry shall transport him on its viewless wings to the nightingale's world. In a second he is there in his imagination though in this flight thought is a hindrance. Perhaps, he imagines, the moon in shining in the sky attended by her stars. But where we sits there is no light except what is blown down by the wind through the thick foliage of the trees. He cannot see any flowers at his feet in the grass or in the thickets around him or on the trees. But in the sweet smelling darkness he is able to guess the presence of various flowers from their smell.

The power of beauty makes him long for easeful death. He has been half in love with death and called him soft names in his poems asking him to take away his life. He muses that now, more than ever, would be the best moment to die while listening to the sweet song of the nightingale. But then, he realises that if he died he would lose all the sensuous delight afforded by life. He contrasts the immortality of the bird's song with his own mortality. He is led to think of the unhappy generations of men and women who must have derived comfort and consolation from the nightingale's song at all times and in all places. He cites the examples of Ruth in tears in an alien land and helpless maidens behind magic casements in fairy lands forlorn.

The word "forlorn" calls up him his mind his own forlorn state, which wakes him up from his reverie. He cannot escape from reality with the aid of his fancy, she, fancy is famed to cheat us but she cannot cheat us out of reality.

The bird's song fades in the distances and he wonders whether he is awake or dreaming.

The ode voices the romantic discontent and is noted for its brooding sweeetness, its haunting melody, its poetic afflatus and its chiselled beauty.

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SECTION B - DRAMA
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
"HAMLET" (FOR DETAILED STUDY)

An in Depth Analysis of the Play
Introductory

The dramatic situation which leads to the dramatic events or the aid be a good introduction.

King, Ham'let, addenly, Gertrude, Queen of Denmark becomes a widow; and in less than two months marries, the King's brother, Claudius, who is the present King. The people and Hamlet, the prince too noted it as a strange act of indiscretion or unfeelingness. Claudius was in no way like the King, whom he succeeded. He was contemptible in appearance, had has a base disposition. There was much contrast between "this picture" and that "Young Hamlet was the lawful heir but was denied the throne. There was suspicion that Claudius had assassinated his brother.

Hamlet loved and venerated the memory of his father. He was also aware of the unworthy conduct of his mother but the young prince was such an observer of manners and propriety that he kept quiet. However, the course of events had to affected him that he became full of melancholy. He lost all his mirth. The handsome prince looked haggard and tried. He was also in deep distress.

Act I

The scene of all actions is Elsinore in Denmark

In the ramparts of the King's castle, the guards stand duty at night. they had seen a ghost the night before moving around after the midnight hour. They had informed Horatio. Hamlet's best friend, of this strange appearance in the castle. He was coming this night to see for himself, as he had been told that the ghost was "In the same figure like the King that's dead".

The ghost appears again. Horatio is affected "with fear and wonder, he addressed the ghost "what art thou.... with that fair and warlike form of buried Denmark?" the ghost disappears.

In this talk with Marcellus, one of the guards, Horatio says he would not have believed it, if he had not himself seen the ghost. The wore the armour" when he the ambitious Norway combated" Yet it's strange and omnious.

Marcellus asks why the country has been put on war alert. Horantio informs him that after the defeat of Norway and the killing of Fortinb the King, by Hamlet, the Younger Fortinbras is alert to avenge the defeat. And Denmark is preparing for another war.

It's not only that there is something weird about everything in country. And people fear that some calamity is going to befall the land. Why so?

Horatio, the man of learning, now becomes philosophic. The times are bad and it's similar to the state of Rome "a little ere the refigh Julius fell" At that time too, the ghost was haunting the streets and many unnatural sight were seen.

The ghost appears again and Horatio tries to talk to the appan in the mean time, the cock crows and the ghost disappears. Ghosts do not haunt the earth after the first cock's crowing which deralds the dawn.

In the second scene, we move to the King's palace and Queen, Polonius. The Lord chamberlain and his son Laertes and hamlet the prince are all there.

King Claudius tells the assembly why he had become King through a grief and why he accepted Gertrude as his wife something of "a defeated joy" and like "mirth in funeral" but it had to be.

Now Claudius despatches the messenger Fortinbras of Norway who is seeking the return of by father to the elder Hamlet.

Polonius's son Laertes takes leave of the get back of Parts (for studies) from where he had come for the funeral.

Now the King turns to Hamlet and asks him how much be yet bore his grief that was caused by his father's death. And the Queen reminds him that "all that lives must die/ passing through nature to enternity". Hamlet agrees. the Queen asks why he there is no seeming with him, it is real.

Here we have the famous passage.

"It is not alone my inky cloak,

good mother

Nor customery suits solemn back,

That can denote me tryly (Act I, Scene 1, 77, 83)

(The word "seem" comes thrice in the context, once used by the Queen and thrice by Hamlet. It comes again and again in other contexts too. If one expects that the verbal aspects and their quality have much to do with a true understanding of the play, this is one of the expressions that could be used as a clue. In other words, the juxtapositions of what is appearance and what is reality is something general to the play.

The king now talks of the inevitability of death and tells Hamlet that to persist with one's sorrow is a kind of stubbornness. "It is unmanly grief. He asks Hamlet to stay with them and not to go back to Writtenburge, where he has been studying before his father's death. Hamlet agrees. the king and Queen withdraw.

Left alone Hamlet expresses his feelings through a soliloquy

(It was an accepted stage convention for characters, alone on the stage, to speak their thoughts. It was actually talking to oneself or thinking aloud. Another form of speaking to oneself is called "aside" these are words expressed in the presence of others on the stage which they are supposed not to hear. The "aside" is often a brief comment or statement unlike the soliloquy which is often long.

In later times, the soliloquy became unfashionable as stage technique, for reason of it being unnatural.

In this soliloquy (one of the many in the play the Prince expresses his desolation. He wonders why his life has lost all its meaning. He also wonders why there should be a moral prohibition against suicide for one who is weary of his own life. The world now seems to him "an unneeded garden: That his mother should marry after his father was "but two months dead" is really unberable. But he consoles himself by saying, "frailty they name is woman".

As regards his uncle, what was his relation to his father? they were so far apart. He was "no more like my father/than I to Hercules".

And it is such a person that is mother married, which was nothing short of incest" It is

not, nor it cannot to good".

Horatio enters now; he had come for the King's funeral. Or was it to see his mothers wedding, asks Hamlet with derision.

Horatio uses this occasion to describe the visit of the ghost. Hamlet decides that he will stand watch with them to night.

The third scene is very much a dramatic scene. Laertes and his sister Ophelia are talking and they talk about Hamlet's love for ophelia. Perhaps Hamlet loves her truly but for a royal person love and marriage cannot be determined by the heart's desire. He is the King's heir and she is not a princes. He also advises his sister not to act foolishly in a fir of passion. She may regret it later. 'Now Polonius enters. As Laertes is about to set sail for Paris, it is now the turn of the old man to advise his son. In one of the oft-quoted passages of Shakespeare, we see the man of conventional wisdom warning his son about the pitfalls of life and how one would behave and act in a manner wise and prudent.

"give they thought no tongue

Nor any unproportioned though his act.

.....

to thine own self be true

And it must follow, as night the day

Thou canst not then be false, to any man"

Act I Sc. 3 59-80

After Learter's departure, Polonius too discusses with his daughter her love for Hamlet. As the son did earlier, the father too cautions his daughter. Ophelia says, "He hath my lord, of late made many tenders/o his affection to me" and also "he hath late importuned me with love/in honourable fashion". But Polonius is not impressed. He warns her that they are like snares to catch stupid birds and all talks of holy vows are but attempts to beguile a fair young maiden.

The last two secnes of the First act (4 and 5) deal with Hamlet's encounter with his own fathers ghost.

Hamlet, with Horatio, waits in the castle platform.

The ghost enters at the stroke of midnight, and Hamlet, though amazed addresses the ghost boldly. The ghost certainly looks like his father. How does it come out of the jaws of the earth where it lay buried?

The ghost beckons Hamlet to follow it. While Horatio tries to stop him, Hamlet follows. He is not afraid at all.

When Hamlet faced his father's ghost are alone, the ghost speaks of his death, which was unnatural. It was foul murder while Hamlet, the King, was asleep his own brother poured poison in his ear which killed him. It was murder most horrible. And the ghost wants his son the prince, to avenge the crime. The ghost, however, does not want the prince to do anything against his mother, let her have her punishment in the life hereafter.

The ghost makes its exit. Hamlet how left alone speaks to himself. (This is the second solioquy). The unnatural end of his father's life unsettles him all the more and from now he is committed to only one thing. And that is Revenge. The prince is also disgusted with his mother, whom he calls "most pernicious woman". When the thinks of/Claudius, he feels.

"That one may smile and smile, and be a villian"

Later in the company of his friends, Hamlet tells Horatio, who is still full of wonder at

the sight of the supernatural.

"These are more thing in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than you dream of in your philosophy".

The guards and Horatio all swear watched by the ghost from a far that they will keep this matter secret.

At the end of the scene, we see Hamlet again in deep distress and melancholy. There is a touch of self-pity.

When he says,

"The time is out of joint. O cursed spite.

That ever I was born to set it right!"

(A perceptive reader of the play would have noticed by going through the first Act that Hamlet is a very complex character. We will see much more of it as the play progress.

Act II

Polonius is typical medieval courtier, through he holds the high office of the Lord Chamberlain. In the manner of one whose job is to protect the interest of his sovereign, Polonius pokes his nose everywhere. He has his nose in all the palace intrigues whether it be to evesdrop whether it be to carry tales.

This habit is a evident even at home. Polonius, therefore, sets a servant to spy on his son's behaviour in Paris. As for his daughter Ophelia, he orders her to see no more of hamlet.

Ophelia now rushes in to tell him that Hamlet broke into her room while she was sewing. He gripped her wrist, stared at her face and looked out of the room suddenly. Polonius decides that Hamlet has been driven insane by unrequited love. He goes to tell the King the news.

In the second scene, the King who is already very much aware of the change in Hamlet's behaviour asks Hamlet's two friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, whether they know the reason, Polonius enters and he has his own poet theories about Hamlet's behaviour but the King is not sure. The Lord Chamberlain wills however, keep a constant watch.

The King and Queen leave, and Hamlet enters. Polonius engages him in a talk. Hamlet indulges in quibbles to confuse the Lord Chamberlain with his two friends however Hamlet in more open. He doesn't conceal the heaviness of his heart at the state of things Denmark. He also suspects that his old friends are now on the job of finding out why Hamlet is not himself. He knows not why but he has lost all mirth, the earth itself seems sterile and the atmosphere foul.

In this mood Hamlet speculates on man, the dream of creation and how, this "piece of work" is alternately noble and feeble, infinite in faculties and in apprehensions like a god, this same creation now seems to Hamlet "this quintessence of dust".

This piece of brilliant prose certainly reflects Hamlet's state of mind.

This long scene takes us into another situation. A troupe of travelling actors has come. Hamlet is instantly delighted, for the enjoys so much stage performances very much. He asks one ot them to render a scene from a tragic play and is so moved that the speech have to be broken off.

Hamlet orders that the actors are to be put up on comfort. One actor is stopped by Hamlet and in secret he asks him to present a play called "The Murder of Gonzago" before the King with a few extra lines to be written into the text by Hamlet himself.

Now Hamlet is left alone, as one an earlier occasion, when he is left alone. He becomes a tormented being. He had just watched an actor reciting something and getting into a torrent

of tragic feeling and weeps freely.

"For Hecuba!

what's Hecuba to bim, to Hecuba

that he should weep for her?

Act II Sc. 2, 568-570

Compared to the actor, who was only acting in play, Hamlet with enough of true suffering and sorrow has not shed a tear.

Hamlet yet recovers enough to feel that what is needed is not tears but action and revenge.

Hamlet wants yet one final proof, before he takes revenge on the King, that Clauduis murdered his father. It appears that hamlet still cannot make up his mind. He reasons that the ghost might be the devil assuming a pleasing shape to tempt him into evil. If it were so the play to be enacted before the King will give convincing proof. So he says,

"The play's the thing

Where in I'll acatch the conscience of the King"

Act II Sc 2, 616-671

Act III

Rosencrantz and "Guidenstern report to the King of what change they saw in Hamlet. He is "distracted/But from what cause a will by no means speak". But hamlet seems to be happy now because a play is going to be presented.Now the Queen turns to Ophelia and says in her usual way that Ophelia can only hope. The King and Queen leave.

Hamlet comes again on the stage. And here we have perhaps the most- discussed soliloquy in all Shakespeare. Hamlet speaks to himself.

"To be or nort to be: that is the question:

.....

.....

And lose the name of action"

Act III Sc, 1, 56-58

It would be easy to stop living by which "we end/The headache and the thousand natural shock/that flesh is heir to" But there is the respect for life and one does not save himself by ceasing to exist. One does not end his torment by suicide. It leads to something worse. So Hamlet is not able to kill himself. But he had thought about it many times.

Hamlet sees Ophelia but he is so sick in mind that he wants nothing to do with any woman. It is true that he loves her but that was in the past. Now the idea of love and marriage sickens him. So he tells Ophelia,

"get thee to a nunnery. Why wouldst

thou be a breeder of sinners?

In this mood Hamlet deprecates everything that was so valuable to him at one time. He is bitter with himself; he is bitter with others especially the being that is women. There is an echo of his feelings at his mother's action.

So in a manner that does not befit a prince he speaks with spite to Ophelia "To a nunnery, go". And makes his exit.

Left alone, Ophelia is affected by the atmosphere of melancholy all around. The poor

girl recalls how the prince, who was a picture of perfection as a soldier, as a scholar has now become the man of this pitiable state. "On what a noble mind is here O'er thrown" and "owe is me/I have seen what I have seen, see what I see!"

In the meantime, the king tells Polonius that since Hamlet is so unsteady now, it is a danger to him. And he will get rid of him by sending him to England to demand the tribute from their king.

Invariably, in a Shakespearean drama the play reaches its climax in the second or the third Act. It is true of this play as well.

In this scene, Shakespeare uses a unique theatrical device of putting a play within a play.

The players are enacting "The murder of Gonzago" In the presence of the King, the Queen and all the court; Hamlet lies down at Ophelia feet. As the play progresses, the King gets increasingly disturbed. It is a representation of Claudius's murder of the brother by poison. The actual scene of the poisoning comes and the King sees a reenactment of his own crime. He can endure it no longer. He calls for lights and the play ends in confusion. Hamlet is now fully convinced that the ghost's revelation was but in statement of truth. If Hamlet thought he needed further proof, he had got it. He is wild with excitement.

In the third scene the King is seen instructing Rosencrante and Guildenstem to go with Hamlet to England. The King knows now that his crown and his life are in danger. He says that Rosencrantz and Guildenstem, on the way, should kill Hamlet and return.

The King, when he is alone reflects on his own life of Sin. He had done the most fould deeds. Yet he longs for his soul's peace. He kneels to pray. Hamlet passes by. It occurs to the prince how easy it would be to plunge the sword into his back but he would not do it. For then, as he is praying ,his soul will enter Heavens which it should not. The King rises from prayer. He however, knows that "words without thoughts never to heaven go".

In Act III Scene IV we are watching the Queen's bed chamber. She awaits her son Hamlet who has been asked to see her. Polonius hides behind the wall hanging as he intends to report to the King everything Hamlet says to his mother. hamlet is already furious because he wants to tell his mother what he thinks of her. Seeing the prince in a violent mood the Queen cries for help, for she fears that her son would murder her. Polonius now echoes her cry and betrays his presence The prince makes a pass with his sword at the hanging crying "rat" and the "wretched rash, intruding fool" falls dead.

Hamlet now confronts his mother. The Queen asks why and for what cause her son is mad with her. Hamlet now gets the chance to speak out. He shows his mother two pictures the picture of the two brothers.His father had all that qualified one for kingship and rule. He looked like love himself. He had the eyes of Mars, a station like Mercury. It was a combination of the best and the noblest in one man. What was Claudius? He was like a moor with mildewed ear, how could she love him and marry him? It was her lust that made her do that. hamlet speaks with such violent feeling and in such rage that she can't stand it any more. But Hamlet batters her without any trace of pity.

The ghost enters and Hamlet addresses it but the Queen does not see the ghost. So she thinks that he is talking into the air and he has become mad. The ghost reminds him that he has forgotten his main role as the avenger and that he should treat his mother better.

Hamlet becomes a little more civilized in his behaviour therafter. But when the Queen says that he has cleft her heart he asks her to throw away the "Worser part" and live with the "purer half.

The Queen is helpless to do anything that would restore his confidence and love in her. Yet her son's savage behaviour has shaken her to the very depths.

Act IV

In Shakespearean drama, the events are taken to a climax in the third act, invariably in the second scene.

The scene which gives the play within the play is therefore, significant.

Similarly, following the climax we find pathos thereafter.

In this stage ii* the progress of the play. We find much less dramatic events which are a prelude to the final catastrophe in the case of a tragic play.

So in Scenes one and two, the Queen tells her husband that Hamlet has killed Polonius in a fit of insanity. He wouldn't reveal where he has hidden the body. This gives the chance to the King to send Hamlet off to England with secret instructions to Resencrantz and Guildenstern to cause his death in England.

In the fourth scene we see Hamlet on his way to England, seeing the army of Norway. The army is passing through Denmark on the way to Poland. this impresses Hamlet much it sets him thinking too. While the Young Fortinbras is full of energy and is the picture of action, he has been delaying too much with his action of revenge. He feels disgusted with himself. He feeds and sleeps but does not act. (Incidentally this vacillation is a major trait in Hamlet's character).

We now move to the fifth scene. This is a scene noted for its pathos. Poor Ophelia is deeply affected by her father's death. For the gentls, sheltered girl, he would had gone to pieces, first by Hamlets behaviour and now by her father's death. She wanders through the courts singing songs she would never have heard or known. She has lost her sanity and the King and Queen can only watch her in helpness pity.

Laertes, who has returned from Paris wants to know how his father died, he demands an answer, and would not be put down by the vows of loyalty to the monarch.

The King hopes that his would be the right occasion to rouse up Laertes against Hamlet.

Ophelia re-enters the stage and her brother is soon overcome with grief that he exclaims, "do you see this, O god?"

The wily Kind persuades Laertes to challenge Hamlet for a duel and kill Hamlet with a poisoned rapier.

In the meantime the King's plans have gone away. Hamlet has managed to escape from the ship bound for England. He sends word to the King that he is coining home.

Act V

The last act of the tragedy is before us. And (in two scenes) Shakespeare brings the events to a decisive end. We have at the end all the main characters lyinh dead on the stage.

Death is the final event in all lives but here it is death affirms the tragedy of man.

The tragedy of man is not death that comes in the end. Death will come anyway. The tragedy of man is that man is alone at the end and that is affirmed in that final moment of truth.

In the first scene, Ophelia is about to be buried in the chuechyard. The girl had died by drowning. The grave diggers are working and joking too. They are clowns who gave a grotesque twist to the scene. Hamlet arrives and finds one of the grave diggers singing to himself. He is as cheerfully insensitive to death as the clods of earth he throws out.

Hamlet is fascinated by the right of the loose bones dug up from the grave. He finds there the skull of jester called Yorick whom he had liked as a boy.

The funeral procession of Ophelia arrives attend by all the court. Laertes is beside

himself with grief. He exchanges angry words with the priest who will not allow the singing of a requiem for his sister because she was a suicide. In a fit of fury he leaps into the grave ranting and Hamlet too in "a towering passion" shouts and rants. They start a fight but are separated.

In the final scene of the drama, Hamlet feels profound regret at his own behaviour in the courtyard. "I forgot myself, He resolves to makes a special effort to become friends when he receives a message from Laertes challenging him for a duel. Hamlet tries to believe that it is a friendly challenge but he feels a foreboding. But then Hamlet will not vacillate any more. He says about his future. "If it is not to come, It will be now, if it be not now, yet it "will come; the readiness is all".

The end comes quickly Hamlet scores first in the fencing match. The King asks him to drink some wine for a stop but Hamlet does not. The Queen picks up the wine and drinks It. The King, knowing it is poisoned, tries too late to stop her and she falls dying first as her son and Laertes and both hurt by the poisoned sword. It .has changed hands in a close scuffle. Laertes knows that he deserves his coming death. "I am justly killed with my own treachery". He manages to grasp out the whole plot to Hamlet ending with a final cry "The King, the King's to blame".

The dying Hamlet seizes the poisoned sword and stabs the King with it and then forces the poisoned wine down his throat. The courtiers stand aghast.

With the final wish that the prince of Norway is to rule Denmark, he asks Horatio to do the rest.

Horatio utters a last heartbroken farewell to the lonely tormented being who was an incomparable human.

"goodnight sweet prince

and flights of angels bring thee to thy rest".

Suggested Reading

Anv good English (British) Edition of the play which adopts i scholarly approach could be used for reading and study.

One example is the Arden Edition

There is no substitute for one's own close study of the text i the play.

The 'Analysis of the Play" given is intended only as an aid I study.

"Tales from Shakespeare" by Charles and Mary Lamb and "Stories from Shakespeare" by Merchette Chute can be read through, if' one is areal beginner totally unfamiliar with anything so Shakespeare's play "Hamlet".

A Brief note one the Sources of "HAMLET'

The story of Hamlet was part of the Scandinavian saga from early times.

History and legend have mingled in this story.

It became part of folklore and legend from early times.

It was incorporated into written literature in the twelfth century when Saxo Grammotoeus retold the story in his "Historia Danica"

The narrative of grammatieus is a story of early and relatively

barbaric times.

Even then the basic elements of the plot of Shakespeare's "Hamlet" are there: the killing of the Danish ruler by his brother, the marriage of the widowed queen and the brother, the

CUP/5069/1000/SDE — 13

pretended madness of the dead King's son, his voyage, to England his return and finally the revenge are all there.

Saxo's narrative was a widely circulated manuscript. It was printed in Paris in 1514.

Francoise de Belleforest used Saxo's version to write his story of Hamlet in his "Histories Tragigues"

Based on this there was an English play which came in the 1-580's.

It is now generally agreed that his play, though no copy of it exists, was written by Thomas Kyd (1557? - 1595?) the author of the well-known "Spanish Tragedy".

Kyd's Play based of Hamlet's story is called by scholars the "Ur-Hamlet".

Most likely, this play served as the immediate source of Shakespeare's "Hamlet".

Critical Approaches To "Hamlet"

Introduction

No other play of Shakespeare has received the kind of attention that "Hamlet" has.

Playgoers, theatre critics, scholars academics have spoken and written so much about this play. In other words, there is a mass of writ-ing on "Hamlet"

It is interesting to note that most of the writing can be brought under two heads.

One part of writing is all about the character of the prince. The other writing is devoted to "Hamlet" the play.

As such we would also devote out attention to studying both the play and the central character.

It may also be noted that to be able to analyse "Hamlet" or the prince is considered an achievement a symbol of high Shakespearean scholarship.

The Topics discussed here are:

1. Was Hamlet really mad?
2. "Hamlet": The poetry in the play
3. "Hamlet" - the Bradleyan View
4. An analysis of "Hamlet" by a study of its imagery
5. Eliots' View of "Hamlet"

Was Hamlet Really Mad?

Much has been written on the subject of the hero's madness" in the play "Hamlet". That is to say, there are many interpretations about the prince's behaviour.

On a subject like this, it is possible to make a sensible interpre-tation based on a perceptive analysis of the text of the play.

In the beginning to the play we see Hamlet distraught with grief for mainly two reasons. One is his father's death in suspicious cir-cumstances and the other is his mother's marriage to her husband's brother Claudius (The present King) where she showed indecent haste. It was both adultery and incest. .

The ghost confirms, when it appears before Hamlet, that he, the King was assassinated

From here begins Hamlet's odd behaviour. Any other person would have sought-immediate revenge but not Hamlet. It is his nature to be deeply affected by it. It is also his nature not seek quick resolution. So it becomes for long personal dilemma.

Another factor is that Hamlet is too civilized to think of a wild or ungentle manly deed or act. He is a prince, a paragon, one who sets fashions, a role model. How could such a

person suddenly rant and cry and act with scant respect to the convention of the court and the man-ners that go with it?

In such a predicament, Hamlet becomes withdrawn. He speaks more to himself than to others. The disturbance in his mind compels him to speak to the King and Queen in a language that makes them confused. His responses are different from what one would anticipate. This leads them slowly to suspect his motives.

Hamlets behaviour towards Ophelia, the killing of Polonius as one would strike a rat, the riddles as well as the cryptic statements that he is capable of are all evidences of the working of an unstable mind, of one who has lost his sanity.

However, the presentation of play "The Murder of Gonzago", whereby Hamlet seeks incontrovertible evidence to confirm Claudius's guilt, makes the King realise that there is something other than melan-choly in Hamlet's nature and much of what he showed was pretence and the King acts quickly by sending-him to England.

Now the question is how much of Hamlet's madness is real and how much is feigned.

The King had noticed that though Hamlet was mad, there was a method in his madness. So it would be a cover for his many schemes which the King should not know. So it is an appearance of madness. But is it really so?

There, are two events which compel us not to accept that the whole thing is feigned. One is the way in which he treats Ophelia and the other is scene in the Queen's Chamber Hamlet had no reason to behave as he did to the sweet, innocent Ophelia whom he loved with all his heart. Often in her presence he loses himself, his words do not reflect either his stature or his culture. His words are an outrage to a woman's modesty and violence to human decency.

It is equally so in the scene with his mother. The violent behaviour and the words that the he puts forth mark him as one who is out of his mind. In the beginning of the play, Hamlet tells his mother that he keeps his feelings to himself. But he betrays himself before his mother as one who is on the very brink of madness.

One may, therefore, say by way of conclusion that "for Shakespeare' it (the madness) is less than madness and more than feigned" as T.S. Eliot puts it.

"Hamlet": The Poetry in the play

Readers of Shakespearean drama will readily admit that the plays have a universal appeal. This is mainly due to two reasons. Firstly, the human condition as depicted by Shakespeare is one which could apply to man anywhere, in any time, in any society. The second factor is that the dramatic poetry has a quality that appeals to the human heart anywhere.

The piece attempts to bring out the sheer poetic power that many passages bring out both in context and beyond it. It is sheer joy to j experience it.

Obviously it is Hamlet, the Prince, who speaks much of if. He is the protagonist and in the tragic mould. As such his emotions are, far above ordinary, his the rights of a great soul in deep agony; and imagination gives it a shape and for to produce ultimately something of a poetic achievement.

One can pick these passages in context and see their intrinsic quality also.

When the Queen (Act 1, Sc.2) tries to ease the mind of Hamlet, who is deeply mourning his father's death Hamlet reacts in a very poetic manner.

This not alone my inky cloak, good mother

Nor customary suits of solemn black

Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,

Nor, nor the fruitful river in the eye.

Nor the dejected haviour of the visage

Together with all forms, moods shapes of grief,

That can denote me truly"

He is sorely afflicted by much more, yet it compels him to be I silent.

After some time when Hamlet is left alone, he says "0 god, I you,

How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable

seem to me all the uses of this world!

Fie on't ah, fie, tis and unweeded garden

And then he forgives his mother for her incsest by saying

"Frailty, thy name is woman"

In the third scene, there is Polonius's advice to this son, which has been quoted umpteen times Polonius does not himself practice, what he preaches, but taken, independent the passage has a loftiness all its own.

"Give thy thoughts tongue

Nor any unproprioned thought his act

Be then familiar, but by no means vulgar.

Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried

Grapple them unto thy soul with hoops of steel,

.....

.....

.....

..... Beware

of an entrance to a quarrel, but being in,

Bear't that th' apposed may beware of thee,

Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice

.....

Costly thy habits as thy purse can buy

For the apparel oft proclaims the man

Neither a borrower nor a lender be

This above all, to thine own self be true"

After the departure of the ghost, Hamlet ruminates over the actions of the present King and his ways and says (Act 1, Sc. 5)

"That one may smile and smile, and be a villain"

Again in Horatio's company whose amazement at the presence of the supernatural overpowers him, Hamlet says,

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio

Than are dreamt of in your philosophy"

At the end of the first Act, Hamlet says with a touch of self pity.

"The time is out of joint O cursed spite.

that ever I was born to set it right"

One gets a fair idea of the power of poetry that Shakespeare uses in this .play from the passages quoted.

There are many more.

Polonius seeing the behaviour of Hamlet remarks (Act 2, Sec 2)

"Though this be madness, yet there is method in it"

Here it is prose but now poetic is prose itself!

Other examples of prose which is closest to poetry are also there.

Here is Hamlet's description of Man (Act 2 Sec 2)

"What a price of work is a man, how

noble in reason...."

Now we come to that great soliloquy (Act 3, Sc. 1) of Hamlet which has the opening line,

"To be or not to be: that is the question"

Here Hamlet seriously contemplating suicide. It leads him to a dissertation on the subject of life and death, the weariness of life, the death wish. Yet he finds that morally self slaughter cannot be justified.

In the bedchamber scene (Act 3, Sc. 4) Hamlet's fury and passion are so intermingled as to make him burst on in powerful poetic verse. He contrasts his father and the King, his brother in this passage:

"Look here upon this picture, and on this

The counterfeit presentment of two brothers"

Gertrude is so shaken by her son's merciless behaviour that she cries for compassion.

Perhaps, all of Shakespeare's brilliant poetic power comes to a halt here. Hereafter it is visible action. The time for poetic outbursts and imagination running not is over.

"Hamlet": Bradley's Approach to the play

One can have different approaches to dramatic tragedy. What constitutes tragedy or what goes into the making of a tragedy, as a play writer's interpretation of tragedy is therefore an attempt to arrive at what could have been the dramatists perception.

No critic, however good, can provide a comprehensive view, perhaps not even the dramatist. So any critic can at best give one of many possible interpretations. ,

A.C. Bradley, in his "Shakespearean Tragedy" makes a very scholarly attempt to analyse Shakespeare's' view of tragedy by a percep-tive analysis of his plays.

According to Bradley the character of the hero is the cause of the ultimate tragedy of his own existence. The heroes of Shakespearean tragedy have all a fatal flaw in their nature and character which puts them in the tragic mould Bradley does not overlook the role of circum-stances including accidental occurrences in the progress of the tragedy. Again, there is a specific role for the supernatural Shakespearean tragedy.

But they are riot the cause. The cause lies in character issuing in action or action resulting form character.

This is different form a Greek perception of tragedy. For the Greeks, the hero of tragedy

had to confront the will of gods, who were hostile to man. The gods intervened in human lives to make a mockery of human will and action.

Shakespeare's world is utterly human and so life as comedy or tragedy was related to the condition of man in this world. So the primary cause is to be found in human character.

Seen in this light, Macbeth's overwhelming ambition, Othello's jealousy Lear's credulousness and Hamlet's indecision (of a man who cannot make up his mind) are the fatal flaws which inexorably take their lives to a tragic culmination.

So in Bradley's view character is what makes for human destiny.

This approach leads Bradley to an in-depth analysis of Hamlets character. Let's do it, therefore, in the Bradley manner.

Hamlet was no ordinary human being. He was a prince and a great prince, a soldier, a scholar the class of fashion, the darling of his countrymen. He was in love with life. He was an ascetic who relished the finer elements of life. He was the observed of all observers.

That is one side of prince. As against that, though we do not see a patently indecisive person, we do see at the -rare time, a man given too much to intellectual reflection at every step. Whatever happens to him or around him makes Hamlet associate with it at a deeper level. This takes him away from the personal reality. In effect, this becomes a philosophic approach which does not befit a prince who is heir to the throne.

Hamlet is moved by human experience to feelings that range from agony to ecstasy. All kind of emotions overwhelms him. He is as much affected by morbid melancholy as he affected by excitement. All that is rotten in the state of Denmark evokes tragic misgivings. On the other hand, the presence of the dramatic action and their rehearsal lift his spirits to a state of joy. When the King betrays himself while watching "The Murder of Gonzago" Hamlet is delirious with joy.

One person alone is missing here and that is the man of action. In the medieval world, the prince, who is no man of action is a misfit, however commendable a person he is otherwise.

What was called for was bold action. And here Hamlet was found wanting. He found himself wrecked with indecision as the moment of truth approached.

Yet Hamlet attains the heights of tragic excellence as the hero of tragedy by the flow of events which ultimately possess him, his heart and soul. And in one final burst of action in the duel scene Hamlet re-deems himself though the end is an all round catastrophe.

There is something profound is Bradley's view of Shakespearean tragedy. Yet it fails in certain vital respects. "Character criticism" has its value. It gives good insight into the tragic experience, However, one cannot overemphasize the one human character as Bradley does. It is important but not everything.

There is another serious error in Bradley's view. Bradley analyses dramatic characters as if they are real living figures. The characters do not have an existence beyond the play. They exist only within the | confines of drama and not beyond.

Bradley was soundly criticised in a writing titled "How many children had lady Macbeth" to show how Bradley had gone to lengths to ask his questions, as if it was biography or something.

Posh Bradley an criticism has adequately discussed the relative merits and demerits of "character"-criticism"

***An* analysis of "Hamlet" by a study of its Imagery**

Conventional analysis of a play brings into focus the plot, the delineation of character, the play's appeal to audience and so on.

It is possible to take at a play from other angles too.

Shakespeare criticism broke new ground in the twentieth tury with the publication in 1935 of "Shakespeare's Imagery and what it tell us" by Caroline Spurgeon.

Spurgeon's analysis of imagery in Shakespearean drama was by itself a new way of looking at drama. It gave fresh insights to the understanding of Shakespearean drama as well as specific plays. And i brought a new critical method.

Later writers like Wolfgang H Clemen built upon this method which resulted in some very perceptive analyses, which were fresh < well as stimulating.

Now the term " Imagery" is very common in modern criticism. Unfortunately it is one of the most ambiguous terms too.

In its simplest meaning imagery stands for "mental pictures" which are experienced by the reader of a poem.

Imagery, as it is used in sophisticated criticism stresses imagery as the essential component of poetry and as a major clue to poetic meaning, structure and effect.

So by analysing Shakespeare's poetic technique and then by doing an intensive study of the poetry of Shakespeare, one can get at the core of a play, any play. In turn, it helps us to understand the play as much as the study of the plot or characterisation or something else does.

We will now try to understand the play "Hamlet" by viewing its imagery, its impact and relevance.

What Spurgeon calls "Iterative Imagery" gives a clue to each play? The metaphorical images, if they are iterated, point to something constant in the play as a whole and it has a relevance to the whole play.

In "Hamlet", what gives the clue to the play should be found mostly in Hamlets own utterances. There is a reason for it. "Hamlet's" language-is not the conventional language of the court. Others speak it because they tread the worn-out paths in thought and deed. So their language is similar.

Polonius is the classic example of the common user of language. He is the sententious over maxiens in his advice to his son. The point is that the speech reflects no personal obligation; the speaker is so distant form the listener.

It is different with Hamlet. As he lives in a world of solid reality he has necessarily to get at the core of things. Here one has to get away from the picture of Hamlet as a man incapable of action, a thinker and dreamer. This view is one sided since Hamlet is in closest touch with reality unlike others and knows that a resolution of a problem by any means in no solution Nor is it action in the true sense.

One can speak of action as moral choice only where the choice, has to be made and not before its time. That is why Hamlet has to take his action and thought or reflection together. Otherwise action and reflection become mutually inimical abstract principles, which they are not; in reality, they together constitute the human condition. So the customary interpretation of "reflection hinders action" will obscure the reality of Hamlet's condition.

What does the imagery in "Hamlet" reveal to us?

In the very first act of the play, while Hamlet's father, host describes how he was killed, it describes the poisoning and how it affects the system. The poison is a "leprous distilment". it infects totally and eats away the whole body.

This picture of poisoning dominates the imagery of the play. Hamlet sees it and there projects the corruption of the land and people as an imperceptible and also irresistible process

of poisoning.

So we see the image of sickness and decay throughout

"The Canker galls the infants of the spring" .1.3.39

One can relate it to what is said of Claudius,

"this canker of our nature"

5.2.69

This certainly help us to get into the meaning of the play.

Similarly in the Pyrrhus episode, which an actor recites before Hamlet, there is an emphasis on.

"Aroused vengeance sets him new a work"

2.2.499

It is a warning to Hamlet that vengeance calls forth bloody deeds Earlier, Pyrrhus being in suspense, unable to act, is in the same condition as Hamlet ic, that is, "Neutral to his will".

So as a painted tyrant, Phyrrus stood And like a neutral to his will and not matter did nothing"

2.2.491

Now it was possible for Shakespeare to group a number of images around the central symbol and integrate that at different levels by which one sees the theme and the unifying elements which stress the theme.

The verbal qualities alone can, in a play like dat of Shakespeare, give us glimpses of what the play is all about. Individually, the images may not seem very significant. But in their totality they become integral to the play as other aspects like plot, character and atmosphere of the play.

T.S. ELIOT ON 'HAMLET'

Eliot's Essay on "Hamlet" created a sensation for sometime, as he was a major poet and critic of his limes.

What more, so much was made of Eliot's use of the phrase "objective correlative" which he casually ins reduced in this essay.

So much has been written of the prince, the hero of the play.

For Eliot, however, '"Hamlet" the play is the primary problem and Hamlet, the character is only secondary.

What does Eliot mean by that?

Hamlet, the character is so tempting to put any critic to action. Some of them like Goethe and Coleridge are creative writers so that they read into the character something of themselves, as it were, this takes them away from the play which alone the critic should study as a work of art. That is to say, the critic's primary job is to stress the importance of the whole, that is the play and not the importance of the leading character.

Shakespeare had Kyd's "Hamlet" an earlier work, to be Used as material, Shakespeare's play is distinct in the scene it is a typical Shakespearean tragedy.

What did Shakespeare do with the Hamlet story?

He introduced along with Hamlets madness, the revenge motive, which were there in the earlier plays too. But then, according to Eliot, there was something more. According to him, there was in Hamlet a "motive which is more important than revenge" and it blunted

his desire to take revenge: What was that? According to Eliot, again, Shakespeare's play has as its main theme "the effect of a mother's guilt upon her son"

This is something uniquely Shakespearean. But in Eliot's view, Shakespeare" was unable to impose this motive successfully" upon the material of the play. So the play "is most certainly an artistic failure"

Eliot is a profound critic as he is a profound poet. But later critics have not been convinced by Eliot's arguments. According to some of them Eliot's statement on what is called the "formula" for an emotion is a false statement, a false argument. No object or situation is in itself a "formula: for an emotion. The emotional significance or effect is derived from the way it is rendered by a poet.

The readers' requirements are not only met by a poet, Instead the readers finds it by a reading of the play. The response to art is what makes something enjoyable for which the readers' sensitivity is essential.

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SECTION B
DRAMA (FOR GENERAL STUDY)
BEN JONSON - VOLPONE

Ben Jonson 's life and works:

'Ben Jonson was born at Westminster, a suburb of London at the time, in the year 1572. His father, who was a clergyman, died before Ben was born. When the boy was two years old his mother married a master bricklayer. Ben was sent to the Parish school first and then to the Westminster school. It is said that William Camden the second master, who became headmaster later was of great help to the 'boy, He met the expense of Ben's education and became his close and lifelong friend. There is a view that Ben Jonson went to Cambridge and was there for some time as a student. But it has been pointed out that there are no records to show this. Ben entered his step-father's trade of bricklaying but he soon left it. Leaving home he went to Flanders, where he enlisted as an ordinary soldier in the British Expeditionary Force in .the Dutch wars again Spain. He returned to London in 1592 and married a woman, who proved to be ill tempered. He had many children, all of whom died young.

Soon Ben Jonson found his way to the theatrical world and be-come an actor and playwright. His early plays have not been preserved. But soon he became successful; he is mentioned in Francis Mere's Palladis Tamia as "one of the best for tragedy" But it is seen that he produced his best comedy "Every Man in his Humour" at about this time (1598), This was performed by the Lord Chamberlaine's company with Shakespeare in the cast. It is said that he killed a fellow actor in Henslowe's company and very narrowly escaped being hanged. From 1598 began a very successful creative period for Jonson. He brought out a Folio volume in 1616 containing nine plays, eleven masques and sev-eral poems. All his best works belong to this period. He was granted a royal pension of one hundred pounds in 1616 and made poet laureate in the next year. It is said that he was offered a knighthood but he refused it.

The next nine years (1616-1625) was a happy period. He was a court poet and gathered several young poets round him as his admires.

He wrote much by way of poetry, criticism, history, etc. Which however was not published and part of which was destroyed in a fire along with a very good library that he possessed. Compared to the previous period (1598-1616) this was less productive. Now began a period of decline, it is seen that the Oxford University honoured him with an M.A. degree in 1619 and that his pension was increased to two hundred pounds. But his life in the court was never the same after the death of James I. His last days were marked by poverty and sickness. He passed away in 1637 and was buried in the poet's corner of Westminster Abbey.

Ben's was an exuberant and vital personality. He was very widely read and was aggressive by temperament. He was imprison ed twice, once in a murder case, Most of the great literary men of the day were his friends especially his fellow dramatist Shakespeare. L.C. Knights describes his personality as a union of opposites, "remarkably individual, yet informed with a strong sense of tradition" A Marked classical bent is combined with an erudite English man. (Pelican Guide Vol. 2p. 302). His concern for the dramatic unities, his economy of expression, his didactic insistence proclaim the classisist in him. His learning and classical elements are assimilated by sensibility that is in direct contact with the living world around him. The operative standards are classical, of a man who has read widely and thought deeply but the material is supplied by direct observation. He is a master of quick moving intrigue and of farce, but his comic vision is embodied in forms that are drawn from real life. He is one who has learnt from other civilizations but is thoroughly at home in his native Elizabethan England. We see him most closely following classical models and

applying rules derived from classical theory and practice. But his lyrical gift and his comic sense are his own. "No English writer was more idiosyncratic that Jonson and his picturesque and violent life-which included (after brick laying and soldiering) the slaying of an actor in a duel and consequent imprisonment and branding, a temporary conversion to Roman Catholicism etc. is sufficient testimony to his individuality and self-confidence". (David Daiches - a Critical History of English Literature.Vol. two. p. 310).

His contribution to English Drama

He departs from the romantic drama of his times and strikes out a new path in presenting a sratiric picture of his own age. In the prologue to his Every Man in his Humour he finds fault with the themes and conventions of contemporary drama and shows himself a realist and conscious reformer of the stage. Apart from his learning and his skill, him individual genius and his power, his fame rests on his original con-tribution to English Drama, Viz, the "Comedy of Humours". This is based on the theory of humours in medieval medicine. According to this theory the "humours' were primary fluids in the human body-blood, phlegm, choler and melancholy. The proportion of these in a person determined his physical state and his character type, In Jonson's "comedy of humours" each character has one of these humours in excess, that gives him a characteristic distortion or eccentricity.

In holding up to ridicule the human foibles of the society of his day Jonson is said to have depicted the life of London realistically, which ultimately led the way to the "comedy of manners" of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This almost puts him in the place of forerunner of the comedy of manners. His erudition, his realism and his insistence on the classical virtues make him a forerunner of neoclassicism in England.

Jonson's major dramatic works are: 'Every-man in his humour,' 'Every Man out of his Humour', Cynthila's Revels, Volpone or the FOX, Eplcoene , or the silent woman, Poetas eV The Alchemist and Bartholomew Fair Sejanus and Catallne are his tragedies.

Actwise Summary of the Play

(Note the name of the characters, which are suggestive of their traits)

Act I

Volpone's (Fox) house. He praises gold but his chief pleasures is inhis clever tricks by which he acquires riches. He plans to tempt people by promising to leave his wealth of them. He makes money by exploiting the greed of the legacy hunters . Mosca the parasite echoes his master's views and assists him in the plans. Nano the dwarf. Androgyno the fool and hermaphrodite (Mixture of man and woman) and Castrong (eunuch) stage a show for the entertainment of Volpone. Nano traces the history of a soul from Apollo through Pythagoras to Androgyno the fool. Mosca dresses Volpone and smears his face with ointment to make him look a dying man. Volpone pretends to be suffering from cough, gout, paisy etc. Voltore (vulture), the lawyer comes in and presents a global plate to Volpone. He promises to reward Mosca if he gets Volpone's wealth. Mosca tells him that Volpone has made a will in his favour. Corbaccio (raven) an old man enters and Voltore is sent away hurriedly. He has brought a sleeping medicine for Volpone's will and Mosca tells him that it has not yet been made, Corbaccio produces a bag of gold to outweigh Voltore's gift to Volpone. Mosca suggests that he makes his own will impress. Volpone and he is sure to give all his weath to him. Mosca also assures him that he has been made the heir. Lady Would Be arrives and Volpone refuses to see her, she is such a bore. He wonders that her husband allows her to visit people alone. Mosco tells him that Cornino is just the opposite. He keeps his beautiful wife shut up at home and keeps guard over her. Mosca's description of her beauty rouses Volpone's passion and he plans to see her through her window.

Act-11

Sir Politic Would -Be, an English Knight is seen talking Peregrine, another English traveller. The scene is outside Corvino's house. Sir Plitic's folly is brought out. This first

scene has no obvious connection with the plot. Perhaps Jonson isjust ridiculing the the gentry) In the next scene Mosca enters an sets up a platform. Volpone diguised as a mountebank speakes for the crowd- the usual pep-talk of salesmen. He says he has oil which will cure various diseases. Celia appears as her window and Volpone offers her wonder drug that will keep her eternally youthful. She drops down her handkerchief with a little money tied in it. In a short scene Corvino enters and drives away the mountebak and the whole crowd. The scene changes, Volpone is speaking to Mosca. His lust is roused by Cellia's youth and beauty and the fire of passion is raging within him. He doesn't mind spending any amount of money to get her. Mosca promises to do his best. Corvino's house. He is rebuking his wife for being seen at the window and encouraging the mountebank. He threatens to lock her up and be more server than before. He calls her a harlot. She is to remain in the room at the back of the house and not even look at the window. He will cut her pieces if she disobeys Mosca is announced and Celia goes in. Mosca informs Cornino that Volpone's doctors have prescribed a very good remedy for a complete cure-a young woman "Lusty and full of juice to sleep with him". Various friends of .Volpone are competing with one another to provide him with this remedy. Some have offered their wives and daughters. Mosca leaves saying that Celia should not be brought to Volpone until he is sent for. When Mosca has left, Carvino changes his tune to Celia saying he was only testing her constancy, to prove that he is not jealous; he offers to take her out in her best attire.

Act-III

Mosca in a street in Venice, is talking to himself about the art of the true parasite. He has succeeded in tempting the most jealous of husbands to prostitute his wife. In the next scene he turns Bonario against his father Corbaccio, who is planning to disinherit him. The next scene is in Volpone's house. He is being entertained by the three deformed persons of his family. Lady Would-Be is announced and Volpone is afraid that her sights will kill his appetite for Celia. He lies down in his couch. Mosca returns, conceals Bonario in the house and rescuses Volpone by telling the lady that her husband is with the most cunning of courtezans of Venice at the moment, she leaves the place. Corvino comes in with Celia without waiting for Mosca's Summons. Soon Celia learns why she is brought there and she is horrified at the prospect and refuses to comply with her husband's wishes. He leaves her there and goes away. Volpone attempts to ravish ber, Bonario hears her cries, come in and leads her away. As he goes out he wounds Mosca who suggests to Volpone that both of diem commit suicide, Corbaccio enters and Voltore at a distance. Mosca informs Corbaccio that his son has vowed to kill him and Volpone on account of the former's will dis inheriting him. Voltore overhears this and expresses his suspicion of Mosca, but the later convinces him that all these things are for his sake. He is going toget not only Volpone's wealth but that of Corbaccio as well. Mosca also reports to Voltore that Bonario has seized Celia who came to visit the sick man and wounded him. He has persuaded Celia to level a charge against Volpone of attempting to rape her. Voltore agrees to defend them and asks Mosca, Corobaccio and Corvino to meet him at the law court.

Act-IV

A street, Sir Politic Would -Be and Peregrine in conversation. Lady Would-Be enters and says that Peregrine is the courtezan in disguise. The knight fears that his wife may be right and leaves the place.

Peregrine is angry. Mosca promises to show the courtezan to Lady Would-Be at the law court. Next we come to the court scene, there are four judges. Voltore tells the court that Celia is committing adultery with Bonario, who has therefore been disinherited by his son and Corvino denounces Celia as a whore. Lady Would-Be also gives evidence that she has seen Celia trying to seduce her husband. At first Voltore pleads that Volpone is too ill to attend the court. But the Judges, are firm and he is brought in. They are satisfied that he is too ill to attempt rape. They order that he be taken home with care and they send Bonario and Celia to prison.

Act-V

Volpone at home, He is nervous over the discomfort he felt in the court. He takes a drink of wine and is revived. In the second scene Mosca comes in and they celebrate their success. Nano and Castro are sent out to spread the news that Volpone is dead. Voltore, Corbaccio, Corvino and Lady Would-Be arrive one by one. Volpone has asked Mosca to put on a gentleman's robes and prepare an inventory of his new possessions standing behind a curtain Voltore sees Volpones will and Mosca to go out in Magnifico's robes. Volpone says he will himself go out in a court officer's guise and question the legacy hunters. The next scene is in Sir Politic's house. Peregrine comes in disguised as a merchant. He is under the impression that Lady Would -Be was set on him by the knight in the earlier street scene and now he has come to take revenge on him. He fells the knight-that Peregrine is Venetian agent who has reported to his government that Sir Politic Would-Be is plotting against Venice and that an arrest warrant is issued against him. A knock at the door sends Sir Politic to hide behind a tortoise shell. Some merchants come in claiming to be search officers. Along with Pregrine that fease the knight and pull off his shell. His wife comes home and they decide to leave Venice for good Volpone's house. Both are in disguise, Volpone goes out and Mosca s the grotesque family free-, he informs us (The audience) that he won't allow Volpone to ' ome the master of the house unless a bargain to struck between them. He is going to ass' ' that Volpone is dead and that he has inherited his wealth. The titter is going to be bitte n the next scene Volpone disguised as a court messenger meets Corbaccio and Corvino in reet. They are going to the court Volpone congratulates them on them on their inheriting V' ıe's wealth. He also congratulates Volpone's house) He is obviously teasing them and e' ıg the fun Corbaccio and Corvino see Mosca dressed as magnificent, Volpone angers th y expressing surprise that they have been gulled by a parasite. When Corvino threatens to beat him Volpone answers that he is aware of his (Corvino's) courage. He had shown it when he publicity admitted that he was a cuckold. In another scene Voltore meets Mosca and warns him that his end is near. Mosca leaves and Volpone (in disguise) approaches him and offers to thrash Mosca. He adds that he cannot believe that a clever advocate like Voltore has been fooled by a parasite.

The court meets again. Voltore submits a written statement thatBonario and Celia are innocent and that Celia was forcibly taken to Volpone by her husband. But he also states that the charge of rape was false as Volpone is important. Volpone tells the court that he is still the true heir. Voltore pretends to be well again. The devil him has gone out. He states that his earlier written statement is false and that Volpone is alive. The magistrates show great respect for Mosca, a magnificent. On of them offers his daughter in marriage to him. Volpone is alive. The Volpone ask Mosca to save the situations. The latter demands half of Volpone's properties. This is not complied with and he refuses to declare that Volpone is alive. Volpone reveals himself and also the true facts about Mosca is to spend the rest of his life as a prisoner and also to get a whipping. Volpone also is to be imprisoned for life and to be in fetters for ever. All his wealth is to be confiscated and given to a hospital. Voltore isexpelled from the legal profession and banished from Venice. Corbaccio's wealth is to go to his son. Corvino is to be shown up as ass and to be pilloried.

Explanatory Notes:

Act 1 Sec, 1

Line 1: Good morning: Jonson indicates the time or implies it often in the course of the action to indicate the duration of the action to show that he observes the unity of time. Aristotle said that tragedy endeavours as far as possible to limit the action to a single revolution of the sun, one day. The opening lines of the play show Volpone as a worshipper of gold.

Line 5: The celestian ram: The first sign of the Zodiac.

Aries. This indiicates the spring season

Line 8-10: The high style of the opening is likely to evoke certain tragic sublimity in the minds of the Elizabethan audience who were familiar with the same tone of blasphemy in

'Dr. Faustus' and The Jew of Malta'. 'The Machivellian heroes of Marlowe/

Son of Sol: Sol is the Sun God. In alchemy gold is conceived as the son of sol.

Line 15: that age: poets have referred to the golden age to mean the best age. They were paying a tribute to gold.

Line 24-25: Even hell heaven; even; even hell in your company is equal to heaven

Line 31: Purchase : earning

Line 58: Romagnia, Greek wine, Candian : Wine from Candy in Crete.

Scene -2

Line 6: Pythagoras: Greek Philosopher who was the first to support the doctrine of metempsychosis or transmigration of the soul into different bodies. He is said to have claimed that he remembered many of his earlier lives. Aethalides the son Mercury, Euphorbus, Hermotinus, then a fisherman and so on.

Line 13: Cuckold of Sparta: King of Sparta and husband of Helen who was carried off by Paris, son of Priam of Troy. This led to the Trojan war. A cuckold is one whose wife is unfaithful to him. It was believed that such a person would get horns on his forehead.

Line 17: The Sophist of Greece: It is said that Pythagoras was saluted as Sophist or "wise man" but he was content to be called a philosopher or the friend of wisdom.

Line 27: Golden thigh: Pythagoras is said to have claimed that he had a golden thigh, which helped him in the Olympic games.

Line 34, 40, 44. flash, beans; These three things were forbidden by Pythagoras to his disciples and he also wanted them to observe strict silence for five years.

Line: 89-90: Vulture...gor crow: The names are suggestive. Vulture is Volture; Kite is Lady Politics; Raven is Corbaccio and Gorcrow (the carrion crow) stands for Corvino.

Line 108: moyle: mule Scene -3

"This *and* the following scenes are a Roman Salutation the morning visit of clients to their patrons: says Rea. This helps us to fix the time of action.

Line 10: S. Marks: The Market is St. Marke's square, where many gold smiths had their shops.

Line 58: forked counsel: advice that points in two directions provoking gold to come up; whichever side a lawyer took in a case about gold, the gold would finally come to his pocket.

Line 70-71: golden land: on a sea of gold, honey.

Scene -4

Line 67: By your own scale: your are judging by your own standard (This is an aside)

Line 73: aurum palpable.. Corbaccio's gold coins are

not in potable (drinkable) form but they can be felt or touched.

Line 107; Stone dead: dead as a stone; insensible.

Line 124: Rook goe with you, raven: "The Raven said to the Rook, stand away black-coat" Proverb. It is like the kettle calling the pot black; one is as black as the other.

Line 156: Aeson: Jason's father. Jason led the Argonauts in their journey to Colchisto to bring the Golden Fleece. Medea the daugh-ter of the King of Colchis assisted Jason in obtaining the Fleece which he got after several exploits, She came with him to his land Thessaly. She was able to cure his father and rejuvenate him by means of her magic brews.

Scene - 5

Line 92: fat: There was a belief that cannibalism would enable to improve one's health. This should obviously be a pleasing to a fox.

Act II Scene I

Line 14: licence: passport

Line 21: How it will be seconded: whether it will be confirmed.

Line 30-31: According to an old proverb the bee makes honey and the spider makes poison from the same nectar. Lady Peregrine and the courtesans live in the red light district of Venice for different purposes, she to study the fashions and they to sell themselves.

Line 55: Mass: Master

Scene: 2

Line 4: mountebankes: literally those who mount on benches: wandering quacks, sometimes jugglers.

Line 6: venting: selling,

Line 45: a sforzato . a galley slave.

Line 60: In several scartoccious : In separate pieces of paper

Line 62: oppllations : stoppages

Line 70: canaglla mob

Line 76-77: strangers of the terra firma: visitors from the main-land, not natives of Venice

Line. 80: Magazines underground cellars

Line 82: cocted: boiled

Line 101 fricace message

Line 103 mal-caduco. the falling sickness

Line 112. Aesculapian arte. medicine Aesculapius was the god of medicine

Line 118: Hippocrates: father of medicalscience He lived in the 5th C.B.C.

Line 136: signioty of the sanita :"the heal authorities.

Line 214: a double pistolet: a gold coin »

Line 264: virginal Jacks : the keys of a harpsichord which strike the strings.

Act II Scene 3

Line I: Spight O' the devil: two possible meanings are suggested. "The devil s malice' an oath 2; offspring of the devil.

Line 3-8: There is an echo of the Italian popular Comedy throughout the 2nd adn 3rd scenes. Flamino was one of the stock names of the popular Comedy of sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Francisina was the stock name for an amorous servant girl. Pantalone another stock character, a merchant who is old and jealous and cuckolded by his wife.

Scene -4

Line 6: an: some, ambitious (fire) searching all over the furnace for an exit.

Line 21: Hope (1-18) is the good angel and Despair in the bad anger of the Morality plays, Volpone Mosca is Hope. Shakespeare to his two loves, "the better angel is a man right fair/The worser spirit a woman coloured 111" (sonnet No. 144)

Line if you can home him: If you can cuckold him.

Line 38: Judge may be the result of my work. If I don't succeed you need not praise me.

Scene -5

Line 4: dole of faces: stock of facial expressions.

Line 7: Satyres: Lecherous persons.

Line 17: Fricase for the mother : massage treatment for hysteria.

Line 23: make one: join (in two senses)

Line 34: goatish: lustful.

Line 57: Locke: probably a chastity belt (a defensive device worn by women)

Line 62: honest : open

Line 70: anatomic: "a subject for dissection" a body to be dissected. Scene -6

Line 14: osteria: hostelry

Line 29: cataplasme: Plaster or poultice.

Line 42: delate: 1, report, 2-, dilate upon.

Line 44: opinion : his good opinion of me.

Line 55: queene: whore.

line 74: comming coming; coming round.

Act III scene 1

Line 4: Whimsy: whim.

Line 10: mysterie: profession.

Line 14: town arte: the parasite's art of getting every meal from a different house.

Line 17: to bait that sense: 1. to tempt their ears. 2. to feed their hunger.

Line 18: Kitchen -invention: 1. servants fare or the leftovers. 2. recipes, 3. receipts (what he is about to receive)

Line 29: visor: expression.

Scene 2:

Line 3: thee: the singular is for contempt ("if thou though some thrice..." Twelfth Night, IIII-II 50)

Line 14: unequall: unjust.

Line 24: observance: parasitism.

Line 32: prove: undertake.

Line 34: let me here perish: variously explained.

Line Let my hopes of salvation perish. 2. let me die as stand here hoping to be saved. 3. By all my hope of salvation let me perish ' Let me perish, by all means.

Line 39: serious offence against good manners (tale-bearing)

Line 46: It is no business of mine.

Line 49: for which mere respect: just for this reason only.

Line 59: pietie: filial piety. Scene-3

Line 5: dellcates: luxuries: darlings.

Line 15: feet nimble

Line 26: dwell: linger or remain: encamp.

Scene -4

Line 6: most favorably: "either sarcastic or a slip for misfavourably."

Line 17: tire: attire; coiffure.

Line 37: fucus: make-up.

Line 52: seed pearle: a small pearl used medicinally as a restor-ative.

Line 54: ellcampane: mirobalanes plants once used in medicine.

Line 74: concent in: harmony between.

Line 76: The poet: Sophocles.

Line 102: encounter: oppose.

Line 122: and: another form of an meaning "if'

Line 125: coaetanel: coeval.

Scene-5

Line 2: Welcome to my redemption: you are just in time, to save me.

Line : the cock-pit: the place where cockfights took place, the comparison is to the noise made by the spectators

Line 14: toy: trifle

Line 23: lightly : usually

Lin3 28: Rlalto: Probably the island of Venice or its bridges.

Line 34: blood: appetite.

Line 36: primero: a card game.

Scene -7

Line 7: presently: Immediately.

Line 9: except you told me: unless you tell me.

Line 21: move: propose or suggest.

Line 32: traine: I trick 2. lure

Line 61: quick: turn

Line 62: critique : expert

Line 78: the beauty only of price in Venice: the one priceless beauty of Venice.

Line 112: but : only.

Line 118: errant: arrant (not erring or wandering)

Line 120: expecting: devising.

Line 120: consider-: reconsider.

Line 126: luite: relieve her fears.

Line 127: comming: forthcoming: willing.

Line 144: Copper ma: Chapman : dealer.

CUP/5069/1000/SDE — 14

Line 148: 'raysed: raises (as a spirit is raised) "rayed" is an emendation suggested, meaning "arrayed"or dressed.

Line 192: carbuncle: a deep red gem.

Line 220: Ovid's tales: the stories of Ovid's Metamorphoses see below.

Line 221: Europa and Jova: Jove (Jupiter) came in the form of

bull and mated with Europe. ,

Line 222: Mars was the god of war. He was in love with Erycine.(Venus)

Line 229: grand-signior: Turkish Sultan.

Line 238: pined: formented (forpined "He was not a pale as forpyned goost", Chaucer's Prologue: 1.205)

Scene -8

Line 7: engaged: at stake Line 8: Fortune : bad luck.

Line 16: saffi: the bailiffs assistant.

Line: LJ: however: whatever else happens.

Scene -9

Line 17: who's that: he does not mean "who is a parasite?" He pretends he has not heard it, and means "whom do I hear'"

Line 22: foists: excuses.

Line 36: stated: installed

Line 55:Scrutineo: The Senate House of Venice:

Line : 58: There was no want of counsel in the plot. It was well contrived.

Act IV Scene I

Line 1: It was a plot: the reference is to the scene in which mountebank attracts Celia's attention.

Line 2: mentioned : asked me.

Line 7: Crude : raw.

Line 11: Twill slander....of wit: will not slander you by saying that you have wit.

Line 12: grab: bearing (Note this kind of advice to a young traveller was common in Elizabethan drama to Polonius Laertes in Hamlet)

Line 20: So as...In hem....I. In order to keep myself form them. 2. Provided that I did not miss them entirely.

Line 26: Nic. Machlvel: Nivolo Machicvelli (1497-1527), Florentine statesman, author of the Prince which is considered ungodly.

Line 29: metall: I material. 2. Quality.

Line 34: preposterous : back: to the front.

Line 35: strippes: exposes

Line 40: contraine: title of a book in Italian.

Line 47: discover : disclose.

Line 60: cast: planned hoigh: cargo boat.

Line 64: defalke : deduct : out of.

Line 120: soria: Syria

Line 106: Lazeretto : In quarantine.-

Line 120: the easiest thing in the world (out of hundred things)

Line 129: reason del sato: reasons of state.

Line 143: Peecing : minding.

Line 144: cheapened : bought, sprats: kind of small fish.

Scene -2

Line 1: housed: gone to some house (of ill repute)

Line 2: both : both fast and lose.

Line 5: I do not....him: I don't want to prevent him, but to catch him in the act.

Line 6: It: complexion

Line 31: Politic : cunning.

Line 49: historique : probably hysteric: or histrionic.

Line 53: forehead : dignity.

Line 55: fricatrice : prostitute.

Line 58: liquid : transparent.

Line 60: Carnival: feast before Lent, But it is quite likely that Lady Would -Be means " carnal: fleshy.

Line 63: discipline : discipline.

Scene -3

Line 2: protest: Proclaim.

Line : callet: prostitute.

Line 18: see : use

Scene-4

Line 1: carriage: procedure

Line 4: convaid: distributed Line 8: but: only.

Line 21-22: Mercury was god of eloquence: also the god of thieves.

Scene -5

Line 19: your vertues: your worship: a form of respectful address.

Line 41: timeless : untimely

Line 44: owe: own

Line 49: act: Corvino's bounty

Line 54: fact: 1. Crime 2. act (their amours)

Line 57: preserve himself : remain

Line 79: ever: (a slip for) never.

Line 81: Illen, bed-Iain be bed-ridden.

Line 87: Collections: conclusions.

Line 107: abhorse his knowledge, "hates to have to acknowledge him"

line 124: here: Upon the head. Line 139: lay'd calculated: planned. Line 146: take: put

a spell on. but: only.

Scene -6

Line 32: strappado: the rack: instrument of torture.

Line 34: helpe: cure

line 38: equal: impartial

Line 45: face: appearance.

Line 55: Prodigies: monsters.

Line 71: the other, his prostitution of Celia.

Line 79: Rest...eyes: sleep easy.

Act-V Scene 1.

Line 4: cave: look out.

Scene -2

Line 19: borne if: manged it

Line 32: rere: rarely

Line 51: figures: figures of speech.

Line 61-62 : do it with constancy, sadly, do it in all seriousness.

Line 75: (it is a command) treat then sciirvily.

Line 83: parcels: part: items.

Line 103-105 : Jove...Acrislu guards: (O.K. Mythology)

Acrisius imprisoned his daughter Danae in a tower because an oracle had predicted that her son would kill him. He posted several guards around her. Jove descended' into the tower in the form of golden shower and out of his union with Danea we born Perseus, who finally killed Acrisius. An irreverent inference from this story is that part of the gold (of the golden shower must have gone into the "pockets of the guards.)

Line 105: makes for: gives

Scene -3

Line 3: sutes: sets, tissew a fine rich cloth with golden thread.

Line 7: vellets: velvets.

Line 32: salt: salt cellar.

Line 43: for maintenance: to eke out their allowance.

Line 51: wittol: a complaisant cuckold.

Line 83: chance : good luck.

Line 84: travels: travails.

Line 92: for: 1. inspite of. 2. as.

Line 96: for your fee: at your usual rate.

Scene -4

Line 6: guld: gulled : how Sir Politic was gulled Line 16: him whole: his whole time.

Line 45: a fralle were rare: a fruit basket would be the vary thing

Line 51: ingine: device: invention.

Line 83: the freight of the gazetti: in the news.

Scene -5

Line 3: thou become's it: you are an ornament to the rank of Magnifico's

Line 6: My fox is out on his hole: a boy's game. Line 8: In his borro··ed case: in his disguise.

Line 12: possess!: in possession. Scene 6

Line 21: very woman: true or real woman (frail woman)

Line 23: bear it out carry if off.

Line 25: be a knowne let it be known. Scene-7

Line -8 Preparations: repair

Line 10: piscarla: fish market.

Line 12: customed: well patronised.

Line 16: hand: promise

Scene -8

Line 6: Brook'd liked.

Line 12: moral emblems: engravings or cuts with explanatory verses.

Line 27: baslllske: a legendary reptile which could kill by looking. Scene-9

Line 10: Justinian: Roman emperor who codified Roman law.

Scene 10

Line 16: passion anger: spite Line 24: since: in the interim.

Line 33: conferee: compare or collate Line 41: but, to: merely for.

Scene 11

Line 7: seareup: cauterise.

Line 16: crotechets: whims, coundrums: tricks. *Scene 12*

Line 10: Obsession : siege Possession: occupation.

Line 12: varlet: city bailiff, a muncipal officer.

Line 42: practice: plot.

Line 60: qulcke : alive

Line 80: toward: in a befitting manner.

Line 105: beg favour: plead privilege of mark.

Line 139: berlino: Pillory or wooden frame with holes through which the heads and hands were put as punishment.

Study Aid

I. Ben Jonson as a dramatist - a general estimate:

The first thing that strikes us in Ben Jonson is his self-reliance and his aggressiveness. Edward Albert (History of English Literature -OUP) calls it combativeness. David Daiches (A critical history of English Literature -vol two) calls it, 'enormous self confidence, which at times rises to arrogance". No English writer was more idiosyncratic than Jonson. His picturesue and violent life bears witness to Jonson's individuality. He owed this and his deep learning to his teacher William Camden, under whose encouragement Ben Jonson the boy cast or his

diffidence and learned to relay on his own efforts. This angularity is seen in his offering to go to prison as a mark of solifarity with Marston and Champan who were imprisonmed for writing East ward Ho in which Scots in genral where satirised. there were threats that their ears and-noses would be cut off. But powrful friends intervened and all the three escaped being maimed or branded.

Another important thing to be remembered about Ben Jonson is his vast learning especially in the Classics. It is said that throughtout his life he copied into a notebook passages from the ancients and constantly referred to these while writing. In painting the society of his own days too he used to make preliminary studies with his notebook in hand. His work was amply documented. That he was widely read in history and literature is abundantly clear from his writings. This must have given Jonson his self confidence verging on arrogance. He was sble to attract many of the younger generation around him and he enjoyed the reputation of literaty dictator of the times, he was also patronized by James I and made the first poet Laureate of England. He had one of the finest libraries in London but it was destroyed in a fire.

Jonson's learning wide and deep made him a clasicist. He know the literary theory and practice of the ancients, not only of the great ones but also of the forgotten and mediocre authors of actiquity. By training he was a classicist and his expressed predilections were for the classical virtues. His insistences on the moral and didactic function of the poet, his concern for the unities, for brevity, perspicuity, directness etc., all these show him a genuine classicist. This has to be seen against etc., all these show him a genuine classicist. This has to be seen against the background of his times if we are to realise the indiduality and courage of conviction, of Jonson the man . "In one sense, if the mark of originality be resistance to the general currrent, he was more original that Shakespeare. Shakespeare accepts the conditions of the stage of his time, is aware of its shortcomings, but resigns himself to them with a smile. His relations with his public remain sympathetic. Honson however is in angry opposition to the Elizabethan stages, and sets up up his own tastes, ideas and theroris, all derived from the ancients against the popular taste. Shakespear follows with docility the course of the stream, jonson flings his vast bulk against it" (Legouis and Cazanu, n: A History of English Literature J. M. Dent p. 444). He sought in the classics a cure for the uncontrolled romantic exuberance of the Elizabethans. He can therefore be described as the forerunner of neoclassical in english Literature.

Jonson thus was a conscious reformer of the stage. He sought to be more correct in structure more contemporary in theme and more improving in effect. this made him a realist in an age that was essentially romantic. This prompted him to return to the controlled satrical, realistic comedy of humours. His man concerns was with the drawing of character and it was this that led him to the comedy is seen to be dominated, utmost obsessed by one pecular quirk. These characters therefore become types rather than individuals. This was really at cross purpose with his prediction for realism. Such a character is bound to be an exaggerated caricature, not a fully realised human being. In this mode is alsmost akin to the "morality plays" of the Middle ages' . Also he lacked the ability to enjoy sthe essential, humanity of his immoral characters as Shakespeare did in the case of the Falstaff off of Sir Toby Belch.

In realy all his comedies Jonson opened up a new vein. Jonson was a 'close observer of life. the whims and affections, the tricks and tomfooleries of the life around him, are observed with a seeing eye and broght out vividly. In this is must be noted that be was paving the way for the comedy of manners that came later. Thus he can be described as a forerunner of the comedy of manners also.

Jonson's style should not go unnoticed in many just estimate, the classical qualities of style such and directness have already been mentioned in an earlier paragraph. The pregnant phrase expressings makes him out as a spirit in the world of letters. Two however have to note of. The desire,

moral indignation behind it, often .... rises to the level or seriousness, which is the proper sphere of tragedy and Jonson forgets that the office of comedy is lighthearted laughter. Corvino attempting to prostitute his wife Celia is such an occasion. The other point has already been mentioned (in para 4 above) viz. Jonson's realistic intentions being the thwarted by his typical handling of character. they almost become abstructions as in the Mortality Plays and riotfully realsises human beings.In the Mortality Plays and not fully realised human beings. In the estimation of his own age Jonson was second to none. But to later generations he has come to be overshowed by the towering genius of Shakespeare. It took some tme before a critical theory developed which could bring out the richness of shakespeare's genious. So now he is almost pushed to the background. But even the enormous prestige of a Shakespeare cannot belittle the merits of Jonson. He had all the literary gifts exept perhaps soaring genius. He had learning, industry, versatility, wit, humour, insight into contemporary life and manners and a style quite acdequate to his needs. L. C. Knights points out that his tone and accent of tradition, a marked classical bent combined with an English man that can digest erudition, a grave and weightly mode of expression with high spirited buoyancy, an insistent moralist and successful popular entertainer.

2. Volpone or the fox - a critical appreciation:

Volpone, or The Fox is the first and the greatest of a series of comedies which show Jonson's charcteristic mixture of savagery and humour, of moral feeling and grim relish of the monstrous absurdities of which human nature is capable, disciplined with a new sharpness and given new depth and scope" (David Daiches: A critical History of English literature, Vol, two, p. 315) Jonson takes the idea from the captattores or legacy hunters of Rome described by Petronius and other ancient writers. Volpone is a cunning, rich man who is childless. He feigns a mortal illness and many of his wealthy neighbours vie with one another to court his favour. Each of them hopes that he will be named his heir. volpone's servent Mosca the true parasite is a clever as his master and he plays on the greed of these legacy hunters. He gives them hope constantly indicating to each that he is about to be named the benificiary of the old roan's will and testament and that he was not likely to live long. They are induced to bring money costly gifts to volpone. One of them Corbacciom disinherits his son and names Volpon his successors to impress upon the later how much he cares for him. Another, Corvino stupidly and excessively jealous office pretty wife, not only forget his jealousy in his overwhelming greed but descends to the level of prostituting her. Mosca tells him that Volpone's disease can be cured if he can lie with a pretty women and that many or his neighours are eager to give their wives and daughters to him. Corvino brings this wife Celia and almost forces her into Volpon's bed. He resists and the fellow goes out leaving her there. The fox jumps out from the bed and tries to rape her, but she is saved by Corbaccio's son. In the end everyone is overreached including Volpone. Mosca overreached his master and both are caught in the trammels of there on greed and currning. All of them are finally exposed and punished.

Any attempt at evaluating a drama has to take into consideration the dramatic aim of the auther. Shakespeare's aim in Julius Ceaser was to bring out the tragedy of Brutu's idealism. Shaw's aim in Ceasar and cleopatra was in imaginative reconstructions of Julius Ceasar's personality to bring Ceaser the man before us in flesh and blood. We cannot therefore,evaluate the two plays by the same criterion. So also in the case of Volpone we have to keep before us Jonson's dramatic aim in the play if our assessment is to be just. Jonson's aim in all his comedies was to expose the follies and foibles of people and show them upto riducule. Actually he was swimming against the current of the Elizabethan romantic exuberance in taking comedy back to its age old satiric function. satire involves wit and humour and Jonson is steeped in the tradition of Roman Comedy in all its varied ramifications. Wit and humour,repartee,innuendo and the innumerable weapons in all armoury at his service.

But to Jonson comedy was essentially a serious art and he was ever insistent on the didactic function of literature in general and the drama in particular. His satire therefore is

devastating. The broad toler-ance and pervasive humanity of Shakespeare are conspicuous by their absence in Jonson's comedies. Not on the legacy hunters but their bait-ers Volpone and Mosca are the butts of Jonson's ridicule. The extrava-gant imagery of their language expressing their ambitios designs sug-gests their obsessive desire for weath. There are moments when the situ-ation becomes grim and play moves closer to tragedy as when Celia expresses her horror at her husband's meanness and cruelty in giving her upto Volpone's lust. Jonson here moves colser to Elizabethan ro-mantic tragedy. This is the tone and temper of the age in which he lived. "Jonson, notwithstanding his liberal allowance of good fun, tunes it (the theme of Volpone) to a pitch unexpected in comedy, and in one place at least, where Corvino would force his wife to shame, strikes the note of tragedy... .Their deeds are 'crimies rather then 'folies' The fox and his friends are never mere mischiefmakers; they are villains, of the stuff of which tragedy makes luse, but without the dignity conveyed in her treatment..." (G. Gregory Smith: Ben Jonson, pp. 109-111)

The introduction of Sir Politic the foolish knight, his wife and Peregrine in a comic underplot which has little connection with the main plot, it an attempt by Jonson to provide some harmless fun-the proper function of comedy in what is really unrelieved catalogue of human depravity.

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JOHN WEBSER:

THE DUCHESS OF MALFI

(For General Study)

Introduction:

(a) Introduction to Webster:

Of Webster's personal history we know nothing except that he was well-known as a dramatist under James I. The early period of his life was one of collaboration with Middleton Dekker and Hayward. Later he turned to original and unaided works. The Duchess of Malfi. and The White Devil, his best works, belong to this period. His last years were influenced by decadence.

(b) Webster's moral vision:

Here are a few aspects of the type of world view we find in Webster's works.

1. Life is a struggle between right and wrong, or good and evil.
2. An action becomes a wrong, when it becomes, sin, a voluntary breach.
3. Man has free will
4. The Voluntary evil acts cause human tragedy.
5. The world is incurably corrupt.
6. The apparent beauties of this world are snare.
7. The glories of this world are dangerous to the soul.
8. People commit crimes because their hearts are set on the glories of this world.
9. The good people are passive and are destroyed by the wicked.
10. Good can be defeated only on the material plane, morally they triumph.
11. The evil doer will one day be caught in the net he has woven for others.

(c) Development of Revenge play.

The instinct for horrors is always there in human beings. The Jacobean dramatist found the Senecan theme of revenge exciting. Seneca was a philosopher, who introduced in this plays, the human motive of revenge as the main spring of dramatic activity instead of an over-mastering fact as we see in the Greek tragedies. Senceca's plays were translated and published in England in 1561. Thomas Sackville and Thomas Nortan produced 'Gorboduc' in intation of Senear tragedy. Thomas Kyd used the revenge theme in "The Spanish Tragedy". Marlowe employed it in The Jew of Malta, and Shakespeare with a philosophical grandeur in Hamlet. Webster's two plays. The Duchess of Malfi and The white Devil, are both in the revenge tradition and introduce the sinister world of Renaissance Italy, but present the avengers as heartless tyrants and the victims of revenge as characters worthy of admiration. In The Duchess of Malfi, Webster takes the revenge motive to the background and brings the clash of character to the forefront.

(d) Usual features *of* revenge tragedy

(a) A murderer cries for revenge.

(b) Someone takes up revenge as a duty

(c) Ghosts appear, demanding revenge.

(d) Presence of a Machiavellian Villain.

(e) Widerspread blood shed.

(f) New type of turtures and horrors.

(g) The revenged are often better than the avengers,

(h) Madness or feigned madness.

(i) Play within the play.

(j) Imagery and language suitable to violence.

The macabre element is the permanent phase of Webster. He treats terrible, striking subjects with a concentrated vigour special to his morbid genius. The materials with which he builds are sought for in the ruined places of abandoned lives, in the agonies of madness and despair, in the sarcasms of reckless atheism, in slow tortures, grief beyond en-durance and the tempests of sin haunted conscience. "Webster was much possessed with death" as a later poet, wrote.

Webster shows profound knowledge of human life in characterisation. He has depth of thought, critical insight and conception with regard of human life and the world after grave. He writes about the helplessness of humanity. 'We are merely the star's tennis-balls...One is reminded of Shakespeare's Gloucester: As flies/To wanton boys are we to the Gods/They kill us for their sport.

Webster was much inclined to emphasize the moral purpose and the sinister motive and enormity of crime. The fifth act appears as an anticlimax. It shows the nemesis which falls upon the avengers. Webster had to face much criticism on account of this act. Some felt that the "play lives too long when it outlives the heroine"

The duchess is sad, pensive and undaunted soul. 'The atmo-sphere of the play is one of unalterable sadness. The play has been shrouded in melancholy. Bosola is melancholy, Antonio and the Duchess have become so, the, Cardinal is haunted by it, and Ferdinand goes mad with it. The unity of tone is accomplished. The greatness of The Duches of Malfi lies in its atmosphere, poetry and two or three superior scenes.

One distinguished mark of Webster's characters is their indi-vidualism. The Cardinal, Bosola, The Duchess and Ludovico are all es-sentially individualists, The Duchess decides to remarry even after threat. Once in love she values the virtue of Antonio, keeps her secrets. In prison she shows dignity and courage, displays a stocial forbearance and fortitude. She is unmoved even in the face of death. Essentially she tries to assert herself, liberate from the heredity fettered traditions, and associate herself with the trends of the Renaissance already in vogue.

Lodvico and Bosola symbolise the absence of order in Webster's universe. Antonio's words: "death and disease through the whole and spread:", describe the atmosphere of the play. We don't for a moment believe that when Ferdinand and the cardinal are dead the state of anarchy would return to a condition of health. In Shakespeare as we are reminded of things once were, we feel that evil complexion, that has come upon the world is only recurrent visitation and not a permanent darkness. In Webster never has the world been golden. The duchess; before her wooing Antonio has a sense of advancing into darkness. "Wish me good speed". When we see one of Shakespeare's major tragedies we juxtapose the darkness of events with the light that could conceivably be but in Webster there is no possibility.

Antonio is a man of thought and not of action. He is Webster's mouthpiece. Sometimes he performs the role of chorus, sometimes he expresses Webster's opinions. In Bosola we have a fusion of malcontent. He is a mediator as well as a tool. He is both cynical and melancholic, but he is a Renaissance scholar, a psychologist, a man of clear thinking and sometimes sensible to goodness.

The Duchess in her opposition to her brothers is the symbol of life, as they are the symbols of death, and the play maintains a tension between the opposing forces of life and death, with the values of life at last triumphant. These symbolic functions of the Duchess and her brothers are carried in the poetic imagery of their lines. The Duchess is always human whereas the brothers are ' beastly'. If she is a 'robin' they are 'blood hounds', tigers and viper. Ferdinand, the cardinal and Bosola, while he serves them'; are the destroyers of life and the imagery that Webster uses is of the destructive fore of nature. The play tries to assert life and orders. Thus at her death the Duchess can assert. "I am Duch-ess of Malfi still"

Essays: On the Duchess of Malfi

(I) The Duchess of Malfi as a Revenge play:

The Revenge play was in vogue in the Elizabethan age and the Jacobean age. It was established by Seneca in his plays, and was introduced into the Elizabethan Theatre by Thomas Kyd, whose Spanish Tragedy served as a model for later writers. Webster was one of the last to enter the revenge tradition. When he wrote revenge plays the end of the revenge convention was clearly in sight. Its hold on the public was on the wane.

The Revenge play gets its name from the main spring of the action. Revenge of wrong, real or supposed is the principal motive. Revenge is here, not conceived as a wild kind of justice but as a sacred and solemn duty which may not be neglected.

The execution of revenge involves a number of murders, naturally demanding the representation of horror, in human deeds of cruelty, diabolical intrigues, abnormal and terrifying mental conditions and sense of extreme physical suffering. This therefore demands a melodramatic character, though an expert dramatist would make the play rise to a higher level and avoid a melodramatic atmosphere.

Seneca's stoical philosophy underlies the conception of the revenge play. A moral idea governs it. It teaches man to face suffering and death with calmness and courage, and thereby attain the integrity of the human soul.

The Douches of Malfi has almost all the ingredients of a revenge play. Duchess remarries against the wishes of her brothers. Worst of all, it is a secret marriage, giving scope for vulgar talk. The two brothers take this as an insult to the family and they take revenge. Horrors too, We have in abundance, at least ten violent deaths, an offer of a dead man's hand to the Duchess by her brother, a show of the waxen figures of Antonio and the Children, the chorus of the madman, the murder of Cariola as she bites, the strangling of the Duchess and stabbing in the fifth act. As William Archer would say Webster drenches "the stage with blood."

Seneca's idea as to how suffering and death are to be met by the hero or heroine finds full expression here. The Duchess .is an em-bodiment of stoical virtues. She is innocent, gentle and fearless and has a remarkable integrity of character. With fortitude and self-possession she faces suffering and death. We have two sets of characters here, one good the other evil, and the moral conception that governs it is exclu-sively Senecan. The vicious are punished, justice established and moral order restored.

Yet one can discern many aspects, which distinguished the play from the usual revenge plays. Traditionally the motive revenge had a certain sanctity attached to, but no such sanctity is associated with the revenge motive in Webster's play. The avengers here are villains, and their deed is an inexplicable and monstrous wrong' (Frederick Allen).

Webster's chief interest lies not in the execution of revenge but in the chief characters

of the play, the psychological changes they undergo, the thoughts and passions acting upon them and the way they developed. The revenge motive therefore does not hold the centre of interest, though the action springs from a revenge motive, which appears very weak for after the death of the Duchess, Ferdinand wonders why he killed her, whether it was to get her "infinite mass of treasures.' With William Archer one may doubt whether Webster was sure of his characters' motives. But we have to do this with a little diffidence for F.L. Lucus asserts that "We find it difficult to imagine the violence of family pride in the sixteenth century Spaniard or Italian". So to the Elizabethans it was all clear; they had no doubts and Webster quite sure Clifford Leech too feels that unequal marriages and secret marriages were reasons satisfying to Webster's contemporaries, for they believed it an offence, to the family.

Modern psychoanalysis is of the view that the motive in Ferdinand is sexual jealousy.

Whatever be the motive, the Duchess of Malfi remains a play in the revenge tradition, or a play very much influenced by that tradition. Webster introduced a change in the technique and structure of the re-venge play. He reshaped and remoulded it raising it to a higher artistic, moral and spiritual level, making ft a play for all times and true in any setting.

2. The dramatic art of Webster

Webster is characterisation, with those subtle and fascinating insights into human nature, his exquisite poetry, the skilful handling of horror and the greatness of his moral vision make him a great artist for all times, less : only tp a few of the greatest kind of English literature

Webster's characters are all psychological studies, profound probings into the working of the human mind. "He touches the depths of human nature in ways that need the subtlest analysis for their proper explanations" (J.A. Symmons) Webster has created some of the finest characters in English drama. The Duchess is a unique creation. Her in-nocence, graciousness, courage, endurance, dignity and majesty invite comparison with some of the finest of Shakespeare's women. Sometimes she looks more impressive than some of Shakespeares' heroines. On the one hand, if we have the duchess, the embodiment of all that is virtuous, on the other we have the Cardinal, the incarnation of evil, a Machiavillian Villain, absolutely devoid of anything human. In him we have a better ego, a character who represents evil in its most horrifying manner, in its diverse forms and dimensions.

Webster's treatment of horror is an improvement upon traditional methods; not piling horror on horror to create sensationalism or melodrama but turn them into something sublime. This is no more re-pulsive as it sometimes became with other dramatists, but tragic and noble in certain respects. One is reminded of Charles Lamb:

"..... to weave a horror skillfully, to touch a soul to the quick, to lay upon fear as much as much as it can bear, to wean and weary a life till it is ready to drop, and then step in with mortal instruments, to take its last forfeit; this only Webster can do.

The richness and splendour to Webster's poetry, which adorns the play throughout and has a lot do with the brilliant dramatic effect of the various scenes, must not go unmentioned. Both his admirers and de-tractors agree on this. His writings are full of literary power and verbal felicity. "In the deepest and highest and purest qualities of tragic poetry Webster stands nearer to Shakespeare", says Swinburne. Even William Archer; hostile always to Webster, yields here: his play finds robed in regal purple of pure poetry'. The Duchess of Malfi is full of passages rich in their poetic splendour, imaginative beauty and vitality, (give examples from the text).

One charge usually levelled against Webster and particularly about the Duchess of Malfi, is (he looseness of construction. One reason behind this attack is the fact that Webster never cared for any particular canon of dramatic art. Secondly many felt that the fifth act in the 'Duchess of Malfi' as an irrelevant addition or as an anticlimax. According to Willam

Archer, "With the death of the Duchess, the interest of the play is over...but the plays still drags its festering length through another act" F.L. Lucas felt that "the weakness of the play lies clearly in the plot. It lives too long, when it outlives the heroine". One has to concede that the effect in the theatre would have been more effective, had the play ended with the death of the heroine. But the author's moral concern was so strong that he dared to face all adverse criticism against that. As Frederick Allen points out he used to pursue to the end of his theme of sin and retribution his supreme end appears to be the vindication of moral truth..."

Websters mo. l philosophy is summed up in the final lines of his two tragedies. "Let guilty men remember their black deeds. Do lean on crutches made of slender reeds". (The white Devil)

"Integrity of life is fame's best friend which nobly, beyond death shall crown the end" (The Duchess of Malfi.)

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RICHARD B. SHERIDAN
THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

English Drama After the Elizabethans

English Drama underwent a sudden change after the Elizabe-thans. The unsurpassed Shakespeare was laid to rest in 1616; Ben Jonson bid farewell in 1637. English drama fell into the dark pitches of artificiality, excess of horror tragedy and a fake tragicomedy. The new audience loved scenes of artificiality horror and uncontrolled sentimen-tality.

The political scene also underwent a sea change. King Charles I was defeated in the Civil War and finally executed. The Puritans came to rule and centers of pleasure and enjoyment were closed down in 1642. Romantic .England was dead and gone. The highly imaginative people suffered from suffocation due to inordinate suppression. Some very fortunate artists crossed the Channel and staged some plays in the Continent, esp. France and Germany. The Puritan rule did not last long, Charles II, the son of the executed king, was invited to to English throne and Monarchy got restored in 1660. Charles II had been brought up at Paris which was the centre of World culture and he was exposed to the blessings and curses of art and culture.

The free life he had been enjoying had influenced him so much that he decided to be the patron of all forms of art. Charles II had sincere love of theatre and the popular desire for art got coupled with it; and the theatres were re-opened. The result was an immediate overflow of dramatic activity. But in the meantime English society had been changed. The imaginative romantic English remained no more. In its place a new generation had crept in.

The Restoration Drama

With the new generation, the field of Drama was also renewed. A new type, of theatre came into existence. The old, open air public theatres got remodelled into new, in-door ones. The stage got well deco-rated and settings were largely used. Boys were acting the roles of women in Elizabethan drama. Charles II had seen women on the conti-nental stage and he decided to introduce actresses in English Drama. Ladies or girls higher families remained away, but ambitious pretty girls in of poorer ones were ready to act.

The play-goers got divided into two. The rich ones went to comfortable Private Theatres which charged high prices; the poor ones went to ordinary ones. In the ordinary theatres melodrama was staged for the poor commoners. The middle class remained reluctant to visit either of these for religious and moral reasons.

The Heroic Drama

The Heroic Drama was popular only for a time ji Restoration England and usually written in heroic couplets. The usual themes for this type of plays were love and Honour. The hero of this type was not one with flesh and blood, he was not like the Shakespeare hero too. He was endowed with supernatural qualities. He was brave and boastful. On the other hand the heroines were virtuous. The language and the style were also boastful. These were the chief characteristics of the heroic Drama which gained popularity in the very beginning of the Restoration period.

The Comedy of Manners

Farcical humour and comedy of humours paved the way for the Comedy of Manners. Reflecting the English society these plays were keen on pleasures and amorous advances.

The target of attack happened to be the upper classes and dialogues trespassed the frontiers of decency, Thus, in short, the written for of the play degenerated to the level of pornography, it was the way of the world and not many contemporaries felt offended.

The Comedies of Manners were praised because of the attitude of the English society of those years. Almost all of the conventional habits and systems were questioned. Religious dogma was overlooked and the esteemed ideas of the bonds of matrimony was seen with contempt. Then morality could play no role successfully. Transient elements were given much importance and nothing remained immortal.

As these influenced the state all notions of morality were set aside. The characters were endowed with flirtations which crossed all barriers of civility. The female ones were ready to got to any extent.

Among the famous dramatists, William Wycherly was regarded as a moralist as he spoke against the foolishness of the society. But William Congreve got a prepetual renown because he stood between puritanism and extravagance.

The Sentimental Comedy

As Comedy of Manners paid more attention to laugh at the follies of man, the Sentimental Comedy tried to describe the Goodness of human nature. This type of plays became popular in the late Seventeenth and early Eighteenth centuries. The distressed middle class was presented on the stage and it evoked the sympathies of the audience. Thus it gave nothing to provoke a smile, but caused tears to flow. This type is always known as the drama of sensibility, which ends happily and depicts the characters with simplicity. The heroes of such plays acted from a sense of humour and responded to the sensibility of others.

As far as comedy is concerned, the popularity gained by this type was a loss. Comedy is to raise laughter, but Sentimental Comedy was didactic. The Sentimentality comedies generally highlighted false sentimentalism. The basis for sentimentally was that man could be de-prived of his senses. Colley Gibber, Sir. Richard Steele, John Kelley etc. are the noteworthy dramatists of this school.

Reviving the Old

The Sentimental Comedy gave a dry feeling to the majority who went to the theatre for amusement. Thus a revival of the Restoration Comedy became inevitable. Complementing the general trend many stepped in. Among those, two were really successful Goldsmith and Sheridan. Goldsmith did not go along the style of Comedy of Manners, although he wrote plays for amusement. But Sheridan tried to bring the characteristics of Comedy of Manners in his plays. Both are thus called the leaders of anit-sentimental movement.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816)

Richard Brinsley Sheridan was born in Dublin in 1751. Thomas Sheridan, his father, was the manager of the Royal Theatre of Dublin. Later, Thomas Sheridan ..migrated to London in pursuit of greener pas-tures. After the death, of his wife-he went to Bath and settled there.

At Bath the Sheridans became friends with the Linleys. The in-terest of the members of both the families lay in arts and it deepened the friendship. Among the Linleys there was beautiful maiden called the 'Maid of Bath' Many young men earnestly desired to be her husband or lover. Among them were rascals too. One of them was a certain Major Mathews. He was persecuting the maid with amorous advances. She got bored of it and decided to leave Bath to escape from them. Sheridan was ready to accompany her on her exile and both of them went to France. In France the maid desired to become a nun. When she held discussion with Sheridan on the matter he advised her to enjoy family life and get rid or her wish- to enter a convent. At last they got married in the presence of a priest, but secretly. The young Sheridar left her withan elderly English doctor and his wife and went on hunting for livelihood. Meanwhile Mr. Linley knew of the fact and found her at the doctor's and brought

her back to Bath. In the course of time Sheridan had reconciled with the Linleys and he bacame a welcome visitor.

Major Matthews took Sheridan as a real rival and challenged him for a duel, which opened way for a series of duels. Anyhow at last, Sheridan married her again in public, accepted by the members of both the families - Linleys and Sheridans. Sheridan was not qualified for any job and so he decided to try a hand in the field of literature, he wrote a pi-ay that proved to be unsuccessful. The Rivals in 1775. In the following year he remodelled the first play and in 1777 he wrote two plays one of which happened to be his masterpiece. The School for Scandal. He went on as a man of letters only for two more years. In 1780 he entered the Parliament and remained in politics till his death. As a Member of the Parliament he proved his mastery in oratory. His magnificent speech lasted for five hours and twenty minutes which happened to be an attack on Hastings. He became poor, after having lost all he had together with his wife. The second wife wanted to be extravagant and worsened the situation. Forsaken by the society, he breathed his last in 1816, but was honoured with a decent burial at the Westminster Abbey.

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

Introduction

The School for Scandal was produced on the stage in 1777. This play, as seen in comparison with the other plays of the period, was much successful because it was a bright star in a dark firmament. People were almost bored with the sentimentality and it revived the balanced emotion of the Comedy of Manners. It could capture the mind of the audience because it was an excellent social satire. Besides Sheridan could get the co-operation of almost all famous actors and ac-tresses: and on the very first presentation it was received enthusiasti-cally. We read that Sheridan brought two of his playlets together to produce this play. Sheridan became famous with this play being a rare blending of dramatic talent and stage sense.

Plot

As we know from the title this play is about scandal mongers. In it we can see the slanderers and their final humiliation at the hands or ordinary people. The first two acts of the play portray their activities. False reports and documents are used to malign the reputation of others. Lady Sneerwell happens to be the lea4er of the mongers. We may not find the first two, acts action -packed because the backbiting of the characters causes the play to go at a slow pace.

The other characters, such as Joseph, Charles, Sir Peter and Sir Oliver remain in an inter-wo:en state to give a very perfect picture and to complete the circle of plot. Joseph and the exposition of his villainy give much scope for amusement.

Lady Sneerwell is exposed well. Her passionate love with Charles bring her close to the ordinary people, thus building the gap between the world of the slanderers and the world of ordinary people. To prove the villain to Joseph, Sir Oliver is brought in disguise. Together with it the good nature of an ordinary man is also revealed. Lady Teazle, a member of the Scandlows College, persuades her husband to stand with the slanderers to save-his own reputation. Accordingly he visits Lady Sneerwell. Again he doubts his wife some illicit relationship with Charles. One the other hand, Joseph is a friend of all slander-mongers. And he tries to seduce Lady Teazle.

In Act IV, the villainy of Joseph is revealed. Together with it in the following act, the two worlds are made to meet: the slander-mongers and those of the ordinary level. Thus a unity of atmosphere is maintained.

The underlying theme of the play is, never believe what is said. Sir Oliver succeeds in the play because he holds this theory. He is not guided by the general opinions, instead he tries to get direct proof for them, and so he ventures on disguise to inspect the loyalty of his

heirs. On the other hand, we find Sir Peter easily led by general opinions and being in the dark always. Towards the close of the play we find that the judgements of the infallible are wrong

Characterization

Elizanethans were famous for their chracterization. But Comedy of Manners attends more to wit and dialogue. The same tradition is held by Sheridan too and we don't find a complex characterization in his plays. Sheridan prove himself not to be a genious in characterization and we have to see the old things again presented on the stage. But he has given an additional grace to the old things and they don't bore us much. The good natured wealthy uncle, an old husband with a young wife, a levelheaded pretty heroine etc. are not new things.

Sheridan's characters represent various classes. The individuality of the characters is not significant. In other words they are flat characters.

The names given to characters by Sheridan suggest the nature of the respective characters Lady Sneerwell sneers at others. Sir Backbite is a fine backbite; teazle teases: Snake proves to be a viper etc.

1) Joseph Surface

Joseph Surfce is not an extraordinary character. The Usual Hypocrite who appears in most of the French plays manifests himself in Joseph. The moral hero of the sentimental comedy is laughed at by the characteriztion of Joseph. He appears to be virtuous and his fine sentiments hide his viallainy. Sir Peter suffers much from this villainy, to him Joseph is a model youth and when everything comes down to the terra firma, he is at a loss. Sir Peter is deceived witht the moral talk and serious demeanour. On the other hand, Lady Sneerwell has understood Joseph very well for she says to Snake, "I have found him out a longtime since I know him to be artful, selfish and malicious in short a sentimental knave....."

Joseph is unscrupulous and he makes love to two women simultaneously Maria and Lady Reazle. He loves Maria for her money and Lady Teazle for a different reason. In act IV scene III we find him explaining himself that he always desires to seduce her. Her finds an unusual ethics in molesting her virtue that thenceforth she would be ready evermore to humour her huswband, Sir Peter. But Sir Petrer's arrival makes him frustrated. In the same scene his villainy is exposed. It is ironical that Sir Peter whoregarded Joseph to be the embodiment of all virtues becomes the first to discover his villainy.

Sir Oliver explains to the audience that the much advertised virtue is hypocrisy. Joseph's effort to prove that Charles is in love with Lady Sneerwell has also turned useless. Snake, whose support is expected by him in this tells the truth; and Joseph has to leave with Lady Sneerwell. Although Joseph is a "farfetched character, he causes much for the amusement of the audience.

2). Charles

Charles is said to be very opposite to his brother Joseph. Although he is sound basically he shows no sigh of virtue. As Joseph is deceitful, Charles is open and sincere. Joseph stays away from the attractions of this world; but Charles is ready to enjoy the pleasures of his life. He finds only two a friends Maria and Rowley. Both are ordinary characters socially praised ones and persone of high stand as well as the scandal mongers are kept away. As Charles is basically good, all charges against him are proved baseless; Charles is ready to help the needy and to love those who helped him in need.

Charles is an original character. unlike Joseph people can meet such a Charles now and then in the society. The enemy against Xharles is his own personality; his virtuous and frank nature is the enemy. We are made to admire him for what he doesn't do.

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3) Lady Teazle

Lady Teazle becomes a controversial figure although she is graceful and elegant. She is not attracted by the charming life of the city. At a time she is scolded for her extravagance by Sir Peter pleasingly she knows her contempt for my authority!" But, to the audeience, she appears graceful even when she is disobedient. WHen Sir Peter ridicules her saying that she ha sbecome of good standard only after becoming his wife, she mildly requests of him one more favour to make her his widow and it completely disarms Sir Peter.

Lady Teazle has a weak mind and a shallow intellect. She is easily decceived by Joseph with his cunningness. She cannot see into Joseph's mind as she is invited to his library. She has been made ready to offer: her virtue by the villain. Then Sir Peter come there to rescue her.

She is a member of the school of Scandal. But we find no venom in her. She says, when I am say ill- natured thing it is out of pure good humour and I take it for granted, they deal exactly in the same manner with me". When she comes to know of the difficulties with the school 'the readily leaves it saying ..... begs leave to return the diploma they gave her..... and kills character no longer.

The Story of the Play

This play is supposed to be taking place in London. There is a school for scandal mongers, presided over by Lady Sneerwell. The occupation of the members is to tarnish the reputation of socially accepted persons. Besides spreading false stories, they are particular that they would get into press too. Each one pursues his/her own way of maligning.

Lady Tezle and Sir Peter Teazle form a humorous couple in the context. Lady Teazle was brought up in the country and she goes after the fashions of the city life. Many a quarrel goes on between the husband and wife even then she is inspired to go on by the members of the school. Sir Peter has got three wards Joseph and Charles who are brothers, and Maria, a rich heiress. joseph is extremely polite and shows off high sentiments. But it is proved to be mere hypocrisy, But he can win the heart of many including Sir Peter. On the other hand, his brother Charles is an ordinary character. He is not ready to show off things. He likes to be seen as he is. Then we see Rowley, the old steward of their father. This steward can read the minds of the people better thant the people of high status: Joseph desires to Mary Maria for her money and Sir Peter to advises her to marry Joseph, the ideal youth. But Maria loves Charles and Sir Peter will never allow her to marry Charles for he is supposed to be a rake. Joseph gets Lady Teazle on to his side to prevent the marriage between Charles and maria. Besides lady Teazle goes to the extent of spreading the news of an illegitimate love between Charles and herself.

Joseph and Charles get their sustenance from Sir Oliver a wealthy uncle. Sir Oliver surface is a sound character and he understands human mind well. Although he is informed of the bad behaviou od Charles by Sir Peter, he is not ready to devour what he hears. He suspects Josepgh to be a hypocrite. As he was not known toJoseph or Charles in person, he approaches them individually as a poor relation, with a new name Stanely. Although Stanley finds Charles surrounded by gamblers and tipplers, he is happy to hear Charles expressing his gratitude to his unknown uncle, Sir Oliver. Then Stanely goes to Joseph who is not ready to help that poor relation. On enquiry about the benefactor lends only some silly things and nomoney On hearing this Sir Oliver becomes conscious of his hypocrisy and is ready to withdraw all his help to him.

Mean while in an attempt to seduce Lady Teazle invites her to the library. Although Joseph has expressed his ardent love to her many a time, Lady Teazle has taken the love as a platonic one. When she is with in his library he requests her to surrender her virtue to him. It will enable her to make her husband more dynamic. She is really in trouble. But Sir Peter come to the library to inform Joseph of the illicit relationship of his wife

with Charles. This hinders Joseph and Lady Teazle is saved.

Without much delay Charles happens to reach there. He is intimated; of the charger that Sir Peter has against him. He denies it. Sir Peter has been hiding when Joseph asid it to Charles who later finds the hinding. Sir Peter and he is pulled out. A visitor comes there for Joseph and he goes out. In the meantime both Charles and Sir Peter discover Lady Teazle hiding behind a curtain. Now all the villainy of Joseph is revealed. This news reached the School of Scandal-mongers. They rush to Sir Peter to know the reality about all the rumours. Sir Peter turns all of them away for he has been furious of all the happenings.

Sir Oliver comes to his nephew as Sir Oliver himself. Although the brothers cannot recognize their uncle, Sir Peter,lady Teazle, Maria and Rowley come there and explain everything to them. Lady Teazle proposes for a marriage between Charles and Maria which is opposed by Joseph saying that Charles has been in love with Lady Sneerwell. But to his dismay, Lady Sneerwell reaches there to substantiate the charge of Joseph. But her own accomplice Snake unveils the villainy of hers and thus the last attempt by Joseph to prevent the marriage between Charles and Maria is turned down. Thus, in the end Charles and Maria are to be married on the next day; and Joseph walks away with Lady Sneerwell.

Mahjor Questions and Answers

1) Discuss the relevance of the title of the play

The title, 'The School for Scandal' is coined with stire. It ridicules the irresponsible and venomous scandalmongers in the society. The school is presented, in funny manner and the fate waiting for each member of the school is presented satirically. A triangular love and the sad state of an old mail with a young wife are presented.

Joseph, a socially good character is made to be hypocritical and scandal mongering. On the other hand, his brother, Charles who is ridiculed by the society as a rake, is to appear as a really virtuous character. In the words of Sir Oliver, the school is a set of malicious, prudent gossips, both male and female, who murder characters to kill time; and will rob a young fellow of good name...."

Lady Teazle is introduced in such a way that the happiness she would derive as a faithful wife is lost to her. Stories are spread about Sir Peter's discovery of Lady Teazle in the library of Joseph. In act V, Sc 2 we find the members of the school running to Sir Peter's to know the reality if the happenings in the library.

Thus the play is centered on the activities of the scandalmongers. Together with their spreading of fresh stories, the incidents gear up in the play. Though we may not meet them on the stage in the middle of the play they remain behind the curtain always guiding all the ugly activities. With the Epilogue of Lady Teazle the last nail, on the coffin of scandalmongers is driven.

2) Discuss

'Sheridan's play: a Comedy a situation and verbal virtuosity'Answer; Sheridan creates scenes and situations in order to drive home pleasure to the audience. His witty and humorous characterization and dialogue pave a thorough fare for a complex effect of emotions and feekings. The practice of the art of scandal mongerings is brought to such an effect that the audience may not pay attention to the story of the play but to the events presented on the stage.

The presentation of the contrastive existence of Joseph and Charles itself is a great situation. The 'rake' is proved to be really virtuous and the 'idea' is proved to be a 'rake'. The published exterior of Joseph is presented to gloruiously that his failure would be from a height. And Charles is suppressed to the bottom so that he coming up should be of great value.

The colourful presenttion of the school for scandal and Sir Peter's turning also give

opportunities to think and act. Lady Teazle, the housewife, is put into a cornered situation by the dramatist. She is shallow witted and is led to comic situation in the library. She is made to consent to the extremities which she has not thought of even.

Sir Oliver i sput on a high pedestal. In contrast to Sir Peter he is practical, He is ready to come to his nephews to test them in disguise and he wins in the attempt. Even in him critics have found an over reacher when he is sent away from the house of his own nephews. But the funny situation is saved with the coming of others.

3) How far is the social reflected in the play?

Sheridan has taken the English society of his own time as the background for his play. The upperclass of the society is taken to make a good ground for the play. The young fellows who have nothing serious to do, the housewives who are not keen on the affairs on their families etc. are ample proofs for the statement.

The characters presented are gifted with much leisure and money. A rich old man happens to marry a country bred young girl, nd her plignt against odds are presented humorously. When the young wife goes after fashions, the old husband is at a loss. And when he catches her hiding behind the curtain at Joseph's although humour reaches a height, the audience is made to sympathize with the rich old man.

The rich had nothing serious to do and so they dwell on silly things. We see Lady Sneerwell, a rich widow, having nothing else to do, carrying On scandal mongering. The chief occupations of the rich who remained idle were scandal mongering, seducing girls, drinking, gambling etc. Such irregularities are presented colourfully by Sheridan in this play. They indulge in gossip and speak of eloping pairs, fashionable dressings etc.

Hypocritical moralists and self-styled persons are laughed at by Sheridan. Joseph is an example for such ones. Pretending to be a man of principles, he proves his integrity with evil nature. On the other hand, the few of the society, who are ridiculed by many and accepted by a very few, stand out gloriously, Sheridan has written this play for them is endowed with typical characteristics of such essentially good people.

Some other important Aspects

1) The play as an Anti-sentimental Comedy
2) The school for Scandal : A Reflection of Manners
3) Maria, a distinctive heroine
4) This play as a mixture of Comedy of Manners are sentimenta Comedy
5) Sheridan a theatrical artist.

SECTION -C
PROSE AND FICTION
OF DISCOURSE
(FRANCIS BACON)

1.0 Objectives

At the end of this Unit, you should be able to

(i) form an idea of the multi-faceted personality of Francis Bacon:

(ii) understnd the salient features of the Essay as a distinct literary genre (form) and

(iii) appreciate the various qualities of Bacon's prose style.

1.1 Age of Francis Bacon

Francis Bacon (1561-1626) flourished in the age of Queen Elizabeth comprising the latter half of the 16th century. Besides beihng a nest of singing birds including Shakespeare and Marlowe, the Elizabethan Age witnessed the blossoming of the Renaissance as also the evolution of English prose. It was an age marked by intense activity in various fields like exploration, navigation, colonization, art, learning, literature and what not.

Please refer toany standard book on the History of English literature and find out for yourself why the Elixabathen Age has been aptly described as the "Golden Age" in the right perspective.

Let us familiarise ourselves with the basic facts of Bacon's life.

1.2 Francis Bacon: A Short Biographical Sketch

Francis bacon, Braon Verulam and Viscount St. ALbans, was born at York House, Strand, in London on 22nd January 1561. He hailed from an aristocratic family, being the younger son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal. His father was an outstanding lawyer and a shhrewd statesman, one of Queen Elizabeth's gavourite ministers. His mother was the daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke, and sister in law of Sir, William Cecil (Lord Burghley). She was a lady of unusual eddiciency and a strong character. Thus we see that Bacon was born with a silver spoon in his mouth.

As a boy, Bacon's wit and precocity (unusual mental ability) caught the attention of the queen, who used jestingly to address him as he 'young lord keeper'. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, and in preparation for a career of statesmanship was sent to Paris in the suite of the English ambassador to acquire further educative experience. His father's death in 1579 threw the teenaged Bacon (he was eighteen years old then) upon his own resources. He embraced (took up) law as his profession. He was called to the Bar in 1582 and became Queen's Counsel in 1589. However he did not fave very well and remained without promotion duringthe rest of Queen Elizabeth's reign (rule)

It was after the coronation of the next monarch James, I, that baon sky rocketed his way escalating posts and positions in life, being a time - server and sycophant (flatterer) he mastered that art of ingratiating himself with (winning the favour of) the king. Thus he was knighted in 1603 became Attorney General in 1614; Privy Councillor in 1616, Lord Keeper in 1617, Lord Chancellor nd Bron Verulam in 1618. Viscount St. Albans in 1621. Truly enviable public you agree?

One of the paradoxes or ironics of life is that good things never last. Bacon's meteoric phenomenal rise was soon followed by a sudden. Catastrophic crash. He was charged, before the House of Lords, with the acceptance of brides n his official capacity, and the adoption of fraudulent. (dishonest) means for benefiting his friends, at the expense of the state. However Baon offered no de4fence and was sentenced to a huge fine, imprisonment during the King's pleasure and perpetual banishment from Parliamnet and Court. Fortunately for him, this sentence was never implemented and ultimately he received a royal pardon.

Bacon spent the few remaining years of his life in scholarly pursuits (interests) including scientific research and philosophical speculation, He died in 1626 from complications arising from a cold caught while he was trying out a scientific experiment. Stuffing the body of a freshly killed bird with ice to find out how long ice could preserve flesh from decay! He was buried at St.Michael's Church. St Albans Indeed Bacon and eventful life.

Let us briefly take a look at some of Bacon's writings.

1.3 The works of Bacon : A short Survey

Bacon was a prolific writer. His forte (strength) was prose, but he dabbled, (tried) rather unsuccessfully, in poetry too. He wrote both in Latin and in English. The bulk of his writings, through not necessarily the more significant part, is written in Latin; for he laboured under the mistaken notion that Latin would survive being a classical tongue, whereas English, A "vulgar language" would became extinct. Let us enumerate some of Bacon's major works.

A) The Advancement of learning (1605)

A great prose work and a contribution to Bacon's scientific scheme, this book is of significance since through it, the author became the first to strike the note of utilitarianism in learning.

B) The New Atlantis (1614-17)

Often classe with Thomas Moore's Utopia, this book was published posthumously (ater Bacon's death) in 1627

C) History of Henry VII (1621)

This book is an excellent instance of the application of the scientific method to the writing of history.

D) Instauratio Magna

This book was to be a comprehensive treatise containing the whole of the grand scheme of Bacon's Philosophy.

E) Normal Organum (1620)

This is the most serious and learned of his books. But despite the above mentioned learned, scientific and philosophical treatises Bacon's appeal both to the Common reader and the serious student of literature alike rests on hi Essays. So let us discuss Bacon's Essays, and their various aspects in the following sections.

1.4 The essays

In his life time Bacon published three editions of essays. He brought out the first edition of his Essays in 1597. It comprised only ten essays including of Discourse (which you will be studying in detail in unit 2) J. Max Patrick remarks that *Prudence, the art* of getting on in the world, was the main theme of these ten brief essays. These "fragments" as Bacon himself termed them are groupings of pithy sayings and maxims slightly exoanded to from a commomplace book. The Baconian essay of 1597 consisted of a string of incipient (starting) paragraphs related to a subject such as Studies, Discourse, Suitors, Expense etc. The expression is terse and aphoristic (brief and effective) each little division being independent of the others structurally.

In 1612 Bacon reprinted the original Essays in a slightly expnded for and added twenty

nine new ones. One essay entitled *Of Honour and Reputation* which appeared in the first edition was eliminted so that this edition consisted of 38 essays in all. The twenty nine new topics such as Religion, Death, Empire and Fortune were introduced under the descriptive title Essays, or Councels Civil and Moral, and the style was made more periodic.

Finally in 1625, Bacon published his third enlarged edition of essays. Twenty more esays were added and most of the previous 38 essays whih had been enlarged. The essay of Honour and Reputation which had been deleted (eliminated) from the second edition was reprinted in the third edition which comprised 58 essays, in all. The style in the essays in the final edition is even less contracted than in the previous ones. Transitions are eased, coherence is improved, and illustrated material is inserted.

Bacon's essays are slight in form and appearance but Bacon took them seriously. This is evident from the fact that he repeatedly revised them and added to them.

Let us now try to understand what the essay meant to Bacon.

1.5 Bacon's conception of the Essay

Bacon was the principal prose writer of his times and his essays are the best known of his writing. Critics hail him as the "Father of the Essay" in England, and rightly so. He borrowed the term "essay" from the French writer Montaigne whose Essays had appeared seventeen years before the earliest of Bacon's essays. Perhaps Bacon must have realized the potential of this new genre to express his various thoughts, observations,, ideas, and impression to the learned public.

Etymologically speaking, the word "essay" or "assay" means a trial or an attempt an effort lacking in thoroughness of finish, being tentative and ill-organised. Bacon described his own essays as dispered meditation's indicating thereby their lack of method and proper organisation. They are, acoording to him, "certain brief notes set down raher significantly then curiously". Bacon was a public figures and a practical thinker, who had the habit of jotting down his observations and thoughts. He thereby regarded the essay as a "receptacle for detached thoughts", a fact which was illustrated by his own compositions. in fact he ranks his essays as mere recreation in comparison to his serious treatises. As Hugh Walker points out; "Bacon is the first of the English essayists. He remains for the sheer mass and weight of gebius, the greatest".

Though he borrowed the term from the Frenchman Montaigne. Bacon put the genre (literary type) to entirely new purposes. However with the passage of time. His conception of the essay enderwent certain discernible (easily noticeable) modifications. Accordingly his prose style also changed from being ascetically (simply) succinct (clear) to being richer and mellower. Moreover the growing popuolarity of his essays during his life - time convinced him of their worth and appeal so that he devoted much time to improving them. In fact, he even brought out a Latin version of his English essays.

Let us consider the topics and subjects that Bacon dealt with in his essays.

1.6 Themes of Bacon's Essays

Bacon was extraordinarily discursive, in his interests, that is he took all knowledge for his province, and while several contemporaries excelled him in depth of insight into subjects which he had specially studied few in any age have supposed in the capacity to utter pregnant thoughts on almost any theme. Along with a tremendous fund of bookish knowledge, Bacon possessed a vast treasure of the sort of practical knowledge which concerns itself with the actul issues of life and the affairs of men.

Indeed Bacon's essays are compendiums (brief accounts) of the author's practical wordly wisdom. His interests and themes are not limited to any one particular field of life. He, sets down what the title of any essay happens to suggest to him at the time of composition.Thus he writes on such abstract themes as Truth, Death, Revenge, Nobility etc. then passes on to mundane (wordly) matters like Parents and Children,

Travel, Marriage and Single Life. He deals with political, moral, social educational, phiolosophical, and intellectual themes as evidenced by the several titles of his essays. Taken together, Bacon's Essays are an epitome (short summary) of wisdom, and his readers can always furn to them for counsel and guidance in various aspects of life.

Let us try to understand the structure of framework of Bacon's essays.

1.7 Structure of Bacon's Essays

Bacon's earliest essays particulalry when read in the original, universal versions seem little more than collections of maxim like sentences: sometimes actual quotations, more often memorable epigrammatic expression of traditional or universal sentiments. His essays have aptly been described as Aphoristic Essay. An aphorism, by tghe way, is short witty saying or a maxim.

However brief Bacon's essays may bbe they always have a complex variety of matter. This is seen even in hiq, slightest pieces where, instead of elaborating one single idea, he brings in one idea after another. It was no easy task to bring order to this complexity.

None of the ten essays in the 1597 volume has a reasoned, integrated structure. Each essay consist of a single long paragraph; Within it a number of points are developed in a few pithy sentences each. There is no continuity; we pass from point in a disjoined way. Openings and endings are often abrupt. Now and then there are hints of a formal structure but it often appears as though Bacon has merely laid out on a string all the separate aphorisms and observations on a single theme from his common place book, Between 1597 and 1612, Bacon's sense of order improved steadily through exercise. His essays in the final version 1625 acquire still more coherence.

Another structural peculiarity of Bacon's Essays which deserves mention is the frequency with which the author repeats himself. A complete list of parallel passages would show many of his essays are compilations, crefully selected and strung together with just enough new matter to give them consistency and connection and to fit them in to their new place. He has gems of thought and language, but he does not scatter them about with the uncalculating profusion of Shakespeare, but rather like those who are spending their stock with care doing (distributing) it out. With measure and method to make its contents fo as far as they can.

Try to read some of Bacon's Essays and find out how the above mentioned features of structure and theme are true.

W.H. Hudson rightly observes that a good book is born of the heart and brain of the author. Naturally the Essay are aprojection of Bacon's personality. So let us spend some time and space trying to understand the multifaceted character of the Elizabethan prose writer.

1.8 Bacon's Temperament, character and personality

Francis Bacon is a human paradox being a combination of a profound intellect and a mediocre character. He was indeed a complex personality, an enigmatic (puzzling) character. He was both noble and mean high and low, philosophic and materialistic truth seeking and false. His zest (interest) for grandeur was colossal, but he also cherished reading in private and retiring and savoured gardening as "the purest human pleasure". Let us try to understand this interesting character.

Bacon is acknowledged to be a major figure in the history of thought. He was endowed with great intelligence, practical wisdom, suppleness (flexibility) of mind, virtuosity (special knowledge or skill) which has few parallels, and universality of interest. In the opinion of J. Max Patrick, he is the supreme English exemplar (model) of a Baroque Ma (having a, florid, extravagant style) a master of the traditions and methods of the past, able to exploit or surpass or vary them with adroit (clever) dislocations reversals and twisting in short, with the incurably flexible technique of a

baroque artist. His goal was POWER for grand ends and philanthropic glory. He won both, and contempt and disgrace as well as we have seen in 1.2. He embraced a course of opposites and extremes and a vastness of scope which interacted the sacred and secular, the sublime and the sordid, the prctical and the ideal, and the ideal, and somehow involved them all in precarious (uncertain, unsteady) balance.

Compton Rickett observes about Bacon that " he had a great brain; not a great soul". The complexity of his character stemmed (came) from the complexity of his principles and aims which he strove (tried) to harmonise, but in vain. Roughly speaking his aims included

(i) Selfness philosophic search for truth

(ii) service to mankind through the advancement of usab;le knowledge: and

(iii) Material success and fame.

Clearly he found it impossible to blend such irreconcilabel purpose without resorting to fraudulent, questionable means.

In the opinion of Oliphant Smeaton: "Bacon was intellectually great, but morally weak". His activity was phenomenal. His marvellous versatility embraced and expr4essed itself through diverse aspect of his personality as lawyer, politician, scientist, philosopher, historian and essayist. By dint (meand) of his super intelligence and effort he managed to reach the pinnacle of wordly success. Honours, dignity, wealth, praise, public esteem, all were his. But alas, the joy of such enviable fame and success was tainted by the humiliating consciousness of shameful acts of tyranny and fraudelence he committed being a sycophant (flatterer) and time server (opportunist). Alexander Pope tried to sum up the complex, multi-faceted personality and genius of Francis Bacon in the following heroic couplet.

"If parts allure thee think how bacon shin'd

The wisest, brightest and meanest of mankind".

Do you agree? Well, the general opinion is that Pope's statement is a tall exaggeration. Bacon was certainly very bright and worldly wise, he did commit mean actsw of bribery to advance in life but he definitely does not deserve to be branded as "the meanest of mankind" at least not as mean as Pope himself!

bacon's personality does emerge vividly in the Essays, but is a quality of judgement rather than the actual subject matter. He appe4ars as a man of deep good sense and psychological insight, subtle to the implications of words and deeps, preoccupi4ed with worldly, affairs, often considering human relations only as an instrument of wordly success. With a constant temptation not always overcome, to think in terms of success and failure rather than of good and evil; but beyond this, with a very real sense of moral values, and richly alive to both the lighter graces of conduct and the arts, and the profundities (depths) of intellectual speculation of spiritual mediation. This is the sensibility through which men and matters are viewed. But it is always the delicately tinted glass through which we look.

The age in which bacon lived was essentially a practical age, and prqactical utility or pragmatism was the main prop (support) of bacon's life. Bacon sought to combine philosophy and politics. The active and speculative life, to reconcile prerogative and privilege, statesmanship and opportunism. The effect was a compromise between dogmatism and free inquiry,, morality and worldly prudence. These consideration serve to account, for both the strengh and weakness of his intensely complicated character.

Have you heard about the Renaissance? It was a "revival of relearning", particularly of the study of the classics, a general enlightenment and expansion of knowledge in various fields like art, literature, science etc. It started in Italy in 15th century and gradually spread to the whole of Europe. Please refer to any standard Britih History textbook and familiarize yourself with the various aspects of his great movement. We shell now consider how the spirit of Renaissance influenced Bacon and his works

1.9 Renaissance spirit and Bacon

Bacon lived in the 16th century which witnessed the blossoming of the Renaissance. The impact of this movement on Elizabethan literature is a universal fac tand Bacon was no exception. As Tillotson remarks: "Bacon was the product of Renaissance". The dawn of the renaissance had introduced into his age a spirit of rational enquiry and criticism, the weakening of the religious bond, a sense of beauty, (philosophical speculations and so on. The impaxt of all these facets (aspects) of the Renaissance can be traced in Bacon's writins, his Essays in Particular.

a) Love of Learning

In the Essays, Bacon reveals a keen awareness of several branches of learning. He himself claimed to have taken all knowledge to be his province. An analysis of his themes will bear out his love of learning and practical wordly wisdom. (Please refer 1.6 for more details)

b) Knowledge of Classics

The marvellous magnitude opf Bacon's classical learning comes to light by a mere cursory (brief) glance at his essay. There is perhaps not single essay which is without some reference to , or some quotation from Greek and Latin writers. Quotation from Pliney, Seneca, Cicero, Tacitus, Livy Ovid, etc, abound in his essays, you may also recall preference for Latin over English, a "vulgar language". (Please refer 1.3).

c) Political views

The Political philosophy Bacon which we get to see in his Essays bear to a large extent the imprint (stamp) of the Greek political thinkers. bacon's conception of the state, its relations to the individuals, his plea for centralizes power, his notions on war and trade, his absolute belief in monarchy etc.. are fround scattered in several of his political essays, particularly on Of Empire and Of The True Greatness of Kingdom and Estates. But it was the incluence of the Italian writers especially that of the Florentine historian and political writers Machiavelli, that influenced most powerfully bacon's political morality.

d) Materialism and wordly wisdom

An increase in worldly matters in place of scholasticism, a Machiavellian approach to life, and emphasis on self-advancement all these characteristics of the Renaissance are reflected in Bacon's Essays, which are truity a Bible of the new wordly wisdom. True to the humanistic culture of the Greeks and Romans they dole out (give) practical tips nd precepts to a man keen on rising in the world in the materialistic or wordly sense.

Other Renaissances features that are seen reflected in Bacon's Essays include a love of beauty a sense of proportion both tin subject matter and style, a sort of machiavellian dispasionateness in the treatment of even such subjects as love and marriage. His treatment of his themes is marked by a certain degree of coldness and lack of moral earnestness even unscrupulousness, and he writes with intention of instructing aspirants on the path if wordly advancement. In this respect the reminds one of University wits like Marlowe, Peele and Greene, the most distinguished products of the Renaissance.

Francis Bacon is an acknowledged master prose style. So let us try to understand the outstanding qualities of his manner of writing particularly his essays.

1.10 Bacon's style in the Essays

Besides being the father of the English essay. Bacon was the pioneer of modern English prose style. An analysis of his Essays wil reveal the salient feature of his style. His style in general is that of an analytical clear-headed thinker or scientist. Hence it is marked by such

qualities as simplicity, vigour, brevity, clarity, precision and terseness.

Simplicity is the keynote of Bacon's prose style. Since his primary intention was communication, he deals with its subjects in a direct straight forward manner. The vigour of his style is intellectual rather than emotional. Epigrammatic brevity is another of Bacon's stylistic achievements. He employs a terse, sententious style pumping in wealth of ideas into his short crisp, pithy sentense, which can naturally be expanded as though they were, proverbs. In fact many of his sentences for instance those on 'Books', have become quotable quotes.

Equally remarkable is the lucidity and perspicacity (Clarity)of Bacon's style. Eventhough he writes briefly, he is not vague, obscure or ambiguous. Readers seldom miss the point he is trying to make. One device he employs is a precise, pinpointed style which expresses only the essential and leaves out the trivial and superfluous. Naturally Bacon's prose style is s packed and compact one.

Bacon's vocabularly is siggulalry rish and vast, probably inferior only to that os Shakespeare. His verbl stok embraces not only English but also the Classics not only art and literature but also science, politics and philosophy.In spite of his predilection (preference) fo rlatin, he was equally at home in English.

There is a surfeir of quotations and allusions in the Esays, though much of it is unacknowledged. It is not plagiarism (theft). The point is that Bacon's aim was not to collect quotations, but merely to raise echoes. When he quotes profusely from Cicero. Plutarch or Tacitus. What interests him is the penumbra (area) of universal sentiment around the particular expression used by famous authores. Hence he does not scruple (hesitate) to change the actual words or to adapt themto his own very different contexts, thereby heightening the universal appeal of the thought.

The word aphoristic has often been employued to describe both Bacon's essays and his style. An aphorism, as we have seen, is a short, witty saying. Bacon, realized that a compressed. aphoristic style suited both his thoughts and mode of treatment. The maxim or aphorism was considered to set upon accepted wisdom the final stamp of authority and he described his essays to be the voice of an authority. The essays especially the early ones compile similar aphorisms in the fields of "morality, policy and history" The phrasing is Bacon's own, more often than not, but the ideas would have been familiar to every educated man. Naturally they won for the author complete acceptance and approval, with admiration for the aphoristic perfection o f Bacon's expression. The Renasissance scholar had a special love of the oithy or sentimental.

The terseness, simplicity and straightforward nature of Bacon's prose revolted against the highly organized, ornate, florid, verbose and Latinised style of most of his contemporaries. HJowever he does indulge in imagery and figures of speech. His essay particularly the later ones are characterized by wit, imaginative insight and rich "poetry".

Admirable thought his prose style was Bacon's manner of writing was not free from faults. Occasional obscurity, ungrmmaticality, high intellectualism unaccompanied by emotionalism and an affected manner of utterance are the usual chrges levelled against him on this score.

Bacon is said to have employed two styles according to McCauley. In his view, with the passage of time, Bacon's style had become "richer and softer" so that one can perceive a marked difference in the style of the first edition (1567) and third edition (1625) of Essays. Of course this is a debatable, point since many critics and scholars feel that it is not a matter of two styles, rather Bacon's later style is only an evolution or a development, probably a deviation from his personality and cannot be two different styles, unless the man becomes another man!

Let us wind up this Unit with and overall estimate of Bacon and his essays.

1.11 Bacon the Essayist: An overall Estimate

Francis Bacon is acknowledged to be a major figure in the history of human thought. He was certainly England's most important Renaissances thinker. He was a righly informed commentator on, and critic of the intellectual movements of his age and a considerable constructive philosopher, as well as the brilliant writer and shrewd essayist familiar to students of literature.

As an essayist Bacon's reputation rests on the three editions comprising 58 essays in all. Everty page is the fruit of his own experience distilled through the alembic of his marvellous mind in his Essays, supreme intellectual force is united to protean variety of interest and sympathies. From the start their popularity was great. Their brevity was recomendation to readers with limited leisure, their compactness of thought and conciseness of expression a virtue, passing meritorious, in an age when looseness alike in thought and language was the rule rather than the exception. The quote Oliphant Smeaton; "While the essays may not as a whole, display the stately music of Donne or of Hooker, the florid ornaments of Burton or of Browne, the sustained grandeur of Johnson grandeur at times verging on grandiloquence or the sineway flexibility of Selden, they unite in themselves a portion of the excellences of all the six.

As one of the world's epoch making books Bacon's Essays ha done much to mould and direct the character of many individuals. They almost inevitably challenge comparison with Montaigene's Essays. Bacon lacked Montaigne's lightness of touch, broader social sympathies, and piquant (sharp) picturesqueness in stating obvious truths so as to make them appear new. "If Montaigne was the great literary artist, Bacon was the profounder moral and intellectual force". (O. Smeaton)

As an essayist Bacon's contribution to English prose is significant. Besides inroducing new genre (literary form) namely the essay into the realm of English literature, he set up a model of lucid straight forward English literature, he sret up a model of lucid straight forward English prose style which could serve as a vehicle for all kind sof subjects, both grave and trivial high and low. As Plugh Walker remarks: "The new style of Bacon fitted itself as easily to building and gardens,a s to suitors or ceremonial as to truth and death". Also Bacon was, in the words Douglas Bush, "the theoretical and practical leader of the and - Ciceroniam government in England". We are indebted to Bacon for improving the quality if writing. He is certain at the first at stylist in the history of English prose. To sum up, he is both tghe father of English Essays and father of Modern English prose.

With this we wind up Study above sections and become familiar with Francis Bacon, the man and essayist. We shall study in detail Bacon's Essay of Discourse in the next line.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

(i) understand the characteristics of a good conversation

(ii) realize the need to master the art of conversation and

(iii) appreciarte some of the fine quanties of Bacon, essayist

2.1 Introduction to the Lesson

Man, as well all know, is a social being, an dis often impelled by the desire for self expression to talk, write or communicate to fellow beings. While all of us can talk, we cannot say that all of us do si equally well. In other words, some of us dpo not know the skill of talking well. Haven't you come across people who are very shy in the company of strangers? Others who do not know what to say; still others who donot know when to keep their mouths shut? Also you must have met several people who are speeches keep you spellbound, or whose conversation is really enjoyable. What is the secret of the successful speaker or

conversationalist? Well, in the lesson which you are about to study in this Unit namely *Of Discourse* Francis Bacon, the great prose writer of the Elizabethan age gives us an account of some of the do's and don'ts of a good conversation. The Essay will certainly help us to gather a few tips on the art of talking well in company. Also you may find in it many of the fine aspects of bacon's prose style which you have studies in Unit -1.

Of Discourse was first published in Bacon's 1597 edition of Essays. A few additions were made in the 1612 edition, Most of the images quotations etc. are added in the final edition of 1625. It appears as Essay No. 32 and is included under 'Essays on Thought, Art and Leisure'. Today we generally use the world "discourse" to men a speech, lecture or a sermon. Please note that Bacon usesit in the old sense of conversation

Let us try to understand the lesson by analysing it sentence by sentence.

2.2 Explanatory Notes and Paraphrase

(I) Lines 1-5 Some in their discourse should be thought

Discourse: Conversation (old sense). Note that towards the end of the lesson, Bacon uses the word in the sense of long and eloquent speeches and powers of debate.

Commendation: praise, reputation

wit: Here probably means ingenuity (or cleverness) of argument.

Hold all arguments: maintain all propositions or support any side of a subject or question submitted for discussion

Discerning: able to see and understand well and form opinions rightly

Paraphrase:

Some people while talking wish and hope that listeners should admire tham for their intenuity or a skill inbeing able to support their arguments in a discussion or dispute. They prefer this kind of admiration to that which can be attained by the correctness of their judgement.

Bacon implies that such an attitude is wrong because a speaker ought to be praised far more for his right thoughts and his ability to reason and form the correct opinion than for his ability to argue a point sucessfully.

(ii) Lines 5-9 Some have certain perceived ridiculous

Common places: Set topics for discussion originally as a student's exercise; or notable passages found in some author, copied in a common place book an dperhaps memorixed; or ordinary familiar subjects worn out by use till all their novelty and interest are lost.

Themes: set of fixed subjects

want: lack

tedious: tiring, monotonous

Perceived: noticed

Paraphrase

Some persons are very good at talking at length about their favourite subjects and topics. But their range is quite narrow and so they cannot discourse or speak on large veriety of subjects. This lack o fvariety renders talk tiring and monotonous, pehaps even silly and insignificant.

Have you heard of a "windbag"? It means a person who talks" a lot but says nothing interesting. George Bernard Shaw feared he would be ridiculed as being a "windbag" If he kept on repeating his speeches.

(in) Lines 9-12 The honourablest leads the dance.

Honourablest: (old usage) most worthy of honour or praise part: ability, accomplishment (e.g. "man of great parts") give the occasion: starta conversation: broach or introduce a topic so as to give the others a chance to join in. Moderate control, regulate the discourse so as to act a sort of moderator. Leads the dance: guides the conversation efficiently.

Paraphrase

The most desirable accomplishment or gift of a speaker is to join the discussion. In this way a good conversationalist can act as leader and moderator just a man leads a dance.

Bacon implies that to guide a conversation efficiently, a speaker should not monopolize it but he generous to let other join in and their views. Here the author advocates a policy of give and take.

(iv) Lines 12-18, It is good, Jade any thing two far

Discourse and speech of conversation: both in sustained, formal speeches and in common exchange of conversation intermingle..... arguments: mingle or combine matters of merely present interest with subjects of a permanent interest. Tales with reasons: stories or examples with theories or reflections: Jest: joke to jade: to overdrive (properly said of horses). Here to drif a subject or topic to death. As we say now: in this sense

Paraphrase

Whether in sustaind formal speeches, or in common exchange of conversation, a man can enhance his talk bymingling matters of merely personal interest with subjects of a permanent interest bytelling stories and giving reflections in connection with them; by asking question and giving his own opinions, and by combining his serious, thought with light jokes. This sort of blending light and serious, matter is essential for, otherwise the talk or conversation will become tiring and monotonous by driving a single topic to death.

Variety is the spice of life, thus we have heard Bacon seems to realize the need for some sort of a 'comic relief amidest serious talk. Here he appears to take a romantic stand, and not a classical one.

Line 18-22 As jest, that deserveth pity.

Privileged: Left out, exempted as subjects of talk. Present: urgent, immediate.

Paraphrase

As far as joking is concerned, certain things should be exempted from being made subjects of jest; they include religion politics, important personages, any peron's urgent or immediate business or affairand such matters which actually ought to rouse our sympathy.

Certainly these are the remarks of a man of the world. All the prohibited topics especially religion and politics are so sensitive that any centringn them is likely to crete much bad blood and tensi. Bacon's sane advice is that we avoid talking on such issues. Likewise joking about pitiful or pitiate things is certainly a mild form of sadism and hence undesirable.

(vi) Lines 22-26 Yet there be some utere loris.

Dart : pointed, Stinging(remark, here)
to the quick : hurting, cutting (the *quick* being the living)
or semsitive flesh beneath dead skin or nails)

Vein: habit tenednct would: ought to Parce puer..loris" Spare the sput, boy, and use the reins more strongly" - *Ovid,*

Metamorphoses. These are the words of advice of Helois to Phaeton an advice in self control

Paraphrase

However, there are some people who think that their wit or ingenuity has been ineffective unless they utter something hurting or provocative like sending pain fraught arrow to hurt them. Clearly this is tendency that ought to be checked.

Bacon employs a Latin quotation fromOvid which means "Spare the spur, boy and use the reins more strongly" to support his point. He implies that the tongue like a spur can really hurt when it utter punget and painful words and hence should be checked. The advice is very timely.

(vii) Lines 27-31 And generally men... of others memory

Saltness: wit (Latin sal, salt was commonly used in this sense) compare also Colossians 4.6: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man. This last idea is taken up in Bacons next few sentences.

Satirical vein: tendency or inclination to be critical of others

As: in propoertion as

Sq he: Here 'he' is redundant in syntax but it is repeated (As he so he) for the sake of clarity and emphasis.

Other's memory: the grudges they will bear him

afraid to his wit: fear of being ridiculed or satirized by the speaker

Paraphrase

Generally speaking, people should be able to diffenentiate between what is truly witty and amusing and what will hurt others by its bitterness and sarcasm. If a person has a tendency to be sarcastic and makes others victims of his pungent,hurting remarks, then he can be sure that the latter will not forget such painful utterances and will entertain feelings of hostility and hatred towards him.

How often people forget this truism! Bacon is merely, but severely warning us to keep our sharp tongues under control.

(viii) Lines 31-38 He that questioneth fit for a poser

Questioneth: asks questions

ontent: please (the people he asks, by showing that he

values their opinion) apply: suit, adapt (old sense) apply his questions etc., Plutarch gives similar advice in

"On Listening to Lecture" (moralia 43) ocasion: opportunity poser: examiner, one who 'poses' or puts questions.

Paraphrase

In the course of a conversation, if a man asks many questions, he will be able to increase his knowledge using the answer he receives, moreover he shall please the people he asks by showing that he values their opinions, especially if he adapts his questions to suit their ability to answer. However he should not put troubelsome or embrassing tothe speaker, for that tendency is suitable for n examiner.

Bacon highlights the importance of asking the right sort of questions to keep a conversation alive. There are instances where awkward questions are put to the apeaker say in a lecture session with the mean intention of embrassing them. Actually no one gains anything by exposing the speakers' ignorance.Prudence (wisdom) and politeness demand that we ask to know, and give the speaker a chance to reveal what he knows.

(ix) Line 38-43 and let him to long galliards

reign: dominate the conversation

galliards: a type of lively dance of France

Paraphrase

The speaker should give opportunities to the others inthe group to speak. In fact if he finds that someone in the group is trying to dominate the conversation, he should cleverly stop him from occupying centre stage, and thus provide an opening for someone else to talk in the same way as musicians controlled the dancers who danced extremely long galliards without allowing others a chance.

Here, bacon implies that noone should be allowed to monopolize a conversation. By common experience we know that it leads to the speaker showing himself off and also making the others feel left out and neglected.

(x) Lines 43-46 If you dissemble you know not.

Dissembel: pretend,hide

Paraphrase,

During a conversation, if a men pretends that he does not know something which he really does know them on a later occasion he will be credited with knowing what he actually does not know.

Bacon implies that oif a person disclaims knowledge of what he does know, his genuine plea of ignorance will also be ascribed to his modesty. One is reminded of the saying 'Silence is golden'.

(a) Lines 46-53 Speech of aman's himself pretendeth

of man's self: about one's own self'

Wont to : used to, accustomed to

Scorn: contempt

He must needs etc: because true wisdom was said to lie in

knowing one self

Paraphrse

A speaker should not speak about himself in the course of a conversation, except very occasionally and in relevant contexts. Baon knew a person who used to remark contemptuously about another person thus: "He ought to be a wise man, for he speaks so much about himself". There is only one case where a man can claim his expertise in some act or pursuit so that he may praise another with authority because by admiring a virtue he has in somebody else he will indirectly be able to draw the attention of the listeners to that virtue in himself.

Bacon implies that boastful and self-centered talk should be avoided by all means. He cleverly shows how one can win praise and recognition without blowing one's trumpet (boasting)

(xi) Lines 53-56 Speech of touch home to any man

of touch: personal (not necessarily malicious or slnderous)

as a field.... any man : like an open field where one may walk about, not a highway that leads home.

Coming home to: having special reference to especially in a malicious or hurting manner.

Paraphrase:

In a conversation, personal remarks particularly spiteful or hurting ones, should be

used very sparingly; rather they should be avoided. A conversation should be like an open field where one may walk about; it should not be a highway which leads home.

Bacon's keen insight into human psychology is revealed in these lines. He is wise to realize that people in general are sensitive and resent being slandered, criticized or ridiculed in public.

(xii) Lines 56-63.1 knew two mar a good dinner

where of: of whom

was given to: had a tendency for

scoff: insult

keep royal cheer: entertain grandly

flout: hit, taunt, hurting joke or remark

dry blow: hard hit, ironical remark

passed: happened

mar : spoil

Paraphrase

Bacon knew two noblemen in the west part of England, of whom one had a tendency to insult others (with his malicious remarks) but always entertained grandly in his house. The second nobleman would enquire of all who had attended the dinner part at the former's place whether no ironical or sarcastic remark or joke had been made there. The guest would reply in the affirmative. Upon that the lord would observe that he thought that the first lord would spoil a good dinner (with his spiteful remarks)

Is Bacon exaggerating? Don't you think there do exist such people as the first nobleman? The tongue is indeed a most curious thing. It can taste good food. It can also kill the appetite for a good dinner by uttering malicious words!

(xiii) Lines 63-66 Discretion of speech in good order.

Discretion of speech: speaking agreeably or pleasantly, showing discernment or wisdom to distinguish

more than : better than, more desirable

eloquence : fluency

agreeably : suitably, appropriately agreeing with the person addressed.

Paraphrase

It is far better to talk pleasantly than to talk eloquently or fluently. To speak suitably and appropriately with the purpose of pleasing the person addressed is superior to aiming at a choice of good words or at an arrangement of the words in a good order.

Bacon emphasizes the importance of human consideration while talking to others.

(xtv) Lines 67-73. A good continued and the hare

continued : fluent and continuous

interlocution: dialogue or conversation, involving quick ex-change of words, as opposed to a continued speech or settled speech. Show slowness: drags, being monotonous settled speech : set or deliberate speech of a certain length. Showeth shallowness: lacks depth of knowledge (to be able to make a sustained speech) coarse : straight run, race nimblest: fastest betwixt: between

as it is... the hare

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The greyhound (a keen sighted dog used in chasing live hares, as it can run very fast) runs more quickly, but the hare more nimbly. Likewise some are good at formal speeches, others in quick conversa-tions. In Advancement of Learning II. xiv.6, Bacon distinguishes between 'orators' and 'sophisters' by the same image.

Paraphrase

A fine, fluent continuous speech without dialogue or reply to interrupters or questions can be dragging. Similarly a witty reply or repartee without the ability for a set or deliberate speech discloses lack of deep knowledge. In other words, a man without the power of speaking continuously- is evidently contrasted against another person who has ready wit and is able to make a smart resort but has not depth of knowledge so as to make a sustained speech. Such a man is compared to a hare as against a greyhound; while the former turns more nimbly, the latter runs more quickly.

Bacon distinguishes between those who can talk at length on a given topic like an automatic machine and those whose forte (strength) is to make short effective and witty repartees or extempore criticism.

(xv) Lines 73-75 To use too is blunt

circumstances: introductory details or incidental matters in

connection with the main topic. Ere: before

matter: main topic of discourse wearisome: tedious, tiring blunt: abrupt and therefore not pleasing

Paraphrase

While talking on a particular subject a person should not dwell (talk) too long on incidents, matters (by way of introduction), for it will be tedious for the listeners. At the same time, if he broaches (begins) his main topic abruptly without any introductory remarks then too the effect will be not at all pleasing.

Bacon's same advice is to adopt a golden mean between too many digressions and too abrupt a beginning.

Read the Essay a number of times sentence by sentence, and with the help of the detailed explanatory notes and paraphrase given above try to understand is meaning well.

Let us now proceed to write a critical appreciation of Bacon's *Of Discourse*

2.3. Bacon's Of discourse: A critical Appreciation

Of Discourse which belonged to Bacon's first edition of Essays published in 1597 deals with the do's and don'ts of good speech both in formal discourses and in conversation. Bacon begins by dwelling on the way a good conversation is often spoilt by (a strong wish to display one's ingenuity or ready wit, without profundity (depth) of reiteration(repetition)of pet themes, owing to a limited" range of subjects at one's command.

The author next goes on to describe the salient features of a good conversation in private life and gives certain practical rules for the guidance of the general public. In a conversation no one should mo-nopolize all the talk; instead everyone should be given a chance to join in and air (express) his views. The most honourable ability of a good conversationalist is to led the conversation so that all the interlocutors (speaker) participate equally. The monotony of a talk can be reduced by blending it with question, opinions and light jokes Talking about jesting, certain sensitive matters such as religion politics great personage and pitiable things should be exempted. Sarcasm should be avoided by all means as it lingers long in the memory of the hearers.

Questions may be asked in the course of a conversation but with the aim of pleasing the speaker and at the same time enhancing (increasing) one's knowledge so that no a latter

occasion, others will credit them with knowing what they really do not know. Talking about oneself should be reduced to a minimum. Likewise one should not slan-der anyone in a conversation. It is far better to talk pleasingly than flu-ently.

Finally the author touches on making set speeches and debating in public life. Eloquence without the power of debating shows lack of a ready wit. On the contrary, the ability to give a sharp retort or to make extempore criticism without the ability to make a sustained speech be-trays one's want of deep and comprehensive knowledge.

Of Discourse is a typical essay of Bacon's and bears testimony to his fine qualities as an essayist and an excellent stylist. The style employed in presenting his ideas reveals all those characteristic by virtue of which Bacon is acclaimed as one of the greatest writers of En-glish prose. The entire essay is written in a highly condensed aphoristic style. The sentences are bald, pithy and sententious. The concluding sentence of the essay "To use too many is blunt" is one illustration.

Bacon generally brightens his writings and makes his meanings clear by means of figurative language illustration and anecdotes. The dance image to show a speaker should lead a conversation; the use of a smile to compare a discourse to an open field the use of double metaphor of the hare and the greyhound to bring out the difference between the debater and the sustained speaker; the anecdote of the two noblemen to illustrate how a sharp, sarcastic tongue can mar (spoil) a good dinner; *etc.* are a few examples. The essay also contains a Latin quotation from Ovid. " Parcepuer etc." which Bacon introduces In order support one of the ideas of the essay.

Bacon's treatment Of his theme in this essay is impersonal as most of his other writing generally are. Though it does not tell us much about the inner life of the author, it certainly does give us the impression that Bacon was very much a practical man of the world, an astute diplomat, keen on getting on well' in the world, influencing and im-pressing people, a man endowed with much prudence and common sense. The essay is not without significance or relevance to the modern reader. The views expressed in it can serve as good counsel for the teeming million jostling (posing) against each other in the present age, be it in a private conversation-, a public debate or an international dia-logue.

Let us attempt to write an annotation to a passage taken from the lesson.

2.4 Model Annotation

1. Speech of touch towards others should be sparingly used: for discourage ought to be as a field, without coming home to any man. (Lines 53-56)

Francis Bacon, England's most important Renaissance thinker, is acclaimed as both the father of the English Essay and the father of modern English prose. As an essayist his reputation rests on three edi-tions comprising fifty eight essays in all *of Discourse* appears as Essay No.32 and is included under "Essays on Thought; Art and Leisure." The essay deals with the do's and don'ts of good speech both in formal dis-course and in conversations.

Speaking about the features of a good conversation. Bacon ob-serves In the given line that personal remarks particularly spiteful and hurting ones should be used very sparingly; rather they should be avoided. A conversation should be like an open field where one may walk freely; it should not be a highway that leads home.

Using a very effective picturesque simile, Bacon illustrates that a good conversation is always open and general and never aims at anyone in particular. Bacon's keen insight into human psychology is revealed in this passage. He is,wise enough to realize that people in general are sensitive and resent being slandered, criticized or ridiculed in public.

Study the way the above annotation is written. You can use the first paragraph as a common introduction. Refer to the paraphrase In this way you can annotate any passage from the lesson without much difficulty.

Read the study material given in the above section as well as that given in Unit- I very carefully and understand the various aspects of Bacon and his essay *of Discourse. You* should now be in a position to tackle the questions included in the following section.

2.5 Model Questions With Hints

1. **Essay based on Bacon's Character'**

   A) "The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind"- Consider this estimate of Bacon.

   B) If parts allure thee, think how Bacon shind The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind."

   Discuss the couplet in relation to Bacon's life and essays.

   C) Justify or-criticise Pope's characterization of Bacon as "the wisest brightest, meanest of mankind."

   D) Reconstruct Bacon's personality and character from his essays.

   Refer Unit-11.2 and 1.11

2. **Bacon as an Essayist**

   a) Bacons essays are unequalled for their conciseness, their pertinence, their practical suggestiveness and their vivacity. Elucidate

   b) Bacon's essays are the expression of life-time of experience in the world of men and affairs. Elucidate

   c) Brief notes set down "rather significantly than curiously." How far is this an apt description of Bacon's essays?

   d) What was Bacon's conception of the essay?

   e) Account for the immense popularity of Bacon's essays.

   Ref. Unti-1, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7,1.11

3. **Based on the Renaissance**

   a) What do you understand by the term 'Renaissance'? Bring out the influence of the Renaissance on Bacon with special reference to his essays.

   b) "The philosophy of Bacon' s Essays is as worldly and Re-naissance as a style, Discuss.

   c) "Bacon is the most complete representative of the Renaissance in England - learned worldly, ambitious and intriguing" Discuss

   Ref. Unit-1 1.9 , 1.6, 1.10, 1.11

4. **Based on Bacon's style**

   a) Comment on the aphoristic style of Bacon

   b) Illustrate from Bacon's essays the chief qualities of his style. What contribution did he make to the development of English prose?

   Ref. Unit-1.1.10, 1.11

5) Attempt a critical appreciation of Bacon's of Discourse]

Ref. Unit-II 2.3,2.2

You can prepare you own essays on the above topics by studying the study material and stringing the relevant parts together to from a coherent, logical whole.

You will have to answer a few Objective Type questions in the examination. Also you need to have comprehensive knowledge so as to answer your 'viva voice' A few samples are given below:-

2.6.Objective Type Questions.

1. The number of essays included in Bacon' s final edition is (58)
2. Bacon's first edition of essays was brought out in the year ..(1597)
3. "If Montaigne was the greater literary artist, Bacon was the profounder moral and intellectual force". -Who said so? (Oliphant Sematon.)
4. Who used to address Bacon as her "young Lord Keeper"? (Queen Elizabeth)
5. Bacon's prose style is generally described as (aphoristic)

I am sure you can make many more each questions and answers.

With this we come to the end of Unit -II. I shall give below a select bibliography. You may read as many books as possible and increase your knowledge.

2.7. Select Bibliography

1. Quinton, Anthony, *Bacon*
2. Patric, J. *Max Francis Bacon*
3. *Francis Bacon's Essays:* Introduction by Oliphant Semeaton..
4. Walker, Hugh, *The English Essay and Essayists*
5. Bush, Douglas, *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century.*
6. *Pelican Guide to English Literature : Vol II*

1. *A history of English Literature* by Compton Rlcket (for any other author)

7. *Bacon's Essays: A Selection.* Ed. by Sukanta Chaudari

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OF STUDIES

"Of Studies" is a typical Baconian essay Thematically it presents the point of view of a shrewd and practical man of worldly wisdom. Tech-nically it is in a simple, crisp style with apt illustration and homely im-agery.

Summary

Studies give pleasure, serve as ornamental and are useful to develop skills. Studies give pleasure-in leisurely private life: in a public discourse, one's reading serves the ornamental purpose and practically studies help in execution. Men with experience can o£ course judge mat-ters in certain fields. But learned people are good at planning and man-agement. To spend too much time in studies is drudgery; to use studies for ornamental purposes is affectation; literally following studies is a scholar's mannerism. Studies formulate one's nature which can be fur their perfected by experience, just like a plant's growth can be regulated by pruning. That is, one's natural ability can be shaped and developed by studies. Practical men condemn studies, simple people admire studies and wise men make use of studies, Wise men have a wealth of knowledge gained by observation. One should not study to contradict or to confuse, nor to take things for granted; but should read to think. Some books are to be acquainted with, some to be accepted as such and some others to be analysed and mastered. In other words some books are to be read here and there; others to be read without care: some others *to* be read closely with attention. Some books may be read in excerpts or in condensed for. Reading makes a complete man; conversation and meet-ing help us to be ready to use what we read and writing makes it all perfect. Studies pass into the character of the man. Hence reading of history makes men wise, poems sharpen our while witty mathematics trains us to be subtle and natural sciences renders depth; philosophy makes us grave and serious. Logic and rhetoric help us to be argumen-tative. There are suitable remedial exercises to cure specific diseases; for instance bowing strengthens kidney and bladder; shooting is good for the lungs and chest: walking helps the stomach and riding takes care of the head. Similarly study of Mathematics helps a man to gain concentration. Study of Law develops in a man the skill to prove and illustrate. Thus every defect of the mind has a sure prescription.

Notes:

Ornament	:	accomplishment
Expert men from	:	Men of experience; knowledgeable from experience not study.
too much at large	:	too vague and general
curiosity	:	with care
conference	:	meeting, conversation
Crafty	:	practical or manual ability and therefore scornful of book learning.
ready	:	quick wilted
Natural Philosophy	:	natural science (In eighteenth century phi-losophy generally meant science; but science referred to knowledge)
moral	:	Moral philosophy meaning philosophy in the modern sense.
Absent studio in Mores	:	Studies pass into character
Wit	:	Elizabethan period, the 'wit' has shades of meaning.

(i) the mind, intellect

(ii) the imagination, power of invention.

(ill) sound sense, judgement, understanding.

(iv) wisdom

Three of these shades are used is this essay.

School men: medieval theologians, who applied the rules of Ar-istotelian logic and disputed over the minutes points.

Cumini sectors: literally dividers of cumin seed i.e. hair-splitters thope who argue over more shades of meaning.

boat over: a metaphor from hunting; examine carefully after a thorough search.

Receipt : cure prescription.

Commentary

This essay On Studies is full of oft-quoted aphorisms. This shows Bacon's power of condensing great thoughts in a few telling words. This essay is full practical hints. Bacon does not even hesitate to say openly that some books may be read in abridged form and that the some need be just skipped through.

Bacon's Style

Bacon not only introduced the essay from in English, but also made significant contribution to the development of English prose style. Bacon's prose has to be read slowly and thoughtfully as profound thoughts are presented in an extremely condensed form. Bacon proved that essay is the suitable from for "concentrated expressions of weightily thoughts". He followed the pattern set by the French essayist Montaigne but Montaigne's essays are more personal and subjective, and Bacon developed a style of his own.

Bacon's prose is known for its terseness of expression and epigrammatic brevity. His essays are full *of* oft-quoted maxims: "Reading maketh a full man:, conference a Ready Man: and writing an Exact man" ' These express basic and accepted principles in a rhetorical style with force. As they present knowledge or idea in broken form, the readers are prompted to inquire further or think deeply about the idea. The essays are designed to make the reader examine rather than accept ideas. The aphoristic presentation makes them disturbing.

Bacon makes extensive use of quotations and classical allusions. He does not write on an impulse. He does not create material but we find him commenting on already existing material. He uses the quotations to pin point a moral or to illustrate an argument. Bacon's wide knowledge and reading is reflected in these quotations. He shows special talent in making creative use of the earlier authors. Quite often he is not accurate in his quotations not because he is careless, but his aim is to not collect quotations but merely to raise echoes. He develops an awareness about these thoughts and points to the universal appeal of these ideas by adapting the original maxims to different contexts.

Bacon, being a serious philosopher with a scientific bent of mind, writes more like a lawyer a poet. We find a combination of vividness, clarity, control and force In his prose. He goes from point to point, analysing his views on a chosen topic. He never digresses like Lamb or Hazlitt and argues to the point. Each essay structurally has coherence. As an essay proceeds it tends to offer revaluation of its subject. "Of Truth" is one of the best examples of such treatment. It starts with the consideration of the difficulty of seeking truth but then emphasizes the compulsion to follow truth irrespective of the consequences: this change in attitude is effected skilfully by imagistically moving from man made half lights to the full light of creation.

In Of studies" for example, he repeats the idea of the preceding sentence, but also adds something new. He explains the basic concepts, adds illustrations and valuably gives a new

imaginative dimension to the idea.

Even though Bacon adhered to the aphoristic style in his earlier essays. We find a shift in his style in his later works. His essay "Of Truth" marks the shift in his style from the aphoristic to the imagistic style. Maybe this use of image and metaphors prompted Shelley to call Bacon a poet. Bacon uses images not a express the inexpressible, but to render an abstract or unfamiliar idea more easy to grasp by associating it with a concrete and familiar image. "A pleasure to stand in the stand in the window of a Castle, and to see a Battle, and the Adventures thereof, below: But no pleasure is comparable, to the standing upon the vantage ground of Truth: (A hill not to be commanded, and where the Ayre is always clear and serene). And to see the errors, and wandering, and Mists and Tempests, in the vale of below". Bacon uses images not to intensify the meaning but just to make a meaning that is already established by his illustrative, devices, more effective. "Natural Abilities, are like Natural plants, that need pruning by study."

The scientist and lawyer in Bacon gives a general pattern to the collection of his dispersed thoughts. The essay Of Truth. Of Death, etc. do follow the technique of partition and contain a sort of regular outline. Bacon the intellectual, successfully compartmentalises emotion and rea-son. There are different opinions about the place of feeling and emotions in Bacon's prose; specially: L.C. Knights regards Bacon's prose style as gravity restricted in sensibility. He feels that Bacon consciously undermines emotion over reason because he believes that striking imag-ery will hinder the reader's attempt to follow an argument, hence his images are just ornamental, and serve as illustrations. But Theodore Radpath disagrees with L.C. Knights and declares that Bacon's images besides illustrating the point have "a striking vitality of their own". Bacon selects and uses images in a very clear manner that at the first glance the analogies seem to be telling, just like scientific proofs. But a closer reading reveals that the analogies are there for polish and Balance. The maxims and the evidence which are intended to support them have nothing to do with one another.

Bacon's essays abound in Latinisms. He uses Latin words in their original Latin sense. The abundant use of parallelism, antitheses and rich metaphors make his style quite rhetorical. We could discern balanced and patterned sentence structure containing both parallel and opposition. We could place Bacon between the typical Elizabethan prose and late eighteenth century style.

Bacon's prose can be summed up as objective in fact, analytic in method, impersonal in tone and instructive in purpose.

Books for Reference

1. Hugh Walker, Essays and Essayists.
2. Ed. Stanley E. Fish, Seventeenth Century prose.
3. L.C. Knights, Explorations: Bacon and the Eighteenth Century Dissociation of Sensibility.
4. D.G. James, The dream of learning.
5. Brain Vickers, Francis Bacon and Renaissance Prose.

HENRY FIELDING

Henry Fielding, along with Defoe and Richardson, is not only of the founders of the modern novel but the author of Tom Jones, one of the dozen or so greatest novels in English.

Henry Fielding came to London in 1729 a rich west country, a young man of twenty, full of political ambitious with high connections. The general belief is that as he was totally committed to Walpole and the court and his political writings were one-sided. But we do find him taking a natural stand at times when he was not entirely obliged to his patrons. From 1727 to 34, was a period for fielding to reveal himself as the most popular dramatist of London. Except " The modern Husband" which caused eyebrows to raise by its earnestly in high circles, Fielding's comedies were conventionally entertaining and popularly pleasing. We cannot agree with G.B. Shaw who boldly placed Fielding along with Shakespeare as a dramatist. Since Fielding shone in a lesser sphere that of farce and burlesque.

However, he was forced to leave theatre in the wake of an Act of parliament of theatre and he returned to his political writings. Then came a literary event that provoked this versatile man to fiction writing. It was his own amusement and rather exasperation success of Richardson's Pamela (1740) Fielding respond -by thoroughly parodying in the hilariously delightful Shemela (1741) and then the next year by Joseph Andrews is much more than a parody, mimicking the indomi-table Virgin, Pamela parody, miming the indomitable Virgin, Pamela by substituting with a male of improbable Virtues. The novel is rather in Cervantes's style, and following Fielding's own early theory of "comic-epic poem in prose" whose subject is to ridicule nature by exposing it in all variety. Whereas Richardson's maidens evoke a brooding glum world, Fielding's world is cheerful and expensive presided over by a genial Omniscient narrator and Fielding himself claimed that in "Joseph Andrews' he had founded a province of writing.

TOM JONES

TOM JONES his master piece, fulfilled this promise of an ambitious splendid beginning. Generations of readers have been delighted by the comic adventures of its hero Tom Jones and even his disastrous indiscretions of lust. The story is simple, a foundling boy grows into maturity, by passing through lustful adventure's and finally discovers the identity of his parents and marries the beautiful girl he loves. It is not the story that matters but a host of entertaining characters scattered all over the novel, who are enlivened by the sparkling wit and undercurrent of humanity of the narrator, and also the intricacies that complicate the plot. This ingenious ways of complicating the plot claimed the admiration of a person not less than S.T. Coleridge who praised the book as "one of the most perfect in literature"

Like most great books, moreover, Tom Jones offers us more than superficial pleasures. It is the realization of its author's profoundest philosophy of life. This philosophy is essentially in the Christian hu-manist tradition, artfully modelled on a world of abundance, and Orderliness, which is and ultimately a benign one. Thus Fielding's claim that his subject is "human nature is true...His book is essentially" a great creation".

Tom Jones the foundling hero transcends time and space; he stands for all of us. He is Every man, expelled from paradise and thrown out in to the rough world where he has to fight and learn from his own varied experiences. Successfully passing through the resultant trials, he reaches his goal, his girl, whose name in significant,, Sophia, which means Wisdom.

Tom Jone's is a book that comes under the rare category of those which manage to be in the consummate expression of a particular form and conception of literary art.

Tom Jones' sexuality, his libertine, ways, came under heavy fire in the wake of publication of the book. William Empson see this as a result of the author's deliberate designs of the plot and language; Fielding, as he claimed himself, was centring a new province of writing. Thus his new style of presenting a new idea seemed for many a tiresome, boisterous out break, which was insensitive of any fine shades of emotion and feelings. Many were baffled about the author's real view on Christian morality, filial duty of a daughter, and the inherent virtues of regulated gentle man. His readers often doubt whether he is not recommending the loose morality of his hero to his readers. But as Empson points out, there are plenty of assertions in the book that Tom is doing wrong. The reason for ambiguity in this regard is that Fielding uses his habitual double irony. In a very delicate moral arena, the employment of double irony, often does not produce the desired effect. That is what happened here.

From Fielding's treatment of his hero. Tom, one might think that to the moral questions raised at the hero and his creator, the creator's answer seems to be that good action comes only from good impulses, that is those of a good heart, not from good principles. Dr. Johnson denounced this book, reading between the lines the implication that morality is no use, only intensions shall be good. In fact, Fielding wants to stress that Tomes lacks prudence, he ought, to learn it, but Fielding is silent how this is related to chastity enjoyed by religion. In any case, observes, Empson, 'the sexual affairs are only one of the many applications of the doctrine about mutuality of impulse. This seems to be the secret message that Fielding wanted to boast at a time when peopic believed that such a book would surely cause earth quacks and other natural calamities. We can not except a calm sympathetic understanding of a foundling boy who had to friends but a thieving game keeper, who had no pass the rough roads to became a kind of Noble Savage.

Mark Twain did not allow Huck Finn to grow, since growth in-volves evil. But Fielding accepts the challenges and allows his hero founding boy grow into a man, Tasting 'the bitter pill with the earnest hope and faith that the journey's experience would finally make him a prudent balanced person.

Sophia's character is set in such a fine way to suit the author's moral philosophy. Since she discovers her lover in another woman's bed and she walks out angrily. Time and again she is reported to Tom's free play with one woman or other. When the final stage is reached and the choice is left before Sophia either to throw down Tom in perpetual dirt and disgrace or to lift him up and place him a decent pedestal, she prudently chooses the latter. Fielding steps in to make her choose so because he doesn't want women to argue and settle their domestic issues in their favour by arguments. So as critics point out she approved of Tom's exoneration quite suddenly and early. Her justification to this is her author's moral philosophy. Tom is one who is not morally corrupt; his bad acts products of bad circumstances.

Reading List.

1. Martin C. Battest -The Novel to 1990
2. Fielding - A Collection of Essays ed. by Ronald Paulson
3. Tom Jones - William Empson

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JANE AUSTIN

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

"Pride and Prejudice" referred by Jane Austin herself as superior in wit to Emma, is a family novel concerning the five daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet. There are enough foolish pr half-foolish characters in this novel.

James Austen Delights herself by puncturing their inflated egos, their sham, hunbug pretentious natures with shafts of harp wit. Thenovel is unique int he sense that no other novel pictures so accurately and beautifully how a woman of intelligence. elizabeth Bennet, can be embrassed in a society dominated by asses and donkeys who make themselves believe that they are lions and tigers. Mr. Bennet is an endering character with his sarcasm and his natural tendency to escape into the study as and when he is outwitted by the encompassing feminine environment. Darcy's pride offends Elizabeth who is really governed by her own 'prejudices' towards him. To develop their mutual distrust and contempt the silliness of some of the members of the family contributes liberally. But their common sense and intelligence finally unite them. Characterisation; Walter Scott proudly says that he has read Pride and Prejudice three times, which he calls a "very finely written novel" That young lady had a talent for describing the involvement and feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful....."

We find how greatly Scott's honest admiration is relevant since he himself is a mater-novelist with masterly characters andwide, deeplarge canvas. The moral lesson that Jane Austin want to covey in Pride and Prejudice, as in her other novels, though clearly and impressively conveyed, are not offensively put forward. But they spring incidentally from the circumstances of the story. They are not forced upon the reader but he is let to collect them.

The greatness of Jane Austin, as Richard Whatley remarked in 1821, is that like Shakespeare she never repeats. Her characters never resemble one another. Falstaff and Malvolio and many others who arouse laughter are different from one another. So are Macbeth and Julius Ceasar, Atfsten's Mrs. Bennet, Mr. Rushworth and Miss. Bates are no more alike than her Darcy. Knightlley and Berton. Macaulay with some reservations admits that this lady has 'approached nearest to the manner of the great master (Shakespeare) Macualay has no reservation to praise Jan Austen, " a woman of whom England is justly proud" Almost evey other critic on her shares the same view.

We never tire of Jane Austen's characters as each one is different. Her heroines Elizabeth and Emma are really lovable creatures. Rarely do we find living men and women move and speak to each other, love and quarrel on pages, and in Pride and Prejudice, and Emma we have that rare experience. Like Shakespeare too. When she occasionally steps intothe shoes of her characters, Jane Austen is not much bothered about 'the plots' Her innovations is wholly in character and motive, not in situation. The reader's pulse never throbs, his curiosity is never intense, but his interest never wanes. She is a great artist, but high among them; she is a modest Baron among many peers.

The first aversion Elizabeth for Darcy observes. Edwin Muir, was inevitable because of the circumstances in which they met, because Darcy was proud of his social position and Elizabeth was encumbered by her unpresentable family her mother always hunting husbands for her daughters and because both had 'decided that they ought to dislike each other at the

beginning. Elizabeth, is true to her candour in believing that Darcy is cold, haughty and vindictive. She is equally true when later she acknowledges her mistakes and discovers the positive aspects of Darcy. In this regard, we note that the action of the 'plot' moves in the true lines of the truthful movement of the characters 'There is no artificial stimulant administered by the novelist.

Pride and Prejudice confines to a narrow scene and one complex of life. Hardy, Emile Bronte and Meville also have shown the same ability. In such a dramatic novel like this the characters are put in an enclosure. They grow and develop themselves and there is no external hand to help them either positively or negatively. There is no escape into other scenes and if there are any we know that they are false exits. Characters trying to escape through them have to come back to the main stage and wait for their natural inevitable destiny. In Darcy, Jane Austen employs multiple ways of reading a man's behaviour. She conveys her sense of the possibility of very different interpretations of the "same action'" through dialogues that are seemingly trivial but really ambiguous. As the reader goes on he sees that he has been prepared for the climax by a skilful allowance for difficulty to know a complex person like Darcy satisfies present -day readers. We must see Elizabeth's difficulty in deciphering Mr. Darcy's politeness"

We must conclude by reminding over selves of Charelotte Bronete's famous words:

"There is a Chinese fidelity, miniature delicacy in the painting. She ruffles her reader by nothing vehement; disturbs him with nothing profound; the passions are perfectly unknown to her".

Reading List

1. A.O.J. Cockshut The Novel to 1900 Macmillan)

2) "Jane Austen" Ed. by Harry Blamires

a. Critics on Jane Austen Ed. by Judith O' Neill 1970) George Allen arid Unwind

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DANIEL DEFOE : MOLL FLANDERS

Author and His Works

Daniel Defoe is the first significant practitioner of realism in fiction and founder of the modern novel. He is an authority on travel books, lives of pirates and criminals; conduct manuals, sociological tracts and economic surveys. He pictured life as it is, in his novels. He had thorough knowledge of contemporary life in all its shapes. Out of his multifarious knowledge and his keen interest in the remotest phase of life, he wrote his circumstantial account of what a man would do in particular situation. His protagonists are believable individuals. They are ordinary people who are normal products of their environment, victims of circumstances which anyone might have experienced, and which provoke exactly the same moral conflicts between means and ends as those faced by other members of society" There is no divine intervention at all, in his novels.

Defoe is well-known for his novel Robinson Crusoe and Moll Flanders. Ian Watt remarks: "the little art he is truly master, of, of forging a story, and imposing it on the world for truth' His real gift lies on the illusion of authenticity that he creates in his works. Defoe's power lies in his excellence as a story ^teller. Defoe is not a great creator of character. His interest is not in personal trait, but he concentrates on what they do and experience and what effect it has upon their lives. In fact Defoe is interested in actions as long as he sees action in terms of situation. Defoe's Moll Flanders is a study of the effects of heredity and environment in the making of criminals.

Summary

Moll Flanders is the illegitimate daughter of a thief. She is spoilt by the son of the house where she is maid. She marries his young brother who has fallen in love with her. Moll Flanders is thrust into this by circumstances. When this first husband dies, she marries a spendthrift who leaves her and runs away from his debtors. Then she marries a sea captain and goes to Virginia. Later she realizes that he is her half-brother and feels bad returns to England and marries a well to do man who also leaves her. Next she marries a fortune hunter who also gives her up. She finally gets a devoted lover who lives with her for five years and dies parenting two children, but nothing to maintain them. So circumstances force her to steal; she takes up theft as a profession but is caught and sentenced to death. In the Newgate jail she meets her highwayman husband. Both of them are sent to Virginia. She meets again her half brother and son. When he dies, she joins her reformed highwayman and lives prosperously. She does talk about her immoral ways with hatred, in the end.

Thus Moll Flanders is a story of 70 years of life of a single in-dividual. It is in fact a study of the effects of heredity and environment in the making of criminals Defore sees human experience with eyes of a social historian, and so he does not scorn vice and crime in his novels, nor does he laugh at them; but he presents these with a sypathetic concern. He believes that society itself is the main culprit that caused the original crime. Defore in his preface states that his aim in presenting this conventional rogue's tale is to expose the criminals and thereby to warn others. But there is an element of ambiguity in the moral vision presented in the novel.

Moll Flanders appears to be a creature of mixed and unstable motives. "Moll is immoral, shallow, hypocritical, heartless, a bad woman; yet Moll is marvellous"comments Arnold

Kettle.Moll's courage and generosity go long with her moral activities. Her motives are a mixture of prudence and impulse. Moll does have scruples against incest Moll becomes a heronie because she strives for for her indipendence. She has the ambition and the aim to be a human being not a servant. Moll's action and moral choice are based on self interest. Systamattically trying to gain and profit and life Moll faced with problem of survival and aim in life is economic security. Once she achieves that once she prosperous she turns virtuous and looks with repugnance with her earlier actions. There is a charge that Moll's spiritual reformation is not supported by action or physchological change. Nothing in the novel indicates that virtue is more desirable or more enjoyable than wise. Even during her struggle with the society for survival Moll's genuine fears seem to be about the probable results of the discovery of her crimes. Lack of moral pattern is pointed out as one of the short comings of the novel. Defore reduces her heroine to a state of unfriendly misery. Her existence is a continued struggle. Moll is a victim of society at the mercy of working of chance and random circumstances. Yet the novel can be interpreted as a study of temptation,sin and redumption through suffering. Moll Flanders can be dividde into five phases.

The first phase deals with Moll's girlhood and seduction. In this phase through her first two marriages, she learns economic facts of life. The second phase pictures her struggle to maintain herself through a succession of economic social contacts. In the third phase she has lost her looks and grim economic necessity drives her to crime. In the fourth phase she ends up in prison and reaches the scaffold. It is a death in life situation. In the fifith phase she is saved by repentence.

Here we have an archetypal human condition of every woman in society. The novel procliams Defoe's faith in the power of human being to survive. Here for Moll, the main hope is marriage but marriage is an economic institution in which most of the cards are in the hands of the male. She has many husbands, children are abandoned and forgotten, all her actions are primarily dictated by economics. It is true that the book is not the true chronical of a disreputable female but the true allegory of an impoverished soul.

Irony in the Novel

The novel has quite a few moments of subtle and' conscious irony. We do get simple kind of dramatic irony. For example, as a little girl, Moll vows that she will become a gentle woman. But then Moll turns out to be female criminal an expert pickpocket and accomplished prostitute. Moll turns virtuous only after a vicious life helps her to attain economic security. In the novel, in Virgina, woman relates the story of Moil's incestuous marriage, not knowing that she is addressing its chief figure. There is also irony in Moll's innocent acknowledgement that an immoral act is nullified if the person is ignorant of its moral bearings. It is said that " the fundamental shaping irony of Moll Flanders is the double vision of the heroine" Moll knows that she is exactly the opposite of what the family thinks of her.

Narrative

Defoe chooses the pseudo-auto biographical format for his novel, exhibits quite a few feminine characteristics. Yet the autobiographical form makes it difficult for him not to identify himself with the heroine. There in not much depth since we don't see what other characters think of her, we see her only through her own eyes.

It can also be considered as a picaresque novel. A picaresque novel describes the events on a long journey. Don Quixote believes he is on some glorious mission, but he is repeatedly caught up in farcical situations. Picaresque takes the quest story in which somebody is in search of an ideal and deflates it, emphasising that there is no goal to be reached and that one is simply entangled in the complications of life. Moll Flanders also fits into this framework.

There is little or no sense of a society or community, only a sense of limits for the individual protagonist. Before according to Ian Watt concentrates on Isolated individual. There is no opportunity for the individual protagonist to measure himself against more than

his own goals. Elements of realism are very much a stamp of Picaresque.

Topics for Discussion

1. Moll Flanders as tale of Temptation, sin and redemption through suffering.
2. Irony in Moll Flanders
3. Moll Flanders as a study of middle class life.
4. Individual and Society in Moll Flanders
5. Psychology of the criminal in Moll Flanders.

Books for further Reading

Ian Watt in The Pelican Guide. Vol.4

Mack Kinkead wakes in Sphere History of English Literature.

SIR WALTER SCOTT:

THE HEART OF MIDLOTHIAN

Biographical Background

Born in Edinburgh in 1771, Sir Walter Scott was the son of a lawyer. He spent his life visiting castles and battlefields and was also exposed to local legends. He was a voracious reader, acquainted with French, German and Spanish classics, folk tales and old ballads. He was a polio victim yet he was active. He had a natural gift for story telling. He took up the lawyer's profession and during leisure, he pursued his literacy and historical interests. He began his literary output with translations and poetry, He fell in love with a girl was rejected his hand. Later he married Charlott.

He began his literary career with The Ministry of Scottish Border (1802), a collection of traditional ballads. That let him try his hand at writing original verse tales, and the result was The lady of the last Minstrel," describing castles, men at arms and damsels in distress. Scott's popularity was on the increase until Lord Byron came to the forefront. His first novel Waverley itself was a good story of love and adventure portraying the social history of the country. Scott believed that hiding the authorship will boost the sales. Further in some social circle novel-writing was considered to be unworthy of a gentleman. Scottish novels followed one by one like Guy Mannering (1815). Scott's novels can be divided into three classes:

1. Stories of English history set in the Tudor Stuart period: Ivanhoe (1650), Kenil worth (1821)
2. Stories of English and European history set in Middle Ages.
3. Stoics of Scottish past and near present. The Talisman(1825) is a novel about the middle East at the time of the Crusades.

General Chacateristics

A historical novel can be primarily an adventure story, in which the historical elements merely add interest and a sense of importance to the actions described, as it happens in Alexander Dumas' novels or Stevenson's Kidnapped. It can be essentially an attempt to illustrate some aspects of the life of a pervious age distinguishing it from our own. Eighteenth century Gothic romances belong to this category.

Leslie Stephen remarks that "Scott's" best novels might be de-scribed as Tales of My Grandfather'. They dramatise history and men's reactions to such crisis. His recreated past was filled not only by concrete individuals but by historical forces as well. In his novels he presents a particular period and throws light on human character in general. He looks at history through character and vice versa. As a historical novelist, Scott does not retell the story of great events. Through his novels we re-experience the social and human motives which led men to think, feel and act as they did in historical reality. The historical novel need not have a real historical person; no incident in it need have really happened. The world which, the characters inhabit the current that sweep over their lives, and the movements the touch them are real. Scott's tale not only related the fortunes of hero and heroine. It assists in reviving a period of the past. The chief features of a great historic drama or the characteristics of some political episodes Scotte Strength lies in the observation of life and manners, 'the insight into the human heart and command of human passions.

Scott's novels are historical novels in the sense that it can be an attempt to use a historical situation to illustrate some aspect of man's Fate has importance and meaning quite apart

from the historical situa-tion.

Like Shakespeare's History plays, Scott's novels set out to explore and assess particular and attitude to life, in the individual as well as the society as a whole.

Heart of Midlothian

The Heart of Midlothian is one of five novels comprising a series within the Waverley series entitled, 'Tales of My Landlord'. Scott did not publish the Waverly novels initially under his own, name. He invented to fictional personal Jedidah Cleishbotham, school master, and parish clerk. The tales he tells were collected by Peter of Partick or Pattieson who is the personal of the first chapter of the novel. The whole series as the dedicatory paper indicated, deals with Scottish history, national and parochial. The novel is translated into French, German, Italian, Swedish, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and Danish. It has many dramatic and opera versions too. The novel derives its title from Edinburgh's Old Tolbooth prison known as 'the Heart of Midlothian. It is part history and part fiction.

The immediate background of the novel is the Porteous Riot of 1725. In 1725 English Parliament imposed tax on malt or beer, the Scottish national drink. This resulted in wide-spread smuggling. Wilson was a folk hero to be hanged for robbing the exchequer. Fearing that the mob assembled to witness the hanging would save Wilson, Porteous, commander of the city guard unjustly fired at the mob causing a number of deaths. The infuriated mob, headed by Wilson's associated,Roberston, broke open the Tollbooth, carried Porteous out and hanged him.

With these authentic historical events Scott linked the story of Jeanic and Effie Deans, Robertson, whose real name is George Staunton He is the lover of Effie imprisoned in Tallbooth on a charge of child murder. In those day, in Scotland, destruction of illegitimate children by their mothers was a common and frequent crime because the church subjected the erring mothers to public shame and penance. So they con-cealed their pregnancy as best as they could and did away with the in-fant at birth. According to Parliamentary Act of 1690, in the case of women who conceal their pregnancy, if the child is found dead or miss-ing the mother will be considered to be the murderer. This was a law that needed reform and Scott discusses the theme of Justice in the light of this real situation.

The Heart of Midlothian also comments on, the relationship between Scotland and England. The National Covenant of 1638 asserted Presbyterianism as the true and only faith of Scotland. It was a reaction against Charles of England who tired to impose Anglican belief and rituals on the Scottish people. Later Charles II attempted to force . Episcopacy on the Scots and goaded the Covenanters into rebellion in the 1660's. In 1679 the Covenanters were defeated at the Battle of Bothwell Bridge. Scott's Old Mortality refers to these developments. Covenanters quarrelled among themselves and split into groups like Cameroonians. Davie Deans, father of Jennie and Effie is a member of this group. They continued to oppose the government. In 1689 the Presbyterian Church was declared the state church of Scotland. Davie Deans is not fanatically opposed to the government of George II: but believed in civil disobedience. Davie Deans is an independent and stub-born character. Jennie has acquired this faith and Effie, the spoilt daughter, reached against her father's severe principles.

England and Scotland had long been ruled "by one monarch: in 1707 the two countries were officially joined. The poor Scots still felt they lost their national identity. Duke of Agryle was a Scottish Lord and figure of importance in the English government. In 1719 he was appointed High Steward of Household and Duke of Greenwich. Queen Caroline was the regent of the Kingdom at the time of the novel.

Summary

Effie Deans is with child by George Staunton. Meg Murdockson helps Effie to give birth, but Meg's insane daughter Magge Wildtire takes the baby away gives it to vagabonds while Effieis in a fever. Effie is charged with child murder as per the existing law and

CUP/5069/1000/SDE — 17

imprisoned in Tollbooth. During Porteaus Riots, the prison is broken open and Robertson urges Effie to escape- but she refuses. Jeans. Dean, her sister could save her by saying that she had confided to her about her pregnancy. Jearue's staunch religious faith does not allow her to lie and Effie sets on a long heroic journey to London to meet the Queen. Duke of Argyle helps her to meet the Queen and the pardon is granted. Davie Deans gets appointment in a farm in Roseneath and the Duke makes, Reuben Butler, Jeani's lover a minister there. They settle down. Effie weds Staunton. Effie's son is found in an outlaw gang. Before knowing his real identity, he shoots at Staunton and escapes to America. Effie enters a convent in France and dies there.

In this fictional history figuring highwaymen, kidnapping, queens and colourful centuries, "Scott also acts as a moral psychologist and investigator of matters of conscience. Conscience here is historically determined. What interested Scott chiefly, were the moral dilemmas that rigid, uncompromising religion imposed on its followers, who in theory must never sacrifice religious principle to human scruples. All importance of the family and familial relationship, the authority of the father etc. are also underlined here. Quest for Mercy happens to be the central theme centring around the question of moral choice. Throughout the novel, one large question booms: What is justice and what is it worth? Porteous is condemned by the Scottish mob. Porteous was a bad man: but hoe far is the mob justified in their act. Effie is to be hanged. Not Scottish law, but an English queen saves her. Jeanie Dean also faces her moral dilemma: Should she tell a lie to save her sister's life? Thus by the side of the theme of justice and mercy, there is also preoccupation with good ends and bad means. Scott, the novelist doesn't give a final verdict on this eternal argument but he show that law and justice are problematical affairs and the only unambitious and straightforward act is the exercise of charity. Obedience to law was necessary but laws could be harsh and unsatisfactory being made by fallible men. So over and above the workings of law, there can be mercy. At the same time, he also underlines the dangers of lack of personal restraint. The Heart of Midlothian is concerned with flawed moral natures like Staunon's of man fallen nature but of a failure to subdue passion with principle. Effie's unbridled passion for Staunton leads her to act against her own rational happiness and her duties to others . She scarifies, for murder result from her attempts to protect Staunton, She is doomed to be unhappy.

Topics for discussion:

1. Character & Role of Jeans Dean
2. How does Scott blend history and fiction in The Heart of Midlothian?
3. Comment on the theme of justice and mercy.

Book for further reading

Robin Mayhead.Sir Walter Scott(Profiles in Literature)

Thomas Crawfcrdi, Scott

T.F Henderson in Cambridge History of English Literature Vol. XII.

D.D.Delvin: The Author of Waverley.

THE COLLAR

GEORGE HERBERT (1598-1633)

The religious poets of the seventeenth century hold a unique place in the history of English sacred verse. They were not in any case a school-their very Individuality testifies to a general intensity of per-sonal, religious emotion not confined in that age, as some suppose, to the puritans. First of these writers is George Herbert.

George Herbert was born on 3rd April, 1593 in Montgomery, Wales as the fifth son of Richard Herbert of Montgomery, scion of a distinguished Anglo Welsh family "and Magdalen Herbert, a 'woman of parts and later a patroness of John Donne. The Herbert family, the elder branch of which held the earldom of Pembroke, was the most distinguished and powerful of the Welsh Marches, George lost his father at the age of three and a half and it was his mother who influenced George until her death in 1627. George had six brothers and three sisters. Magdalen brought them up; she was an exceptionally resourceful woman of great character, intelligence, piety and beauty. After just over a decade of widowhood she married Sir John Danvers, a man twenty years her junior.

In 1604 the Herbert family moved to London. Probably it was there that Magdalen got acquainted with John Donne. She must have helped Donne, even encouraged him, during his financial difficulties after his imprudent marriage (refer to notes on John Donne). They remained close friends until her death. In his sermon at her funeral Donne paid a glowing tribute to her remarkable qualities and described her house "as a court in conversation of the best". No doubt, Donne moulded the character of George Herbert and influenced his poetry and his ultimate decision to take holy orders.

From the age of twelve to sixteen George attended Westminster School. A year after his entry he was nominated a King's scholar. His career was extremely successful. He studied music amongst his disciplines and became proficient. His headmaster's parting exhortation to him forecast that he "would not fail to arrive at the top of learning in any art or science". He warned Herbert against impairing his health by too much study-for despite all his other advantages Herbert suffered ill health throughout his life, and frequently mentions it in his letters and writings. We note here a close similarity between Herbert and great Victorian religios poet. Gerald Manley Hopkins.

Sir John Danvers, rich, handsome and cultured, and the stepfather of George Herbert, was a friend and favourite of Lord Chancellor. Francis Bacon. Through him Herbert became close to Bacon.

From 1609 to 1612 Herbert was at Trinity College, Cambridge where he took his B.A. and wrote, among other things, two Latin elegies on the death of Price Henry and a New Year Letter to Magdalen reprov-ing, "the vanity of those many love poems that are daily writ andconsecrated to Venus" and lamenting "that so few are writ that look towards God and Heaven". He enclosed two sonnets consecrating" my poor abilities in poetry" to "God's Glory". He adhered to his resolution until his death.

Magdalen wished her son to enter the church and Herbert appears to have intended that himself when he entered Cambridge. Having been a brilliant academic, however, he became attracted by the prospects of distinction that university office held, he was elected a minor fellow of his College in 1614 and a major fellow in March 1615 and he proceeded to the master's degree in 1616. Thereafter he pursued his studies in the Classics and divinity-

and was given a minor college office which involved a little teaching. Walton says of him at about this period that if during this time he expressed any error it was that he kept himself too much retired, and at too great distance with all his inferiors; and his clothes seemed to prove that he put too great a value on his parts and parentage'.

in 1618 he was appointed to his first university office as Prolocutor or Reader in Rhetoric. He was required to lecture four or five mornings a week expounding such classical orators as Cicero or Quintillion. However, he chose to lecture in fulsomely flattering terms on a Latin oration of King James's, which suggests what shape his ambitions were taking. Before the end of his year's duty as Praelector he was aspiring to succeed the retiring public Orator, for whom he had already deputised at least once. This post offered opportunities for contact with the King and other influential people and could lead to other appointments to high office in the state. Herbert made use of all the influence unashamedly to obtain it, and in January 1619/20 he was elected to the post of Public Orator. His first task was to write an official letter to the King, and he took the opportunity to append a flattering epigram.'

As James I often came to hunt near Cambridge, Herbert soon had chances to gain royal favour and exploited them successfully. His personal advantages were considerable, for the came from a good family, he vas handsome, learned, eloquent and capable. He had powerful allies at Court also: his kinsman, the Eart of Pembroke, was Lord Chamberlain; his eldest brother, Edward (later Lord Herbert'of Cherbury, a distinguished soldier, poet, philosopher and diplomat), had gained court favour and become Master of the Revels in 1623. After 1621, Herbert seems to have spent more time at the Court than at Cambridge. From a modern point of view his behaviour may seem sycophantic and timeserving. By the standards of his own time, however, he was doing that any young man of his connections and ability would do in seeking the patronage of the King. Nevertheless, it is apparent that his intention to enter the Church had given place to more worldly ambitions.

In 1625, however, before Herbert had obtained the advancement he sought, King James I died. Presumably Herbert could well have gained the favour of his successor; but for reasons unknown he did not do so, but abandoned court-life.

Herbert was thirty-two when, towards the close of 1625 he an-nounced his decision to enter into holy orders. No doubt he was encouraged in this not only by his mother but also by Donne, who was staying at the family's home at Chelsea at the time. In 1626 Herbert was ordained deacon, and instituted by proxy to the canonry and pretend of Leighton Ecclesia, near Huntingdon. This was a sinecure and did not involve parish work; and Herbert apparently never officiated at Leighton or even visited it.

It was usual to seek ordination as a priest one year after becoming a deacon, but Herbert did not do so. He appears to have suffered a period of doubt as to his worthiness *to* become a priest. Also his health was particularly poor at this period and he was threatened with consumption. For his health's sake he stayed for about a year with his' brother Henry in Essex. During 1627 his mother died, and a few months later he resigned his oratorship.

In 1628 he went to stay with his stepfather's elder brother, Lord Danby, at Dauntsey, near Chippenham in Wiltshire. Here he made up his mind to enter priesthood and to marry. After a brief courtship he married Danby's cousin, Jane Danvers, on 5th March 1628/29; in 1630 he became Rector of Bemerton, near Salisury, and was ordained priest. This rectory was the gift of his kinsman, the Earl of Pembroke; but as the king had promoted the outgoing rector it was for him to make the presentation. At Pembroke's request, Charles bestowed it 'most willingly to Mr. Herbert, if it be worth his acceptance.

At this time it was most unusual for a man of Herbert's birth and education to become a country parson or even to take orders at all. Moreover, Bemerton was a small and obscure parish, and both its churches were in bad repair. Having at last made his decision and be-come a priest, however, Herbert devoted himself to his callings so completely that all who knew

him loved and revered him. His own prose work, A PRIEST TO THE TEMPLE, OR, THE COUNTRY PARSON, shows with what devotion he regarded his responsibility, for it sets down his ideals and was written, as he said, as 'a mark to aim at'. His friend Nicholas Ferrar, who had established a religious community at Little Gidding (kindly recall T.S. Eliot's FOUR QUARTETS) near Huntingdon, later described him as 'companion to the primitive saints and a pattern or more for the age he lived in', and Izaak Walton (Herbert's biographer) and Lord Herbert of Cherbury both testify to his reputation for sanctity. He celebrated divine service twice a day and ministered actively to the needs of his parishioners, however humble they were.

However, Herbert's ministry at Bemerton lasted only three years, for his health was failing. He died on Friday, 1st March 1633, in his fortieth year, meeting his end with serenity and with a prayer on his lips.

The Temples:

George Herbert's poems are almost all included in a collected works called The Temple'. More than half of the one hundred and sixty poems in this collection were written during his Bemerton days, during which time he also revised many of his earlier poems; Though some earlier poems written in Latin had been published, none of his English verse had appeared in print; but some must have circulated in manuscript, for he had a reputation as a poet during his life time. After his death the manuscript of "The Temple' was conveyed to Nicholas Ferrar, who arranged for its publication within a year. The book was an instant success and was acclaimed both for its poetic excellence and for the pi-ety of its author. Herbert's piety is evident in that he was a close friend of John Donne, Bishop Lancelot Andrewes and Nicholas Ferrar. In his poetry he resembles Hopkins.

It is unfortunate that Herbert destroyed his secular poems just before he died.

Poems in 'The Temple' record Herbert's spiritual struggle, but do so in such a way as to generalize his experience for the edification of all those who seek to embrace the mercy of God. His lyrics, like those of Donne, are surprising in their intellectual range and their frankness as also in the obscurity of their figurative language.' They have! such unity and such clarity of structure, however, that they are easier to follow than those of Donne. As Herbert described the poems himself in his last mes-sage, they are pictures of his many spiritual conflicts and his final peace.

Salient Features of Herbert's Poetry:

The range of George Herbert's poetry is limited, as he wrote only on religious themes. Nearly all his poems are comparatively short lyrics. However, content and technique demand the epithet 'great' to modify them with.

In considering the contents of the poems we must contemplate the character and endowments of the man in the course of his life. As we know, he was of aristocratic birth and breeding, handsome and courtly, intellectually brilliant. He achieved swift success in university life and sought further distinction at Court. Then he turned his back on all this and after long consideration and hesitation became a humble country parson, so complete!/ dedicated that in three short years he gained the reputation of a saint. Clearly, such a man was of complex character and his development was accompanied by deep spiritual conflicts. These conflicts are expressed in many of his poems.

Herbert was not troubled by doctrinal doubts, for he accepted whole-heartedly the tenants of the Church of England; nor is there any mysticism in his poems. His own words, in his last message to Nicholas Ferrar, clearly describe-their subject matter:."a picture of many spiritual conflicts that have passed between God and my soul, before I could sub-mit mine to the Will of Jesus my Master, in whose service I have now found perfect freedom". He writes of the problem of resignation, and of his sense of unworthiness; he explores and analyses as subtly as Donne his own emotions, moods and motives;, he is constantly concerned with

the relationship between God and man, constantly striving towards the closer knowledge of God and himself.

One aspect of Herberts's poems which is likely to strike us at once is that many of them are direct colloquies with god, expressed in a conversational tone of remarkable intimacy, which, however, is controlled with such tact that it never degenerates into sentimentality. The effect is completely natural because of Herbert's ability to suggest the speaking voice. This he does with an ease "and range-from the courtly to the vigorously colloquial - that give his verse a dramatic quality (typically metaphysical) which his fondness for dialogue and questions makes particularly noticeable.

To achieve an effect of speech in blank verse is comparatively easy; Herbert's achievement is the more remarkable because he used a very wide variety of metrical forms. No less than a hundred and sixteen of his poems are written in forms which he does not repeat. His poems exhibit an extraordinary technical skill and inventiveness. He invents for each lyrical situation exactly the rhythmic setting that befits it. (Recall the fusion of form and content and Eliot's well known phrase-unified sensibility). He writes with great economy, being an adept at packing meaning in to a small compass; and he is notably a poet of complete poems that is to say that his poems make their effect as wholes, not as collections of brilliant fragments; and individual stanza, lines and phrases suffer by being removed from their contexts.

Herbert's poetry expresses the combination of intellect and sen-sibility and the flexibility of attitude characteristic of Metaphysical wit; but his use of imagery and the conceit differs considerably from that of Donne. He does not draw his images from scientific or scholastic learn-ing, as Donne does, but from familiar everyday source. Like Donne, he often surprises the reader into a new "understanding; but he does this not by outlandish comparisons, but by the contrast between he dignity of his subject matter and the familiarity of the image used to illustrate it, as in AFFECTION : (lines 19-36)

At first thou gavest me milk and sweetness;

....

I was blown through with every storm and wind.

Despite the intellectual vigour and the subtlety of Herbert's poems, they are always graceful and usual lucid, Moreover, they are expressed in language of a purity which drew from Coleridge the comment:

"nothing can be more fine, manly and unaffected."

Henry Vaughan mentions Herbert in the Preface of his second edition of "Silex Scintillaus: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations" as follows:

The first, that with any effectual success attempted a diversion of this foul and overflowing stream was the blessed man, Mr. George Herbert, whose holy l'fe and verse gained many pious converts, (of whom I am the least)...

The Collar : God's Parenthood)

Herbert wrote virtually all his poetry in the last years of his life (1630-33) while he was vicar of the tiny village backwater of Bemerton where he had retired after failing to gain the glittering prizes of State Office he had once expected. But the difficulty of reconciling himself to this apparent failure in worldly terms and accepting a very different spiritual purpose for his life became the subject of many of his poems. The subject is essentially conflict, and as is frequently stated, conflict is the very essence and soul of drama. Herbert's treatment of this conflict is seen at its best and most dramatic in "The Collar".

For your ease and convenience and for ready reference the text of the poem is given below. The spelling is modernized. If available, read the poem 'Affliction', which is companion to it.

George Herbert The Collar

Note : Spelling has been modernized.

I struck the board, and cried, No more.
I will abroad.
What? Shall I ever sigh and pine?
My lines and life are free; free as the road,
Loose as the wind, as large as store.
Shall I be still in suit?
Have I no harvest but a thorn
To let me blood, and not restore
What I have lost with cirdial fruit?
Sure there was wine
Before my sighs did dry it: there was corn
Before my tears did drown it.
Is the year only lost to me?
Have I no bays to crown it?
No flowers, no garlands gay? All blasted?
All washed?
Not so, my heart: but there is fruit,
And thou hast hands.
Recover all thy sigh-blown age
On doubt pleasures : leave thy cold-dispute
Of what is fit, and not; forsake thy cage.
Thy rope of sands,
Which petty thoughts have made, and made to thee
Good cable, to enforce and draw,
And be thy law.
While thou didst wink and wouldst not see.
Away; take heed:
I will abroad.
Call in they deaths head there: tie up thy fears
He that forbears
To suit and serve his need,
Deserves his load.
But as I rav'd and grew more fierce and wild
At every word.
Me thought I heard one calling, CHILD:
And I replied, MY LORD.

Notes:

the board = the table

will abroad = will go out into the wide world on the look out for secular joys and non-religious achievements.

Lines = lines of poetry with the secondary meaning of the rigging of sail ships,

store = the infinite variety of things in creation,

in suit = waiting on the high and mighty seeking favours.

Thorn = strongly suggestive of the crown of thorns of Jesus

Blood = bleed, consequent upon hard work which is not productive

Cordial = restorative

cordial fruit = fruit which can ease and comfort the bleeding heart.

Bays = bay leaves; laurel; crown of victory

Sigh-blown age = days wasted in sighs and cries,

Double-pleasures = carnal, earthly joys and those of Heaven

Rope of sands = Can ropes be made out of sand? If the answer is yes' we know the rope will have no strength at all. Human conduct, if contained and restricted by religion, will have no inherent strength at all.

Cable = strong rope, opposite of rope of sands.

Cable, enforce, draw, law = the leash, discipline and the code of conduct.

wink = ignore; close eyes.

death head = skull; a memnto mori (remember you must die); emblem of mortality reminding the penitent of impending death,

rav'd = talked as if mad

Special additional notes:

Collar = (1) clerical collar

(2) metal collar of prisoners/slaves

(3) collar round the neck of a dog or a cat

(4) symbol of servitude and discipline

(5) choler i.e. anger

The titie has profound implications; with its simultaneous sug-gestions of rebellion against restriction and of the necessity of control, which is what it principally denotes, there is the secondary' or comple-mentary suggestion of 'choler'. It is a poem of conquered will in religious conversion.

Metre and Rhyme:

The irregularity of 'The Collar' with the first four lines having ten, four, eight and ten syllables and no discernible over all pattern of either line length or rhyme throughout mirrors the apparent rebellion which is brought to order in the alternate rhyming of the last four lines by the one word 'CHILD' and the simple acknowledgment 'MY LORD'. This is a brilliant example of the fusion of form and content.

Now we shall attempt a paraphrase of he poem. Read it along with the notes and I am sure you will understand the poem well.

Paraphrase

I struck the (dining) table with extreme violence and shouted at the highest pitch of my voice "NO MORE'. I can no longer be a slave. What (is this)? Am I always to sigh and pine? My lines CD of verse; (2) the rigging of a sail ship - the word 'board' suggests *on board* meaning *in the ship;* the word 'lines' suggests meanings like 'toe the line', 'hold the line', 'thong for holding dogs', 'toggling lines', 'lines of ships following the same route', give one line enough', 'ship's line's meaning 'curves of the ship's hull and 'life-line') are free. Note the similes following : 'free as the road' loose as the wind' and 'as large as store', the last suggesting 'at large' meaning 'not in custody.' I am free as the road, loose as the wind, and widely scattered as things in creation. Shall I always be a waiter on God's will like a suitor at Court? Why don't I get any reward? Why am I given thorns (reminding us of Jesus Christ and His crown of thorns, the reward that he got) instead of a decent harvest? It bleeds me, it does not restore my health. Certainly there WAS wine (good agricultural produce; also the blood of Jesus Christ-Holy Communion) which got dried by my sighs: there WAS corn (the body of Jesus Christ) which my tears drowned (Note the hyperbole.) I have been terribly disappointed; those before me were rewarded by God and reward is denied me. Which takes us back to *board* (line 1, dining board, board and lodge. Am I the only one who has lost the 'year' (suggesting the 'ear of corn')? Note the images of agriculture; thorn, fruit, wine, corn, flowers, garland, bay leaves. Are all flowers, gay garlands blasted and wasted? ('Blast' suggests blight, shrivelling up of plants and 'waste' barrenness - The waste Land')

Now Herbert comforts his heart. There is fruit and there are hands. All that has been lost can be 'recovered', regained on 'double pleasures'. No arguments about what is fit and unfit. Give up imprisonment, the rope of sands (refer to notes) You have been given good strong cable (line, leash, rope), to enforce and draw with, to be your law. You did not see it earlier, as you did not wish it see it. Go away, pay attention - *will be free.* You may remind me of death, summon it; tie up your fears. One who waits deserves to be rewarded. As I rebelled and rebelled, I heard the summons 'CHILD" and I instinctively respond ed "MY LORD".

Rounding off:

The poem begins with the priest suddenly rebelling with extreme violence against God's service:

I struck the board and cried 'no more'.... aboard

The near blasphemous shock of this abrupt, direct opening is surely as dramatic as anything in Donne, containing not only forceful language but an explicit location with a character using direct speech. Admittedly, the character is George Herbert himself a person of ill-mannered rudeness who *raved and grew more fierce and wild.* The poem ends quietly but still dramatically with the sudden voice of God calling "CHILD' and Herbert's moving reply of submission 'MY LORD'. This pattern of a shock opening and gentle endings is seen in a number of poems like The Cross', The Flower' and 'Dialogue'.

The poet is simultaneously analysing the conflict in himself and presenting it in terms of human actions and gestures, of the senses and the body; and because the rhythm is strong and dramatically varied, the conflict comes home to us with vividness, with immediacy; we feel it is being enacted for us in words.

With regard to the diction we have in this poem "a selection of language used by men", in the sense that Wordsworth intended. Both imagery and diction are drawn from common human life, the imagery having a homely vividness and the words themselves a concrete strength. Things that can be felt, smelled, handled, tasted, fed on, things that affect the body, that prick it, that cheer and strengthen it, that imprison, draw along, fasten are pervasive; and the words themselves have the solidity and firmness that make us call them 'real': they are at the farthest removed from abstraction. Instances of this kind of firm reality are in nearly every line: 'free as the road', 'as large as store', harvest but a thorn/ "To let me blood',

restore... cordial fruit', and so on. The 'moral' of the poem does not involve any command to insulate oneself from life: the reference to fruit, harvest etc. is to insulate oneself from life: the reference to fruit, harvest etc. is the opposite of grudging, and we feel the presence of a sensuous life in the very quality and character of the words themselves. We feel that when Herbert wrote 'restore' he meant us to receive its full meaning of 're-store'. The line 'call in thy death's head' is a fine example of familiar words used for striking effect. Herbert was explicit and downright about his fondness for his native tongue:

I like our language, as our men and coast;
Who cannot dress it well, want wit, not words.

Bibliography:

Refer to the notes on John Donne.

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ALEXANDER POPE

EPILSTLE TO DR.ARBUTHNOT

Alexander pope is one of the Tory writers of the Augustan period. These writers include Jonathan Swift, John Arbuthnot, Alexander Pope and a few others.

The Tory writers were all born with a talent for and inclination towards satire. Their Toryism became evident not so much in any ad-herence to the old order as in their searching criticism of the new. They differed from Addison and Steele in. that they refused to accept the hu-man with easy geniality. They derived a lot of satisfaction from satire.

Satirists are particularly and peculiarly subject to the misfortune of suffering from ill-will among their contemporaries and misunderstanding from their posterity. Alexander Pope who in his later work was more inclined than Jonathan Swift to personal satire raised for himself a large number of enemies during his lifetime. Besides, his reputation has suffered for more than two hundred years from a continuous tradition of disparagement of his poetry and censure of his moral character. His nature was far from simple and transparent. He was certainly guilty of a few literary indiscretions, too. However, latest researches and scholarship have important corrections of the traditional view of Pope,. Today he is receiving a better and more sympathetic and considerable hearing.

Alexander Pope was born on 21 May 1688 as the only child of an R.C. linen draper (who probably retired about that time and settled some years later at Binifed near Windsor). Alexander was a stunted child and sickly too, and remained all through his life a semi-invalid; both his delicate constitution and religion were obstacles to an ordinary schooling. (Pope's grandfather was a priest of the Church of England and his father had become a Roman Catholic. As a Catholic he was doomed to suffer disabilities imposed by the Protestant Crown and government) So Pope was irregularly educated at home by some Catholic masters. Having been a precocious child, exceptionally studious and highly gifted, he gave indication of a literary bent. He avidly read all literatures, especially in English and Latin. His efforts at poetry were sympathetically criticised by his father.

The social life of the family was confined to a few Catholic neighbours. The sickly child had no playmates and so sought the com-pany of elderly gentlemen, mostly friends of the family such as Sir Wil-liam Trumbull (a retired diplomat) and William Walsh (John Dryden's friend) who might have been the apocryphal gentleman who once took Pope to Will's coffee house to gaze from the distance upon the veteran and illustrious John Dryden. It was William Walsh who gave the young Pope the advice to strive above all to be a 'correct' poet. Pope had known Wycherely, the playwright now aged and decayed in mind. Popes "Pastorals" has some of such people passing about in it. The great bookseller of the period Jacob Tonsor sought permission to publish "Pastorals" and in 1709 his Miscellany published it. And at the age of twenty-one Pope was launched on a literary career with friends and admires in the great world of London.

More or less at this time his 'Essay on Criticism' had been completed. In 1711 it was published (after a lot of polishing). Addison praised it to the high heavens, calling it in 'The Spectator' a masterpiece in its kind', though the merit of the poem is not in any originality of thought but in 'giving things that are known an agreeable turn'. Like all of Pope's work it is full of aphorisms that have become modern proverbs which bears testimony to Pope's genius for compressed expression.

In 1712 Pope's triumphant march with 'The Rape of the Lock' began. The poem is a mock-heroic composed in order to allay the ill-feeling aroused among some of his R,C friends when the twenty-two year old Lord Petre snipped off a lock of the lovely Miss Arabella Fermor's hair. This brilliant and amusing poem seemed to Addison close to perfect, but Pope risked a revision and expansion of it and published it in 1714. The final version was far superior to the original draft. Revision was Pope's obsession

As his reputation grew, so did his circle of friends. He met Addison's circle, contributed to his 'Spectator' and Steele's Guardian. He collaborated with the Scribbler's Club. This resulted in some coolness creeping between Addison and Pope; Meanwhile, Pope was becoming a part of the Tory set. However when he wrote the prologue for Addision's 'Cato' in 1713 he was said to be a Whig. In 1713 itself Pope published his "Windsor Forest , a landscape poem where he lavished praise on the Treaty of Utrecht just signed by the Tory ministry. His association with the Toryists (Swift, Prior, Arbuthnot, Gay and Bolingbroke, all senior to him) directed his future poetry. This becomes evident in 'The Dunciad' and thereafter

The year 1714 is important in the life of Pope. From 1714 Pope began to have literary and political enemies, which made him observe that 'the life of a wit is a warfare upon earth'. From the 'little Senate' over which Addison reigned at Button's coffee house began to emanate lampoons and scurrilous attacks on Pope, some of them, as known now to us, revised and moderated by Addision's friend Tickel undertook a rival translation , which however never got beyond the first book of the 'Illiad'. Pope had begun to dislike Addison for various reasons. The latter had been showing a patronizing attitude to young poets, including Pope. Addison had not extended any support to Pope's translation, which was never completed. Addison had not supported and approved of Pope's inclusion of the "Machinery of Spirits" in 'The Rape of the Lock' whose inclusion had in fact tremendously improved the poem and its appeal. The translation which took ten years was a great success, though .his detractors continued to attack it on various grounds, some just of course. In 1725 Pope completed his edition of Shakespeare. Though it is not very scholarly, it has very readable introductions.

Pope continued to write and in 1728 began his 'Dunciad' and constantly revised it, updated it to its final form in 1743. He wrote his Moral essays between 1713 arid 1735, The Essay on Man' in 1733-34. "The Imitations of Horace' in 1733-37 and; The Epistle to Dr.Arbuthnot 1735. Pope died in 1744.

People of tender minds are prone to think that all satirists are ogres. But Pope, like Swift and Arbuthnot, was an urbane and amiable person. He was the admired and valued friend of many distinguished men, with whom he associated as an equal. He is primarily the poet of an accomplished society, a society adult and worldly, hard-headed and severe in its judgments, distrustful of naivete and illusion, a society that insisted that the commonplace substance of life, in which it preferred to seek its satisfaction, be graced and distinguished by wit and decorum. Dr. Johnson says: of his intellectual character the constituent and fundamental principle was Good Sense, a prompt and intuitive perception of consonance and propriety. In essential spirit he resembles Horace, although he differs from the Roman poet in the greater sharpness and profusion of his personal attacks. As the poet of the critical spirit, the castigator of offences against taste and good sense he occupied a position in English literature similar to that of Boileau in French literature. Both in its graceful art and in its caustic commentary on life, his poetry was intended for the polite world. He wrote for those witty enough to be delighted and amused by the subtle turns and minute intricacies of his highly patterned couplets.

Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot

Pope wrote the Epistle (a literary work usually in verse in the form of a letter) to defend his career as a satirist. Later he gave it the title of "Prologue to the Satires'.

This epistle is in the form of a dialogue. Dr. John Arbuthnot (1667-1735) was a leading

medical practitioner of the day. Queen Anne had retained his services as physician-in-ordinary (by permanent ap-pointment, not for special occasion). He worked in St. Andrew's Hospital. He had written many learned books on medicine and also the 'Memoirs of Martinus Scribelerus' and "History of John Bull" He was a close friend of Pope and Swift, it was Arbuthnot who had ministered to Pope's mother on her deathbed and also to Pope when he was suffering from severe depression and melancholia.

The Epistle is "in reply to the doctor's request to Pope to continue his tirade against vice". It is an autobiographical piece filled with tenderness and gratitude-he acknowledged the Doctor's service to both his mother and himself. His gratitude is evident in lines 27-29, 133-134, 131-133, 408-410 and 414-415. Thus the poem gives Pope an opportunity to celebrate and perpetuate the loving memory of a great friend and a good doctor and also to settle certain old scores on his rivals and adversaries like Addison (referred to as Atticus) and Colley Gibber, Ambrose Philips, John Dennis; Richard Bentley Hervey (referred to as Sporus) Weisted and Bubb Dodington. I have already mentioned why Pope was unhappy with Addison.

The lines we have to study are 193-214, commonly called the Atticus passage. It is a brilliantly balanced account of Addison where form and consent are inseparably and harmoniously blended with each other. Nevertheless, we have to, for the sake of continuity, rush through the earlier lines and get a bird's eye view of the poem for a better un-derstanding of Pope's penchant or an skill at satire. Given below is an almost verbatim paraphrase of the earlier section. Pope asks his servant, John Serie, to close the door lest he be tortured by poetasters who are like the inmates of Bedlam (a mental hospital) let loose who might with fire in each eye and papers in each hand rave, recite and madden round the land; Pope is defenceless against them who have pretensions to be-longing to Parnassus. They pierce his thickets, glide through his grotto, renew their charge by land, by water, stop Pope's carriage and board his barge. They impinge on him even in the church, even on the Sabbath day, even at dinner time. In short, Pope is hounded down by poet as-pirants who had better leave poetry to more competent people. It is the wrong kind who want to be poets and bump into Pope with persistent demands for help (by way of introduction to prospective patrons etc, etc) Arthur More's son, James More, stole six lines of Pope illegally. Cornus a cuckold blames Pope for the former's wife's elopement.

Pope now addresses Dr. John Arbuthnot as Friend to his life, but for whom Pope would have died long back and the world would have been poorer by many an idle song. He wants to know if there is any drop or medicine to remove the plague (the torture by worthless poetasters) and which it will be a fool's wrath or a fool's love that will kill him. He is being bombarded and tortured by their writing or by their reading. Pope is to judge the quality of their products. He civilly and patiently suffers, reading with honest anguish and an aching head". At last Pope advises the producer of the work: 'Keep your piece nine years, which amount to "Don't ever publish it!"

Now the torture takes another direction. The poetaster requests Pope to take it and correct, edit or do whatever he wants to do with it. He is all submission and has no objection whatever.

Another demands just three things; Pope's friendship, a prologue to his work and a help of ten pounds. Pitholeon (a stupid poetaster referred to in the satires of Horace, the Latin poet) needs Pope's intervention in getting a patron. (We do not as yet know whom Pope refers to by Pitholeon) Curt is mentioned - he was *a* notorious publisher who deceived.

A packet arrives and it presents Pope with two choices. If Pope dislikes if 'Furies, death and rage!' If he likes i, he has to commend it to the stage for performance. But Pope is a total stranger to the theatre and players. Then comes the strangest request-to get it printed through Lintot, who was for fourteen years Pope's publisher. The objection of Pope is overruled with clever remarks by the author: Not, sir, if you revise it and retouch! Every move of Pope is

countered by a stronger, more devious move by the author. At long last. "Do; and we go snacks. This is the offer of bribes- a temptation-to go fifty fifty and it is also he last straw on the camel's back. Pope orders him to get out and closes the door.

The story of Midas and his ass's ears is quoted, ope is the first, just as the queen (or is it the minister?) of Midas, to expose the faults of lesser writers.

Arbuthnot sympathises with Pope and comforts him. He asks Pope to forbear and not to retaliate, to take pricks of the substandard writers (Pope's tormentors) easy. But Pope is not prepared for that. Instead of just pricking, suppose they start biting and kicking. Then what? Let it be known far and wide that they are asses, they constitute the Dunciad. Once it is said, peace will descend on Pope, just as peace descended upon the Queen of Midas when she disseminated the secret surrounding her husband's ears.

But fools are notoriously insensitive. They do not get hurt easily, palm they are absolutely unaffected even when they are laughed at openly, publicly: Pit, box, gallery (the spectators in a theatre) in convul-sions hurl'd/ Thou standst unshook amidst a bursting world. Nothing can affect him-like a spider he keeps at his work and is never tired.

Who shames a scribbler? break one cobweb through,

He spins the slight, self-pleasing thread a *new:*

Destroy his fib or sophistry, in vain,

The creature's at his dirty work again,

Throned in the centre of his thin designs,

Proud of a vast extent of flimsy linest.

Pope now names the galaxy of idiots who later make up the

Dunciad: Gibber, Henley, More, Philips etc. At once Arbuthnot intervenes: Hold! for God's sake-you'll offend-/No names-be calm learn pru-dence of a friend. Pope had counter arguments o defend his outburst. Pope mentions what Grub Street (a place for literary hacks) can do. Publishing is dirty, corrupt business. He refers to the business of flat-tery. He refers to himself and how he happened to be a writer.

"As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,

I lisp's in numbers, for the numbers came,

I left not calling for this idle trade,

No duty broke, no father disobeyed:

The Muse but served to ease some friend, not wife,

To help me through this long disease, my life"

then he gratefully acknowledges his indebtedness to Dr. Arbuthnot:

"To second, Arbuthnot! thy art and care,

And teach the being you preserved to bear".

In the next lines Pope mentions those who admired him and his literary output: Granville, Walsh, March, Congreve, Swift, Talbot; Somers, Sheffield, the Bishop of Rochester, Henry St. John (These lines, too, are autobiography). History and historians are nowhere near the above in helping to establish the repute of Pope as a Poet. Pope men-tions the soft quality of his lines which contain no offence at all. How-ever, Charles Gildon adversely criticised Pope's early poetry; so did Dennis. But Pope wisely refrained from counter attack {because they were mad) Pope accepted good criticism. Now Pope come heavily on Bentely and Theobald who were critical of Pope's works. They were pretentious and never sincere.

Pope generously forgave many. Yet if they raged, "I gave them but their due". Ambrose Philips who attempted a translation of. "The Arabian Nights" from French was a plagiarist (His 'Pastorals was a verbatim rendering of Spenser). Pope calls him a thief and a blunderer who writes mad prose not verse. Nine such as him equalled a Nahum Tate who revised Shakespeare's King Lear' and gave it a happy ending!! "How did they fume, and stamp, and roar, and chafe!"

Now comes our passage

THE ATTiCUS PASSAGE

Peace to all such! but were there one whose fires
True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires;
Blest with each talent, and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live, with ease;
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caused himself to rise;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And, without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
Alike reserved to blame, or to commend,
A timorous foe, and a suspicious friend;
Dreading even fools, by flatterers besieged.
And so obliging, that he ne'er obliged:
Like Cato, give his little senate laws,
Arid sit attentive to his own applause;
While wits and Templars every sentence raise
And wonder with a foolish face of praise
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he? (Lines 193-214)

P[illegible] to all such persons! (who have already been mentioned in the earlier lines) But if there were one whose fires are kindled by true genius and whose fair fame is inspired by true genius, who is blessed with each talent and each art to please (others, readers), who is born to write, to converse and to live with ease and if such a man who is fond of ruling alone, all alone, should bear, like the proverbial tyrannical Turk, no brother (some one like him, a writer, poet; speaker) near the throne and view him (the brother, the competitor) with scornful and' jealous eyes and (with) hate for arts that caused himself to rise and try to destroy the one with negative, damning flattery and civil leer, if he who himself does not sneer, but teaches others to sneer, who is willing to wound and yet afraid to strike, who hints at a fault and hardly reveals dislike (conceal hatred), who nether blames nor commends, who is timorous and suspicious, who is afraid of fools and besieged by flatterers, who is very obliging though never obliged, who is like Cato who gives his little senate laws and listens to his own applause (who blows his own trumpet) and when those who surround him flatter him without mincing

words and with a foolish face, how can one refrain from laughing at such a person, how can one refrain from weeping if he were Atticus? (i.e. Addison)

(Atticus was a friend of Cicero the orator and reminds us of Attica/Athens meaning "chaste, refined, classical in taste, language etc. etc." Note the irony here)

I have already indicated earlier why Pope was incensed and provoked to write these lines. Later, after Addison died, his name was changed to Atticus in order not to stain the greatness of a truly talented man)

In the remaining lines of the Epistle Pope declares that he never sought after fame or popularity. He catalogues what he never did. He continues his satire relentlessly and sometimes waxes eloquently on his biography. On many occasions the satire borders on scurrilous attacks, e.g. Lines 305-308)

The Poem continues for another two hundred lines. In between he lavishes praise on Dr. Arbuthnot, who concludes the poem:

Whether that blessing be denied or given.
Thus far was right, the rest belongs to Heaven.

Written in flawless heroic couplets it is a remarkably lucid satire and deserves unstained praise.

CAUTION: The above notes are no substitute for the poem proper.

Read the poem several times. It is available easily.

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NURSES SONG

WILLIAM BLAKE

William Blake, poet, painter, engraver, was born in 1757. A genius of a very high order, he is immortal thanks to his poetry especially lyrics and engravings. He was the son of a humble London tradesman, said to have been interested in the mystic theology of Swedenborg. As William early proved to be too different to be sent to school with the other children he was irregularly tutored at home. At the age of four he had the vision of the face of the Almighty outside the window of his room and a few years later conversed with the prophet, Ezekiel, under a tree. Blake continued in such familiar association with spiritual creatures all through his life. As he very early in age showed marked inclination and talent for drawing, he was apprenticed to a well known engraver called James Basire in 1771. He was assigned the task of making drawings of the monuments in Westminster Abbey and some other old churches. He studied art at the Royal Academy. The result was that during his impressionable age he came under the strong influence of Gothic art which was for him the supreme embodiment of expression and truth. In 1782 he married Catherine Boucher, who was neither literate nor nu-merate, but who brought Blake the invaluable gift of sympathy with his work and profound understanding of and belief in all her husband's vi-sions. Blake was lucky to have had friends like Flaxman, the famous sculptor, Feseli, the engraver, and Thomas Butts and William Hayley who understood how to be of practical assistance to the great, independent, proud and enormously gifted artist.

In 1788 (Blake was twenty-six) he brought out his "Poetical Works" whose cost was borne by his friends. The book showed Blake's promise for the future and his liking of the Elizabethan age an literature. In 1789 the publication of his 'Songs of Innocence'; and in 1794 the 'Songs of Experience indicated the full flowering of his poetic/lyrical genius, which was also a testimony to his own method of copper plate engraving. Some of the poems can be found in almost all anthologies today, Professedly written for children the poems in these volumes are deceptively simple; they are child-like, not at all childish. They have a little of the humour that usually the children's books make use of as a concession to adult self-consciousness. The poems are as a matter of fact, visions seen with the intensity of genius. Like the later Prophetic Books they were written with the conviction that true poetic inspiration is a kind of direct and immediate spiritual revelation. The titles 'Songs of Innocence' and "Songs of Experience2' indicate (as do some of the poems in the books_ that Blake is 'showing the two contrasted states of the human soul. In the second volume there are bitter lamentations over the injustice and cruelty, the tragic conditions which experience' discovers in 'things as they are'. These verses for children, though they are probably destined to remain the most popular part of Blake's work, constitute a kind of poetic prologue to his more pretentious 'Prophetic Books' devoted to the great philosophical theme of the regeneration of mankind and the return to the state of innocence. The true Blake, the visionary poet, is evident in "The Book of Thel' (1789), The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (1790) and the Prophetic Books, namely Visions of the Daughters of Albion and America (1793), Europe and Urizen (1794), Los and Ahanina (1795), Milton (1804) and Jerusalem (1804). In these Blake uses his private and personal symbolism and revolutionary ideas and beliefs and so they are quite incomprehensible to the uninitiated reader.

In style and in thought Blake achieved the most original and unconventional expression of the romantic revolt of his age. He broke completely with the artistic traditions of neoclassicism (the romantic re-vival was pioneered by Blake, Collins, Cowper, Burns and a

CUP/5869/1000/SDE — 18

few others). His rhymed verses in bi-s "Songs of Innocence' and "Songs of Experience' have a free and spontaneous melody reminiscent of the Elizabethans and a pure simplicity of diction comparable to Wordsworth at his best. (Note the contrast between Blake and the Augustan Satirists).

The literary output of Blake may be classified under four heads on the basis of form.

1. Lyrics including the "Songs'
2. Irregular verse without rhyme.
3. Rhythmic Prose
4. Descriptive Critical Prose Writings.

Needless to say, there is considerable overlapping of one another.

Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience

Perhaps William Blake owed something to Dr. Issac Watts, author of "Divine and Moral Songs for Children" and Anna Letitia Barbauld, besides several other authors of children's books of the period, Issac Watts (1674-1748) and Anna Barbauld (1943-1825) were popular writers of children's books.

The songs abound in wonder, compassion, sympathy and delight. The full title of the complete work is "Songs of Innocence and of Experience showing the Two Contrary states of the Human Soul." The two sets should be read together and they teach in their singing. Inno-cence, for Blake, stands for the pre lapsarian wisdom of man (i.e. his state before the Fall of Man). In one 'the little girl lost is found; in the other the little girl is lost because she has learnt. The contrast between the chimney sweepers is almost unbearable. In the first. "Holy Thursday' we have the sweetness of charity whereas in the second we have the bitter crime of poverty. The poems genuinely evoke the spirit of childhood.

The state called 'experience' needs explanation. When a child realizes that it knows, it gets experience. Thus awareness of awareness is detrimental if the child because that is what the Fall is all about. Before his Fall Adam had 'wisdom' but he did not know it, after the Fall he knew. I shall try to explain it still better. Before Adam and Eve fell, they were naked; the first thing that they did after they tasted of the forbidden fruit was to reach for a fig leaf each to cover their nudity with, for then, and then only, they knew that they were naked. In other words, before the Fall, they were naked, but they did not knew it; after the Fall they knew that they were naked. Thus knowing is experiencing and in turn, experience is knowing. This is where infants differ from adults. Heaven lies about us in or infancy, as Wordsworth says in his famous Ode. It is the loss of Heaven that result as an inevitable consequence of growing up which is nothing but the acquisition and accumulation of experience over the passage of time.

Blake was a visionary and rebel fused into one. He had his personal vision of Nature, infancy and God (Jesus Christ) and he laboured pretty hard to wean himself away from the Augustan bog of highly artificial and contrived clinches. As said earlier, he was the harbinger, along with Collins and Cowper, of. the Romantic Revival. His simplicity and a profound sense of joyous life transformed the emerging new literature towards the end of the 18th century.

Though Blake was influenced by the 18th century Child Literature as a whole and that of Dr. Issa Watts and Anna Letitia Barbauld in particular, he was never a moralizer, as they were. Blake believed in bringing back the lost paradise to earth, for which he depended on in-fants and children. Children are endowed with selfless joy and a prenatal wisdom. They are "innocent" like Jesus. They are Jesuses. Blake's poetic imagination far transcends the mundane, materialistic and moralistic outlook of Watts and Barbauld.

The Songs of Innocence give us a world full of freshness, won-derment, miracle, laughter,

novelty, strangeness, and simplicity and above all, uncorrupted joy. It gives us a world and Nature looked at from the infant's point of view. The "shades of the prison house" have not began to 'close upon the growing boy". The oneness of Jesus, Nature, in-fancy, and innocence is the major theme of "Innocence". The occupants of this world whoever they are, free from the various forms of corruption like jealousy, hatred, pettiness and the like, There is weeping, but the tears are those of joy. There are, of course, danger, cruelty, aggression, fear, the prey, and the predator in this world, but promise is held out that in the kingdom of God all live together in perfect harmony and amity. The meek shall triumph through the intervention of love and compassion and charity.

If the "Songs of Innocence" sings the glory and by of Man before the Fall, the "Songs of Experience" expresses despair, fear, anxiety and anguish. The latter's world is hostile and full of jealousy where we have a blind cruel fate and contradictory creation and where "God" and the "Priests" (i.e. authority) are in collusion with each other and conspire against the defenceless poor and where there is no love, no compassion, no charity and in short, no virtue. Tyranny rules (note the schoolboy's words of agony and despair). We can easily make a catalogue of the issues which loom large in the 'Song of Experience'.

1. They tyrannical and jealous Creator/ God of the Old Testament with His Commandments who is behind the 'shades of the prison house which 'begin to close upon the growing boy'.
2. The world of joyous sexual relationship being under the cloud of jealousy, secrecy, guilty and shame.
3. The dictatorial/authoritarian role of school masters, parents and priests.
4. The misery and poverty of children
5. The stilling 'reason' and the 'meddling intellect'.
6. Hostility to dogmatic religion and despotic kingship.
7. The contradictory elements in Creation (racial discrimination, superior/inferior races, the have and have notes etc. etc.

The poems, as printed by Blake, are either illustrated or decorated by this own copper-plate engraving and the text and the picture are complementary.

They are to be studied together.

The "Songs of Innocence" have a pastoral setting. The pastoral convention which represents the occupation of shepherds in a highly idealized way against a highly idealized country background had come in for strong criticism in the eighteenth century, because of its unreality: men and women, it was said, were neither so joyful, nor so innocent, as they were represented. But, according to Blake, young children do have both joy and innocence and they live in a golden world which is denied to grown up people.

NURSE'S SONG (FROM SONGS OF INNOCENCE)

When the voice of children are heard on the green,

and laughing is heard on the hill.

My heart is at rest within my breast.

Then come home, my children, the sun is gone down.

And the dews of night arise;

Come, come, leave off play, and let us away

Till the morning appears in the skies.

No, no, let us play, for it is yet day

And we cannot go to sleep;

Besides in the sky the little birds fly.

And the hills are all cover'd with sheep

'Well, well, go and play till the light fades away,

And then go home to bed'

The little ones leaped and shouted and laugh'd

And all the hills echoed.

In Blake's design a nurse is resting in the shade of a tree watching a game which looks like ring-a-ring-o' roses. Higher up is a weeping willow, a symbol of tenderness, protectiveness and solitude. We have an interesting question possible here. From whose point of view is the sense being looked at? Is it the child's or the adult's?

"The green", "the hill" in this simple and straightforward poem makes it a pastoral one. The children's play, laughter and shouts fill the nurse's heart with rest and peace. Both she and the children are joy embodied. It is the_ freedom to play that frees the children from the shackles of social conventions and norms. See how all the hills echoed. So here as in other innocence poems Nature, joy and infants are all one. We do discover a tinge of authoritativeness in the call of the nurse which is almost at once quenched by her loving surrender to the children's de-mand i.e. she is not 'jealously' guarding the children in their free state instead, she had let them free freedom is joy, visible in "the little ones leaped and shouted and laughed."

Is it not thus freedom to leap, shout and laugh that is mercilessly nay brutally snatched away from children when they are sent to the prison houses called school? Shouldn't the children be free like the little birds flying in the sky and the sheep gazing on the hillside Are we not violating the very laws of Nature when we send our children to school so early in life, depriving them of joy, laughter and shouting.

It is now believed that this poem was modelled on one by Anna Barbauld. Mrs. Barbauld's Poem is said to be didactic and moralistic and so Blake's must be something like a censure of her poem.

Note the rhyme scheme: abcb. There is internal rhyme: children, green' rest: breast, children, down, play, away, play, day, sky, fly, leaped, laughed.

NURSE'S SONG

(FROM SONGS OF EXPERIENCE)

When the voices of children are heard on the green

And whisp'rings are in the dale,

The days of my youth rise fresh in my mind,

My face turns green and pale

Then come home, my children, the sun is gone down

And the dews of night arise;

Your spring and your day re wasted in play,

And your winter and night in disguise.

This poem begins exactly the same way as its innocent counter-part. But the next three lines of the first stanza are different from those corresponding. Similarly the fifth line is identical in both. Herein ends the similarity.

The word' whisperings' gives us a feeling of conspiracy of shameful secrecy. Besides, who are behind these whispering? Children are not usually guilt-ridden and so it can't be they. "Green' which might mean jealous is an adult reaction. The nurse cannot set the clock back and so she is filled with jealously on not being like children again. She turns pale, She is like Urizen, Father of jealousy. She deprives the children of what is denied her. She regards play, not as it is, a necessary and vital stage of the child's development, but as a waste of time. In the same way, their adult life will be a 'disguise' or 'sham' Disguise is the false self or spectre in which, man imprisons his true self or emanation. The spectre is negation the concomitant being the reasoning power in man.

Note how the poem if filled with images of a negative kind. The nurse has nothing good to say. What is lying in store for the children is no good. They waste their childhood in play and adulthood in deception. The nurse is both jealous and afraid. If daytime is associated with play, then night is associated with work, which, in turn is experience and adulthood.

The poem could easily be one of evil forebodings. Note the rhyme scheme and the internal rhymes, Note also the polarity in the poem created by the possessives (there are eight of them).

Caution

The notes are no substitutes for the poems. Read all the songs of innocence and of experience several times. They are easy to understand and appreciate. They are excellent in their lyrical beauty.

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CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

EDWARD II

Christopher Malowe, the son of John Marlowe, a fairly well-off shoe-maker (and "Clarke of St. Maries") and Catherine, the daughter of a rector, was born in February, 1564, two months senior to William Shakespeare. He was the second of the nine children of the family. Christopher had his early education at the King's School, Canterbury. In 1580-81 he went to Benet (Corpus Christi) College, Cambridge and in 1584, he took his B.A. degree. It is believed that he was refused admis-sion to the M.A. degree course for reasons like his poor academic records, irregular attendance and atheistic views. However in 1587 he took his M.A. degree thanks to the intervention of the Privy Council which forced the University to confer on him the degree as he had been doing espionage work for the government which was responsible for his poor performance records as well as his irregular attendance. In spite of his periodic absence from class, he is considered a University Wit.

The ambitious young man went to London. In 1586 *Tamburlaine the Great* (parts I and II) was performed in London. In 1589 *The Jaw of Malta* was performed. In 1592 *Edward II* was performed, as also *Dr. Faustus*, (It is possible that the latter was performed in 1588 or 1589). In 1593 *The Massacre at Paris* was performed and his most famous poem. "Hero and Leander", was written. In May 1593 Thomas Kyd, a former room-mate of Marlowe and author of *The Spanish Tragedy*, while being tortured, admitted that the heretical papers found in his room belonged to Marlowe. An arrest warrant was issued, but before he could be arrested he was stabbed to death in a tavern brawl by one Ingram Frizer. Marlowe was buried on 1 June, 1593 in the Churchyard of St. Nicholas at Deptford. He was just twenty nine.

Times

It was the period of the Renaissance in England. It was in 1564 that Michael Angelo, the great Italian painter sculptor died and he great religious reformer John Calvin, died. It was in 1564 that Marlowe and Shakespeare were born. In 1576 "The Theatre" was built in Holywell. Shoreditch by James Burbage. There was already the team of players called Lord Admial's Men. In 1577 two more theatres- "The Black friars" and "The Curtain" were opened in Shoreditch. In 1583. The Queen's Company of Players' came into being. In 1587 "The Rose Theatre" was built in Southwark. In 1595 The Swam' was built. In 1599 "The Globe' was opened on the Bankside using the timber from the demolished "Theatre at Shoreditch. In 1600 another theatre called The Fortune' was opened in Cripplegate by Henslowe and Alleyn. Thus in just twenty-five years seven theatres / playhouses came up proving the tremendous popularity plays enjoyed. To a very large extent Marlowe was responsible for this upheaval. Marlowe is acknowledged the greatest playwright before William Shakespeare.

Elizabethan England was in the midst of rapid changes. Increased maritime activities and the ever expanding world, finding of new condiments and establishment of new colonies, the explosive volumes of trade and commerce, the defeat of the Spanish Armad in 1588, humanism, new prosperity and a host of other things made it a remark-able period of time. The sky was the limit to human achievement. Marlowe's plays bear testimony to this ambition. His heroes are super-human, Tamburlaine, Faustus, the Jew are all overreaches. They contain in them the essence of the Renaissance man, the paragon of animals in the brave new world.

Chronicle Plays Before Marlow's Edward II

The history of drama in England upto 1550 spans nearly 300 years from the first quarter

of he thirteenth century to the middle of the sixteenth and saw liturgical pays, the mysteries and he miracles, the Moralities and then secular drama was growing and developing into the next, in the given order. Thus when Marlowe came on the scene, drama had already become secular. In the case of the history plays we may say that they evolved out of the 'Moralities in order to forward the cause of the Reformation. In the middle of the 16th century John Bale's *King Johan* did exactly that with its strange mix of characters like the King, Stephen Langton, Nobility, Clergy, England and the like. Within a- few years the history play matured and got free of morality elements (there is an interesting study of Falstaff from the morality angle he is considered Riot, Sloth, Glouttony etc. personified) By 1580 history plays became totally independent and coincided with the strong sense of nationalism which peaked when Elizabeth ascended the throne. People eagerly desired for knowledge of the past of England and her heroes. The publication and republication of the chronicles of Fabian, Stowe and Holinshed, which ran to several editions prove the enthusiastic response to the call of patriotic spirit. The earliest of these chronicle plays . The famous Victories of Henry V-and then, The life and Death of Jack Straw followed by the two parts of The troublesome Reign of King John, Peek's Edward I, the earliest histories of Shakespeare, Henry IV Parts I and II, then Richard III, are ample poof. In 1590-91 we have Marlowe's "Edward"!!.

Sources

The immediate source of Edward II are Fabyan's Chronicles Stowe's Chronicles and Holinshe'd Chronicles. Most of the material is from Holinshed's. However, Marlowe has significantly altered the ac-counts from Holinshed.

Dramatis Personal

King Edward II:

King Edward II was the son of the King Edward I. He was born in 1312.,In 1327and murdered at Berkeley Castle, Gloucestershire that same year.

Prince Edward

The Prince was the son of King Edward II and Isabella. He was born in 1312. In 1327 he succeeded to the throne of England as Edward III. He died in 1377.

Edmund, Earl of Kent:

Edmund was the son of Edward I and half-brother of Edward ll. He was born in 1301. He was put to death in 1330 by Mortimer.

Gaveston:

Piers Gaveston was the son of a Gascon knight. From early years he was the play fellow of Edward II. In 1307 Gaveston was banished from England by Edward *I* owing to his bad influence over Edward II (the prince). On the accession of Edward II he returned to England. He was given the earldom of Cornwall. Soon he married Margaret, daughter of the Earl of Glouestor. In 1308 he was banished from England again, but returned the following year. He was banished a third time in 1311 but was back in 1312. A few months afterwards he was captured by the barons at Scarborough and beheaded.

Archbishop of Canterbury

Robert Winchelsey was Archbishop from 1294 to 1313.

Bishop of Winchester:

John Strafford became Bishop in 1323 and-archbishop of Can-terbury in 1333.

Warwick:

Guy, Earl of Wawick, was one' of prime opponents of King Edwards II and his minion (Gaveston). He played the key part in the execution of Gaveston. He died in 1315.

Lancaster:

Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, was the most powerful noble in the country and the most

vigorous in his opposition to the king. He was the sworn enemy of Gaveson and of the Despensers. He was defeated by the king's forces at the battle of Borough bridge in 1322, and afterwards beheaded.

Pemroke:

Aymar, Earl of Pembroke, was one of the barons who opposed Gaveston but was afterwards on the side of King Edward II against Lancaster, The hostility to the king attributed to him in the play, even after Gaveston's is unhistorical.

Arundel:

Edmund, Earl of Arundel, was like Pembroke, a supporter of the king after Gaveston's death and opponent of Lancaster. *He* was beheaded in 1326 by the order of Mortimer.

Leicester:

Henry, Earl of Lecister, was the brother of Lancaster. He joined the queen's party against the Despensers, but, after the accession of Edward II, opposed Mortimer.

Barkeley:

Sir Thomas Berkeley was the lord of Berkeley Castle which was seized by the younger Despenser. Berkeley sided with the queen's party.

Mortimer, the Elder:

Roger Mortimer of Chrik was a powerful baron on the border of Wales.

He opposed Edward II and unsuccessfully revolted against him in 1321. He was imprisoned and died in the Tower.

Mortimer, the younger:

Roger,Mortimer of Wigmore was, like his uncle, the elder Mortimer, a baron on the Welsh border. With his uncle he fought against the king in 1321-22, was imprisoned and escaped in 1324, He joined the queens party against the Despensers.

Trussel:

Sir William Trusel as protector of the parliament of 1327 re-nounced in the name of parliament, all fealty to Edward II.

Gurney:

Thomas Gurney was one of the murderers of King Edward. He afterwards fled the country.

Matrevis:

The custody of the king was entrusted to sir John Maltravers, who left the country after Edward's murder.

Queen Isabella:

Isabella was the daughter of Philip of France and married Edward II in 1308. She was sent by the king in 1325 as ambassador to her brother, Charles IV to France, who had for long demanded Edward's homage for his French possessions of Gascony and Pontheiu. In France she gathered about her many of the barons who were hostile to the Spencer's, and in 1326, landed in England with an army. She overthrew the king's forces and. with Mortimer ruled England till 1330. on Mortimer's fall she was sent by Edward II to live in Norfolk. She died in 1357. Niece to Edward II:

Margarete De Clare was the daughter of the Earl of Gloucester, who had married the daughter of Edward I. Margaret married Gaveston in 1307.

Synopisis Scene by Scene

Act I Sc. I

This is a very revealing scene and sets the ball rolling. Two levels are observed at once,

the personal and the political. Pierce de Gaveston has just returned from exile (banished from England by Edward I, now deceased). Edward II's unnatural, perverted passionate love for Gaveston is highlighted. The hostility of the feudal lords of the realm towards the king's minion is focussed. We are given to understand that the first thing that the new king has done, (i.e. revoking the banishment order) has been totally disliked by the lords and it has led to a kind of rift between the king and the powerful lords. In effect, the king has overplayed his hand; he has tried to assert his sovereignty, much to the intense dislike/ disapproval of the lords. This action points a finger at the strength of the king on the one hand and the weakness of the king on the other. The king is unable to identify his priorities. He is a seeker of pleasure, ease and extravagance, much to the discomfiture of the barons. He is swayed by whims and fancies. He desires his minion's presence by his side at all times, not his wife or son, which clearly in-dicates an unusual, unnatural conduct verging on homosexuality. The church and the barons resent the repeal of the banishment order, but the king does not heed. The seeds of civil war are sown. Edward's overbold and undiplomatically handling of the Bishop of Coventry, the confiscation of the assets of the Church, the. Bishop's imprisonment -all these divide the country into two camps- the pro- king and the anti-king camps. The rift widens when honours are heaped on the low- born, common Gaveston, we learn that the political turmoil is born out of personal matters like perverted love for a member of the king's own sex, his inordinate love for pageants and masques etc.

Act. I Sc. II

News spreads that Edward II has confiscated the Bishop of Coventry's assets and imprisoned the Bishop in the Tower. The Church the Ecclesiastical which constitutes one of the three branches of contem-porary society, the other two being the feudal and the scholastic- at once reacts and turns against the crown by joining forces with the feudal or-der. The king is now isolated. The ill- treatment meted out to Isabella, the queen, by Edward adds insult to injury. The lords take strong ex-ception to this conduct. It is for a vulgar, low born man that the king has ignored the princess of France. The Archbishop of Canterbury pleads for restraint because otherwise the country will be torn into several pieces due to internecine wars. Isabella is prepared to endure her ill treatment, humiliation etc. for the sake of avoiding bloodshed, the plot thickens.The conflicts of interests are highlighted. However one looks at it, one feels that Edward II is guilty of serious misdemeanour.

Act I Sc. III

Gaveston who has been given several enviable positions in the form of titles is an upstart. He showers contemptuous remarks on the feudal lords and betrays his lack of decorum, his arrogance and vulgar origins. The demand for his banishment gathers further strength.

Act. I Sc. IV

The lords 'assemble at the New Temple. They insist on the punishment of Gaveston. They draft an order to be endorsed by the king much against his will and pleasure. They will force him to sign the order. Edward II has no choice but to sign the banishment order and Gaveston is banished. Gaveston leaves for Ireland. He, an unscrupulous fellow, has already succeeded in character assassination of Isabella. Isabella on the other hand, pities her husband, she will be ready to suffer provided she is not rejected by her husband. She will be ready to suffer provided she is not rejected by her husband for Gaveston. She hopes that soon she will be able to get him back. She intervenes on her husband's behalf and succeeds. The Banishment order is with drawn. The king pleases and the lords are rewarded for their subdued stand. Isabella has impressed upon the unhappy lords that Gaveston has money, power, influence and, above all, the king's support and he is a formidable enemy. There are other ways of tackling him than getting him banished. Diplomacy is the keyword. His destruction can be managed without any difficulty in absolute secrecy by some hired killer in London it self. So why antagonize the king? Why incur his wrath? The king has arranged Gaveston's marriage to his niece, the heir of the Earl of Gloucester, soon after Gaveston's return from exile.

Actll. Sc.I

The Earl of Gloucester dies. His servants, Spencer and Baldock, have to find new masters to serve. They think about whom they would like to serve. They dec.de on the king's favourite, Gaveston, who is going to marry Margaret, the heir of the late Earl. Spencer and Baldock are sycophants, of small ability, hypocrites and opportunists.

Actll Sc. II

Gaveston returns to England. Even before he reaches the court resentment wells up. As he disembarks at Tynemouth. the lords heap on him scorn and hatred. They even try to kill him which angers the king. News arrives that the Elder Mortimer has been captured and taken pris-oner. The lords at once demand that he be ransomed, but Edward re-fuses to do so (to get Mortiment back)" because of their changed stand with respect to Gaveston. The furious lords point out the destruction of the land on account of Gaveston's bad influence on him, the lowborn devil's abuse and misuse of power, the -empty treasury, the humiliation of Isabella, the reality of foreign invasions, in short, the anarchic rule of England under him. All is due to his passionate involvement with Gaveston. Even Edmund, the king's half -brother, turns against him and soon deserts him.

Gaveston joins Edward. He recommends Baldock and Spencer and Edward retains them as his assistants.

Act ll Sc. II

Edmund joins the feudal lords in their campaign against the crown and Gaveston. The younger Mortimer leads the attack on the castle.

Act II Sc. IV

Gaveston manages to escape by the sea. He is, anyway, now separated from Edward. It is Isabella who informs the lords about the whereabouts of Gaveston to help them pursue him.

Act ll Sc.V

The rebels overtake Gaveston and imprison him; they are about to execute him. But, once more, Edward sends his emissary, Arundel, to intervene, Warwick is firm. Under no circumstance will he relent. However after placing Gaveston under the protection of Pembroke, they agree to a meeting. When Pembroke is visiting his wife, leaving Gaveston in the custody of one on his subordinate staff, James, something happens.

Act III Sc I

Warwick who has been opposing this meeting ambushes James and his party and takes Gaveston prisoner and carries him away to execute him.

Act III Sc II

Spencer and Baldock persuade the king to resist the rebel lords. Their flattery bears fruit.

Edward sends Isabella and the young prince (a mere boy) to France. There she is to act as ambassador and to ask her brother to stop stirring up trouble.

Gaveston is executed. The news shocks the king. He swears re-venge. The rebels now demand the banishment of Spencer, the once who has replaced Gaveston as the king's minion. The demand is rejected.

Act III Sc. III

For the first time in his life Edward shows he is a man. He fights with the rebel lords and wins the battle. The rebels including Edmund are now prisoners of the king. Edmund is banished; Lancaster and Warwick are soon executed; the young Mortimer is put in the tower. The king is now all powerful.

Act IV Sc. I

The banished Edmund, Earl of Kent, is in disguise. He helps Mortimer in poisoning the prison guards some how, Mortimer escapes from the tower and together with Edmund reaches France.

Act IV Scene II

Isabella, who is denied help and support by her brother and French nobility finds a friend in Sir John who takes her along with her son to his cattle. Kent and Mortimer, join them. They all raise a formi-dable -army to wage' war against England. '

Act IV Sc III

Thrall powerful Edward rules England with an iron hand now, liquidating all those who have been against him. It is at the zenith of the power that he learns about the army landing in England under the com-mand of Isabella, Mortimer and Edmund and supported by the French nobility.

Act IV Sc IV

Isabella and Mortimer plead with like-minded natives to rise against Edward for the cause of England.

Act IV Sc.V

War breaks out. The king is defeated. Somehow he manages to escape, but is chased by his enemies. Now Kent vacillates. He wants to set right things in England as early as possible and once and for all does not want any harm to come to Edward. If Edward, the anointed king is harmed, it will be insurrection, be against the Divine Right. The Elder Spencer is taken prisoner and handed over to Isabella. The pursuit of the King continues.

Edward, Spencer and Baldock are in disguise and seek shelter in an abbey. But they are betrayed. They are soon caught and put in prison. Now, the king is resigned to his fate, which is death. His words, clothed in agony and self- pity, make us sympathize with him a little. This sympathy deepens with the loyal words of Baldock and Spencer. Baldock philosophies on life and death.

Act V Sc I

Edward is revealed in a new light. The same introduces a good deal of pathos. However, the pathos does not touch us deeply. It is not tragic enough. Edward surrenders his crown in the middle of his agonized cries. Mortimer and Isabella seem to have fallen in love with each other. As per a message from Mortimer Leicester is relieved of the charge of the king and Berkeley is put in charge. Berkely is to be taken the king to his castle at Berkeley, later to dispose of him as the queen (or Mortimer) commands.

Act V Sc. II

It is now brought to focus that Isabella and Mortimer are in love. The latter is now very powerful. The king being his prisoner and the queen being on his side. He has become very arrogant. The prince should be made the new king and Mortimer the protector. Isabella has nothing to say. News is brought that the king has surrendered his crown, quite voluntarily, Edmund (the Earl of Kent) wants Isabella to be protector and he does not want Mortimer or himself to be in that position. He has changed once again. He has become pro-king. The prince begs Edmund to help him, as he does not want to be involved with Mortimer and his plans. Edmund decides to go to Killingworth Castle to rescue the king from there and later to avenge the wrongs of Mortimer and Isabella.

Matervis and Gurney, two professional torturers, are commis-sioned to torture and then execute king Edward who will be in their charge Berkeley being relived of it forthwith. Edmund's efforts are to be countered. So the king will have to be moved from one place to another constantly. Isabella sends Herring to Edward through Matrevis.

Act. V. Sc.III

The torturers arrive at the castle and humiliate the king in every conceivable way. They wash him in puddle water, shave off his beard and scoff at his conduct. The attempts of Edmund are fruitless. It is now clearly known who the master is.

Act V. Scenes IV and V

A letter is drafted with ambiguous wording: Fear not to kill the king, it is good he die. Or Kill not the king it is good to fear the worst. Mortimer is getting aware that the sympathy of the commons is swinging in favour of Edward. Time cannot be lost. The letter is carried by Lightborn and delivered into the hands of Matervis and Gurney who are puzzled by the ambiguity. Mortimer has been very clever and is trying to protect himself, in case something untoward happens when he can pass the responsibility to Matrevis and Gurney. At the same time they are given secret instruction to destroy Lightborn as soon as the latter finishes with Edward.

Lightborn tortures Edward who has been confined in a dungeon in knee deep puddle water and denied food, water and sleep. Edward is half crazy and half dead. Lightborn makes him lie down and with a table placed on him and stamping on it smothers him to death. As soon as the king is despatched. Matervis Kills Lightborn stabbing him with a dagger and throws his body into the moat. The king's body is taken to Mortimer.

Act. V.sc. VI

Matervis is now standing before Mortimer. He regrets what he as done. Gurney has run away. Mortimer is too proud. He challenges others to impeach him. Matervis wants to fly from England and Mortimer permits him. It is feared that Gurney will betray them all.

As soon as the news of the king's death spreads, matters change. They boy king proves himself more than a match for Mortimer. Gumey has indeed betrayed the guilty. The latter has been handed over to the king. Now the young king knows how everything took place and who were responsible for what. Mortimer is captured and immediately sentenced to death. His severed head is to be brought before the king. Isabella is charged with being an accomplice and sent to prison. The body of Edward is brought before the king. His death is mourned.

Critical Comments

Edward II was Christopher Marlowe's last play, the others being Tamburlaine the Great: Parts I & II, Dr. Fasustus, The Jew of Maltas, The Massacre at Paris and Dido, the Queen of Carthage (written in collaboration with Nashe). The 1598 Quarto has a long title as follows:

The Troublesome Reign and Lamentable Death of Edward II, King of England: with the Tragical fall of Proud Mortimer: and also the Life and Death of Piers Gaveston, the great Earl of Cornwall and Mighty Favourite of King Edward, the Second as it was Publicly Acted by the Right Honorable the Earl of Pembroke his Servant. Written by Christopher Marlowe Gent. Imprinted at London for William Jones Dwelling near Holoborne Conduit at the Sign of the Gun.

(In the above the spelling has been modernized)

It is a pre- Shakespearian play in its most compact form. For some time there was even the legend that the play was indeed written by William Shakespeare. Whereas the other plays of Marlowe are all episodic and loosely structured, Edward II is quite polished with sustained and connected from and remarkably good characterisation. We may say that it was a trendsetter in all respect. The MIGHTY LINE of Marlowe is considerably toned down in this play for the sake of dramatic unity and effect. In other words, the lyrical beauty and high sounding rhetoric which would carry us away in his Tamburlaine and Dr. Faustus are absent in Edward II.

We have more than thirty characters in this play. The most prominent are King Edward

II, Prince Edward, his son (later Edward III) Edmund, the Earl of-Kent (the king's half brother), Piers de Gaveston (later the Earl of Cornwall), Guy, the Earl of Warwick, Thomas the Earl of Lancaster, Lord Mortimer, the Elder mortimer, the Younger (the nephew of the Elder Mortimer), the Spencers and Queen Isabella.

As the curtain grows up we see a street in London. Gaveston appears reading the message from Edward II:

"My father is deceased. Come Gaveston.

And share the kingdom with they dearest friend."

Gaveston is the minion of Edward II. He was banished from England by Edward I in 1307. But the same year when Edward II as-cended the throne, the banishment order was revoked and Gaveston was called back. It is this happy Gaveston whom we find on his return from exile. The exuberance of his speech shows that it is not just friendship, It is possibly a homosexual relationship that binds the two. The nature of relationship is clear in the words of Gaveston.

Ah! Words that make me surfeit with delight!
What greater bliss can hap to Gaveston
Than live and be the favourite of a king!
Sweet prince, I come; these, these thy amorous lines
Might have enforced me to have swum from France,
And, like Leander, gasped upon the sand,
So thou wouldst smile, and take me in thine arms.
The sight of London to my exiled eyes
Is as Elysium to a new-come soul;
Not that I love the city, or the men,
But that it harbours him I hold so dear
The king, upon whose bosom let me die,
And with the world be still at enmity,
What need the Arctic people love starlight,
To whom the sunshine's both by day and night?
Farewell base scooping to the lordly peers!
My knee shall bow to non but to the king (lines 3-19)

He meets three poor men and leaves -them giving them vain hopes for a better future. He soliloquises and we learn what is in his mind.

I must have -wanton poets, pleasant wits,
Musicians, that with touching of a string
May draw the pliant king which way I please.
Music and poetry is his delight:
Therefore I'll have Italian masks by night
Sweet speeches, comedies and pleasing shows;
And in the day, when he shall walk abroad;
Like Sylvan nymphs my pages shall be clad;

My men like satyrs grazing on the lawns,
Shall with their goat-feet dance the antic hay.
Sometime a lovely boy in Dian's shape,
With hair that gilds the water as it glides,
Crownets of pearl about his "naked arms,
And in his sportful hands and olive-tree
To hide those parts which men delight to see,
Shall bathe him in the spring; and there hard by,
On like Actaeon peeping through the grove,
Shall by the angry goddess be transformed,
And running in the likeness of a hart
By yelping hounds pulled down, shall seem to die;
Such things as these best please his majesty,

The lines quoted above give abundant proof to show what Gaveston's ulterior motives are. He stands aside when the king appears followed by his courtiers. From the ensuing dialogue we gather that all is not well between the king and his powerful courtiers and the discord is due to the revocation of Gaveston's banishment order, Edward stands firm: "In spite of them/ I'll have my will: and these two Mortimers/ That cross me thus, shall know I am displeased."

Elder Mortimer if you love us, my lord, hate Gaveston.

The immediate antecedents are made clear in the words of young Mortimer:

"Mine Uncle here, this Earl, and I myself
Were sworn to your father at his death.
That he should ne'er return into the realm;
And know, my lord, ere I will break my oath,
This sword of mine that should offend your foes
Shall sleep within the scabbard at thy need
And underneath thy banners march who will,
For Mortimer will hang his armour up" (lines 82-89)

Well, Edward is pretty quick with retaliation:

Well, Mortimer, I'll make thee rue these words.
. Beseems it thee to contradict thy king?
Frown'st thou threat, aspiring Lancaster?
The swords shall plane the furrows of they brows
And how these knees that now are grown to stiff.
I will have Gaveston; and you shall know.
What danger 'tie to stand against your king (91-98)

Marlowe wastes no time in telling us what is wrong. The king and his lords are fighting Gaveston. It is now open war. Lancaster declares that five earldoms will be sold, if necessary, to raise money to oust Gaveston- Lancaster, Derby, Salisbury Linclon and Leicester, Kent

adds fuel to the fire by threatening them and asking the king to avenge the insurrection. .The lords are not to cower; they leave the "brain-sick king" and they will "hence forth parley with our naked swords" Note the words of Lancaster:

Adieu, my lord: and either change your mind,

Or look to see the throne where you should sit

To float in blood; and at they wanton head,

The glozing head of they base minion thrown . (Lines 130-33)

Edward answers:

I cannot brook these haughty menances

Am I a king, and must be overruled?

Brother, display my ensigmn the field

I'll bandy with the barons an the earls

And either die or live with Gaveston (lines 134-138)

On the angry lord's departure Gaveston appears before the king. See how Gaveston is welcomed:

What, Gaveston! Welcome ! kiss not my hand-Embrace me, as I do thee, Gaveston.

Why should'st thou kneel? Know'st thou not who I am?

Thy friend, thyself, another Gaveston!

Not Hylas was more mourned of Hercules,

Than Thou has been of me since exile (Lines 140-145) Edward confers titles upon Gaveston:

I here create thee Lord High Chamberlain,

Chief Secretary to the state and me,

Earl of Cornwall, King and Lord of Man. (Lines 154-156)

The moment these words are spoken, Edmund, Earl of Kent and half brother of Edward, react with considerable resentment:

The least of these may well suffice

For one of greater birth than Gaveston (lines 158-159)

His frustration and anger are clear- Edward will not brook his words. And as if to spite him, he offers:

Cease, brother for I cannot brook these words

Thy worth, sweet friend, is far above my gifts,

Therefore, to equal it, receive my heart.

If for these dignities thou be envied,

I'll give thee more; for, but to honour thee,

Is Edward pleased with kingly regiment.

Fearest thou thy person? Thou shalt have a guard.

Want' at though gold? Go to my treasury:

Would'st thou be loved and feared? Receive my seal;

Save or condemn, and in our name, command

What so thy mind affects, or fancy likes (lines 160-170)

With in a few minutes the Bishop of Coventry arrives on the scene "to celebrate your father's exequies". Not realizing what has transpired in the last few minutes, stupidly, he comments:

But is that wicked Gaveston returned?

He threatens Gaveston and the- latter retaliates with new found power supported by Edward. This is foolish on the king's part because he is antagonising the Church which is powerful

Throw off his golden mitre, rend his stole, and in the channel christen him anew (lines 187-188).

Kent at once warns his brother, but to no avail, Edward worsens his stand:

No. Spare his life, but seize upon his goods:

Be thou lord bishop and receive his rents

And make him serve thee as thy chaplain:

I give him thee- here, use him as thou wilt: (lines 193-196)

And Gaveston, seizing the opportunity to exercise his new au-thority says:

He shall to prison, and thee die in his bolts (line 197) Edward II: Ay, to the Tower, the fleet, or where thou wilt. (Line 198)

(NOTE : HEREAFTER THE QUOTAIONS WILL BE FEWER IN NUMBER AND THE LINE NUMBERS WILL NO TBE GIVEN. REFER TO THE TEXT TO LOCATE THEM)

The bishop of Coventry is then taken to the tower to be put in chains and in prison.

Now we know how foolish the king has been. He is sure to be opposed by the powerful ecclesiastical sector of English society. The chruch and the warring lords together make a formidable enemy whose attacks cannot be withstood by the king alone. So safely we can predict his doom. It is his infatuation with Gaveston that has blinded him and will lead him to perdition.

The scene shifts to the dissident lords who have now heard about the bishop's imprisonment and the confiscation of his landed property and revenue, as also the new honours heaped on Gaveston. They are enraged and also obviously jealous. Young Mortimer is eloquent.

Were all the relam and us. (Lines 28-32)

The Archbishop of Canterbury joins them. He offers all help to troy the erring king, Gaveston and the allies of the two. He is pow-erful. What we see next is the weeping Isabella, the queen. She says that is leaving the court, as she has no place in her husband's life on ac-unt of Gaveston. Thus Gaveston is responsible for not only the topsy -turvy law and order situation of the country, but also for upsetting the life of the queen. Not the words of Isabella:

Unto the forest, gentle Mortimer,

To live in grief and baleful discontent;

For now, my lord, the king regards me not,

But doats upon the love of Gaveston.

He claps his cheeks, and hangs about his neck,

Smiles in his face, and whispers in his ears;

And when he come he frowns, as who should say,

"Go whither thou wilt, seeing I have Gaveston."

The words given above tells u sin unrnincing terms the homo-sexual crush tha the king ha on Gaveston. Mortimer comforts her; he tells that they will destroy Gaveston and Isabella will get her husband back. These will be achieved "without lifting their swords". She does not want her husband to "be oppressed with civil mutinies". She had rather" endure a melancholy life".

A meeting is arranged at Lambeth at the Archbishop's Isabella once again pleads for amity. Gaveston has heard about the meeting. The scene is no London, the new temple. Things develop fast. The king is isolated. Gaveston's future is hanging by a thread. All the participants in the meeting put their signatures on the demand for the exile of Gaveston Edward, Edmund and Gaveston arrive. The dammed up anger to king Edward and Gaveston arrive. The depented up anger of king Edward breaks, nay, explodes and Gaveston worsens the situation asking him to avenge their insubordination and insurrection. The words of Mortimer tell us that one of the reasons for this hostility between the lords and Gaveston is the favours heaped on the low-born Gaveston by the king whereas the lords have been steadily ignored. The lords are jealous, whatever these be, the country is going to be torn into pieces by civil wars. As a prelude, there is a wordy duel between Edward and the funing lords, neither party willing to relent. The archbishop of Canterbury makes it clear that they will not releant:

Nothing shall alter as us we are resolved.

The stubbornness leaves the king flustered and with considerable reluctance he subscribes to the banishment order of Gaveston. The lords of Mortimer makes the ideas clear:

The king is love, sick, for his minion.

Now that the banishment order has been signed by the king, the lords leave with the Archbishop. Gaveston appears having heard about the order. The words at this juncture of Edward speak volumes:

...The legate to the pope will have it so,

And thou must hence, or I shall be deposed.

But I will reign to be revenged on them.

The dialogue between the two warring parties is remarkably powerful and bears t4estimony to their passionate concivitions. Marlowe seems to know the psychology of his characters.

It is by know clear what the TRAGIC FLAW of Edward is, his perverted relationship with Gaveston. Because of this he becomes guilty of the dereliciton of his duties and responsibilities as the king of England. Just before Gaceston departs, the king and he exchange pictures. When Isabella appears before her husband, Edward retorts:

Fawn not on me, French Strumpet! Get thee gone.

Edward alleges that Isabella has clandestine relation with Mortimer and she is responsible, at least partly, for Gaveston's exile. He demands of her to effect reconciliation between him and the feuding lords and get the banishment order revoked.

Thou art too familiar with that Mortimer

And by thy means is Gaveston exiled.....

But I would wish thee reconcile the lord

Or thou shall ne'er be reconciled to me

When the king leaves, Isabella soliquises:

For ever doted Jove upon Ganymede

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So much as he on curs'd Gaveston

We are reminded of the mythical homosexual pair love and Ganymede. Once more the lords appear and comment that the king had ill-treated the queen Now that Gaveston has been banished, they say the king will return to her. But she is not hopeful at all. Besides Edward has stated:

....For till my Gaveston be repealed

Assure thyself thou com'st my sight.

When she tells Mortimer what the king has told Isabella, he gets furious. Inorder that she continues to be queen, Gaveston has to return. The lord have to give consent to Gaveston to return to England. But they refuse to do so. Meanwhile, in an aside, a secret talk between Isabella and Mortimer takes place immediatetly after whih Mortimer pleads for the repeal of the banishment order, "Which is for our avail, for the relm's behalf and for the king's". He explains his change of mind (deu to Isabella's persuasive arguments) and suggest that Gaveston can be handled..." ...detested he plague." Moreover, they cannot afford to oppose the king forlong, as it will amount to treson and it will lead to the intense dislike of the people at large. Treason invites capital punishment. Surprisingly, everybody approves of Mortimer's plan. Isbella is thrilled. Edward appears in mourning:

He's gone ..... friend

When Isabella tells her husband about the latest turn of events, Edward jumps for joy. He says it is like a second marriage between them. At once he is reonciled to the warring lords. Out of sheer joy he appoints Warwick his chief counsellor and Pembroke shal bear the sword before the king. He makes Mortimer Lord marshall of the relam. The elder Mortimer is appointed "the general of the levied troops. That now are ready to assil the Scots".

Edward orders celebrations. The repeal of the banishment order calls for fest and tournamnet. It is also announced that no sooner does Gaveston return then he will be married to the heir of the Earl of Glousester. The heir is the king's niece.

The king leaves. Only Mortimer's are left on the stage. The homosexual relation is to be forgiven.After all, who is perfect? Note the words of Mortimer:

Leave now ..... toys

Though the younger Mortimer is ready to forgive Edwardil, he is not ready to forgive Gaveston. The long speech proves this attitude:

But this I..... impatient (lines 403-419)

Now they too leave.

On the death of the Earl of Gloucester, Baldock and Spencer are left with no patron. They discuss between themselves who they should serve now. Spencer dvises Baldock that Mortimer being an enemy of Edward is not the right person to serve. The favourite of the king is Gaveston, the earl of Cornwall who is going to marry Gloucester's heir and who is returning shortly to England on the relealment of the banishment order. The heir of Glouscester is all ready intimately known to them. See how calculating they are. The heir has already received communication to the effect that Gaveston is returning and so she promises to retain their sendees.

The scene now shifts to Tynemouth Castle where the king and his party are greedily and impatiently waiting for Gaveston. The impatience of the king drives Mortimer crazy. He reparimands the king.

Nothing but Gaveston Normandy

When the king insist on the motto to be engraved on the shield of celebration to mark

the return of Gavestone he says:

A lofty..... bough of all

Which is symbolic of the state of affairs. Similarly, Lancaster says:

..... There is a flying est.

But Edward is no fool; he understands the symbolic value and the hidden meaning of the engraving and condemns both. He threatens themwith dire consequences.

Gavestone arrives. In strong sexual and romantic words a royal welcome is offered. But when the king orders them to welcome him, they jeer at him. Both Kent and Isabella notice the hostility. The king and his minion scoff at them. It leads Landcaster drawing, sword and he threatens to kill Gaveston. There is furore in the assembly. Young Mortimer wounds Gaveston and Isabella cries out. Gaveston and the attendants leave. Edward banishes Mortimer from the court. Lancaster declare tha they will not tolerate insults and that he will draw Gavestone by the ears to the block. The situation worsens and with a threat the king leaves with Kent and Isabella following. "this war that must abate these barons prided" he says. Warwick realizes that the king is one wounded serpent. All of them will join hands to try" to prosecute that Gavestone to the death". They decide to send their heralds to defy the king.

The message arrives that the uncle of Mortimer who has been leading the campaign against the Scots has been taken captive. The barrons jointly appeal toEdward to ransom him. They do but the appeal goes unheard. Once again there is bitter feud between the king and his feudal lords. Mortimer alleges that the treasury has become dry on account of the King's lavish presents to gaveston. Lancaster threatens to cause a rebellion and to depose the king. There are mutinies on the borders and disturbances inside when the king is merry making and enjoying himself. The king has done nothing to redress the grievances of the people in the past many years. With a threat about impending war, they leave. edward introspects.

My sweking heart too late, (II ii 198-205)

Kent, the half brother, too turns against the king. Kent is driven away. Isabella arrives withthe king's niece. The niece gets Spencer and Baldock employed in the service of the king. The wedding is decided between Gaveston and the niece. After that they will settle scores with the lords.

Meanwhile, Kent who is now persona non grata in the eyes of the king has joined the lords against his stepbrother. though at first he is charged with spying he is at once exonerated and permitted to join the band. They are now hellbent on exterminating Gaveston. But the king is to be spared. the castle to be seized ad Gaveston killed. As per their decisions they besiege the castle. The lives of the King and his minion are in danger. All try to save themselves, except Isabella. When the lords now victorious enter the castle they find that the king and Gaveston have escaped. From Isabella they learn that Edward has gone to Scarborough by sea with a small train. Though Isabella is asked to stay in the castle she insists on going and joining her husband and says that there is the suspicion that Mortimer is her paramour. Mortimer and others leave. Isabella now solioquises and reveals herself to be in love with Mortimer.

So hast thou..... forever.

She will leave for France with her "son and inform her brother, the king of France, about the ill-0 treatment she gets at the hands of Edward, Edward's infactuation with Gaveston et. She hopes that Gaveston will be caught that day itself and killed.

In the open country Gavestone is pursued by the lords and their men. Gaveston is caught. Soon Arundel appears and greets them. Before gaveston is beheaded/hanged, the king would like to see him a last time. After much discussion Pembroke offers to 'take Gavestonto the

King and 'bring him back safe and sound. They half heartedly agree. Pembroke gives George, his trusted subordinate, charge of Gavestone. He leaves to spend the day with his wife who is nearby. Now Gaveston and his captors saunter through the open country when they are ambushed by Warwick an dhis men. Warwick takes Gaveston prisoner and leaves. Pembroke's men return having lost their prisoner.

Marlowe thus paves the way for the capture of Gaveston and to precipitate a crisis with the intention of accelerating the pace of action.

The king receives the news that Gaveston has been overtaken and taken prisoner by Warwick. In a matter of hours Gaveston will be executed. Spencer flatters the king and arouses him. He is joined by Baldock. Their advice is of the wrong kind. Spencer senior arrives and offers help. We begin to feel that Spencer is wriggling his way to the slot vacated by Gaveston as the new minion of the king. Isabella arrives with the news that her brother has attacked and surrounded to Normandy. The King decides to send Isabella as ambassador. She will take the young prince with her. She has to try to patch up the difference of opinion between her husband and her brother. She leaves for France.

Soon Arundel arrives and informs the king about the execution of Gaveston by Warwick. Spencer adds fuel to the fire and Edward swears.

By Earth .... Gaveston (line 128/142)

Edward promotes the Spencers to high ranks when the herald arrives with the message that the feudal lords have a new demand. The demand is that Spencer be removed from the royal service. Th3e infuriated king embraces Spenser (Edward has a found a substitute in Spencer junior for Gaveston) and orders the herald to go away and threatens that the lords will be cut to their proper sixe.

Then the battle erupts. The Spencers and flatterers support the king. The lords demand that the flatterers be dismissed. But this time it is the king who wins. Edward captures the rebel lords and also Edmund . Kent who speaks on behalf of the lords is ordered out. Edward executes Warwick and Lancaster and orders the imprisonment of young Mortimer. Mortimer is taken to the Tower of London. Soon the other lords are to be executed.

All leave except Spencer, Baldock and Levune from France. Levune is secretly bought by Spencer. Spencer arranged with Levune to see that Isabella and the prince are denied assistance by French lords which she is seeking. The mission is secretly financed by Spencer. Levune will influence the opinion of French lords with money got from Spencer. See how Marlowe piles intrigue upon intrigue to thicken the plot.

Kent arranges the escape of Mortimer from the Tower. This once again shows the vacillating nature of Edmund. In other words he cannot be trusted. Not that he is evil, but he is feeble. In France all the appeals of Isabella for help fall on deaf ears. She is terrified. It is then that she meets Sir John of Hainault who offers her and her son all help. He takes them to his castle. Soon Mortimer and Edmund meet them there. Together they mobilize a huge army. Mortimer tries to cheer up the queen. Sir John has offered money, men, arms and moral support to start their campaign against Edward.

Meanwhile in England Edward is comfortably seated on his throne. There seems to be some peace in the land. But it is short lived. Though the dogs of war have been silenced for the time being, there is always the potential outbreak of war in some corner. News arrives that all is not well. Levune send a letter informing them that Mortimer, Edmund, Sir John and a huge army are planning to attack England. It may materialize any time now.

Edward is mad with anger now. Now it is certain that Isabella and Mortimer are infatuated with one another. Edward leaves for the battlefield at Bristol to await the arrival of his enemies. The crisis has been precipitated by the evil Spencers and Baldock, (he wrong kind of advisors to the King.

The army now lands on English soil. Isabella alleges that the king is guilty of misgovernment

Misgoverned thou (line 9-11)

Mortimer is hell bent on getting "the sycophants removed from the proximity of the king and also to teach the King a lesson or two. There is going to be a war and too much of bloodshed. The war breaks out. Isabella is too strong for the king to defeat. The king loses. Mortimer chases the king. Edmund is totally opposed to regicide (recall the Divine Right theory) as Edward is the anointed king, representing God on earth. Therefore the Parliament will decide what to do with the king.

But Mortimer is unable to capture the king as the latter in the company of Baldock and Spencer has escaped to Ireland. The elder Spencer has been taken prisoner and is to be beheaded.

In the Abbey of Neath King Edward, Spencer and Baldock appear in disguise. Together with them is the party of the Abbot and the monks. The latter offers all possible help for the safety of the king. The king bemoans his fate and praises the monastic way of life which is full of peace and happiness.

The king and his friend are soon betrayed. The Mayor and men arrive with Lancaster. Spencer and Baldock are arrested. Lancaster tells the king that he will be taken to the Killingworth castle under orders from Isabella and Mortimer. The king laments his plight. A liter had thou? ..... tyrant's sword (Lines 85-91).

They are then taken away. Baldock resigns himself to his fate and advised Spencer to do so.

Spencer ..... Fall (lines 104-111)

The scene shifts to Killingworth Castle. We see Edward, Leicester, the Bishop of Winchester and Trussel. Mercilessly, Leicester asks the king to cease lamenting.

The griefs..... kings (lines 8-9)

We notice poetic beauty in the long passage where Edward laments his fate and downfall. He talks about the ambitious Mortimer and that unnatural queen, false Isabel". He is helpless, because even though he wants to avenge his fall he cannot, as kings are mere shadows when regiments are gone. He charges Isabella with infidelity (he is himself guilty as he has been steadily ignoring Isabella when Gaveston was alive). "She is my inconstant queen Infamy". The bishop tries to comfort the weeping king saying that it is for the prince that they are doing all that. But Edward curses Mortimer.

If proud head (bines 43-47)

In a highly dramatic gesture he takes off his crown and surrenders it.

A message arrives from Mortimer. Leicester, is relieved of the king's charge. Berkely is give charge of the king. Berkely is to take him to his castle. Edward is now totally resigned to his fate.

Edward of this I'm .... But once (Line 153)

The scene now shifts to London. The Royal Palace. As already guessed at Mortimer and Isabella have become paramours. The flatterers have been put to death and Edward is imprisoned. Mortimer will now be the protector over Edward, the crown prince. A messanger arrives from Killing worth Castle. The message says that the king is well (Whereas the truth is far from it). Soon the bishop of Winchester arrives with the crown willingly surrendered by Edward and informs them of the latest position with the king and all. The king has been transferred to Berkeley Castle.

The newly achieved success and the favour of Isabella have significantly altered

Mortimer: he has become ambitious. He sends for Gurney and Matrevis. He wants to relieve Berkely of the king's charge. A letter is drafted and subscribed to by Mortimer to that effect. Matrevis and Gurney will be in charge of the king arid they will keep on shifting the king from one places to another as part of the torture of the king and also to foil attempts on Edmind's part to rescue the king.

Isabella sends the king a few comforting words and also a token of her love in the form of a signet, ring. There arrive Kent and the young prince. The talk about protector ship is taken up and there is a deceptive drama staged by Mortimer. Kent has once again changed sides. Her favours Edward now. Mortimer calls him inconstant. Kent proclaims that he will go to Killingworth castle to free Edward from his keeps and avenge the brutalities and machinations of the evil Mortimer.

The scene now shifts to the vicinity of Killingworth castle. Matrevis and Gurney have taken charge of the king and follow the orders of Mortimer to the letter. They humiliate the king to the nth degree. They wash him in puddle water and shave off his beard. Kent appears and demands the release of Edward, but his appeals are of no avail. They take Edward away from there.

Motrimer realizes that unless Edward dies he will go down. So he drafts a letter in Latin. It is cunningly done and is ambiguous. It can be read and interpreted in two ways. In case it is alleged that he was responsible for the king's death, he can wash his hands off what and save himself, implicating those who carried out the killing. Lightborn who is a born killer is ordered to execute the king Mortimer hands of Matervis and Gurney. The true colour of Mortimer is now revealed. He has become a villain.

Mean while, in London, the investiture ceremony of Edward III is arranged. It is challenged by Edmund, Earl of Kent and Half brother of King Edward. In spite of the entreaties of the newly crowned king, Mortimer orders the execution of Edmund. Isabella promises to protect her son from his enemies.

In the Berkeley Castle Light born tortures Edward to death after giving the ambiguously worded letter to Matrevis and Gurney. They cannot make full sense of the contents. However, they have been ordered to exterminate Light born immediately after he kills Edward. So when Light born kills him, Matrevis and Gurney kill Lightborn and throw his body into a moat. They carry out the instructions of Mortimer to the letter an dreport to him later. Gurney is now scared to death and he feels. Mortimer allows Matrevis too to flee.

News arrives, Isabella learns about her husband's death. The boy king is terribly upset. But he suddenly grown up and rises to the occasion. Gurney betrays Mortimer. Now that Mortimer is guilty of regicide, he can no longer protect himself. He is caught and sentenced to be executed. The boy accuses his mother of complicity. She is asked to be taken away. Mortimer's execution is carried out and his head brought before the boy king. The dead body of King Edward II is also brought to the place for proper funeral rites and burial. The play ends.

Though the play is a trifle loosely strung, it can yet boast of some integration and cohesion. For a maiden attempt Marlowe has done well. The characters are all endowed with a certain roundness, especially the principal characters like the king, Mortimer, Isabella and Gaveston. The language is free of bombast, unlike his *Tamburlaine* and Dr. Faustus. We may sum up saying that Edward II is first successful history play in the history of Chronicle plays in the English language.

Questions

1. Discuss the role of Chronicle plays in the Elizabethan period
2. Consider Edwrd II as a trendsetter in the Elizabethan history plays.

3. Analyse characterization in Edward II
4. The end of king Edward II is something that he brought upon himself. Substantiate.
5. Gaveston is the Achilles' heel of Edward Discuss
6. There is a good deal of sentimentalism and display of self pity in King Edward. Discuss
7. Isabella is a flat character. Substantiate
8. Illustrate the poetic qualiti4es of Edward II
9. Analysis Edwad . If from the Artislolean point o view.
10. Consider the view that Edward II is running parallel to the present Amerian Government under Bill Clinton with respect to Monica Lewinsky

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Thrissur

ADDISON

Addison gave new direction to the development of essay from, the eighteenth century onwards. His creative work as an essayist can also be viewed as the cultural side of a politician. His writings had some practical influence on the manners of the day. He used the new literary form of the newspaper to educate the society. His objective was to improve the morals of the upper class and the manners of the middle class. He attempted to establish the coffeehouses of the days as centres of social intercourse.

In the first half of the eighteenth century, the periodical esays short articles of wide interest and appeal became the dominant form, of literature. Addison and others felt that small sheets of newspaper or pamphlets could attract the public better than the voluminous books. The periodical essays gave a "faithful and well-composed portrait of the age". News was not the primary concern of the paper. These papers are particularly devoid of political news. Clubs dominated social life in that age and the periodical essays were brought out centering on the activities of these clubs. For example, Daniel Defore published Review, revolving around the Scandal Club. The Tatler met at the Trumper. Addison's Spectator is arranged around the doings of the members of the Spectator Club. Addison explains the working of the Spectator in his first essay thus:

For, as I have before intimated, a plan of it is laid and concerted (a all other matters of importance are) in a club.... For I must further acquaint the reader that, though our club meets only on Tuesdays, we have appointed a committee to sit every night, for the inspection of all such papers as may to tribute to the advancement of the public weal.

Addison in his Spectator appears as a spectator as a spectator of men describing vividly the life of the early eighteenth century. The essay in the hands, of Addison and Steele radically changed in form and developed in all aspects.

Addison's essays are less formal than Bacon's and they are not personal as lamb's or Hazlitt's essays. They dealt with a variety of thems: Popular Superstitions, Ladies' Headresses, Rural Manners, Transmigration of Souls, Various Ways of Managing a debate. Remarks on teh English by Indian Kings these titles should give an idea about the scope and range of 600 and odd numbers of the Spectator. Howeer, the chief object of these essays, is the question of how to live Dr. Johnson's The Rambler, The Idler (1750), Goldsmith's The Citizens of the World, Addison's The Guardian are the few periodical essays of the period.

Life and Works of Addison

An occasional poem, The Campaign published in 1704, brought Addison recognisiton and gained him entry into political career. He was a Member of Parliament, Under Secretary for Ireland and then Chief Secretary and finally ended up as Secretary of State. He began his journalistic career a an active contributor to Steel's periodical Tatler. When the Whigs fell from power, Addison became a fulltime journalist beginning the daily periodical. The Spectator in 1711, again in conunction with Steele. The Tatler was discontinued not because of its failure, but Addison and Steele modified The Tatler and began the new periodical. The Tatler originally publishing advertisements and news, as well as papers of criticism gradually developed into a series of essays on books, morals and manners. The Spectator followed its shape. Addison also contributed to The Free holder (1715-16) a journal of party propaganda. He has staged a tragic play Cato. But he is better known for his essays.

The Spectator essays can be broadly classified into three major divisions: (1) Coverley papers, (2) Comedy of Manners, (3) Critical Essays. The Coverley Papers are so called because they centre round the fictitious character, Sir Roger de Coverley, through whom a detailed picture of English Society is presented in the form of fiction. These papers act as a kind of social document, underlining the deep social change namely the rearrangement of the social classes and the interaction between the town and the country. In the feudal set up, the landowner or Squire controlled the subjects of manor. New towns sprang up and were governed by merchants and workers . Sir Roger de Coverley, the Squire of old landed gentry mixed with men of business and politicians in London. Thus the country and town gradually merge together to form the modern England. This process of social change was accelerated by the Civil War, which was in esence of conflict between the feudal orde4r and democracy. Sir Roger is the symbol of this social change. Addison presented Sir Roger as a Tory character and placed him in several social situations, thus reflecting all the facets of the country gentleman of the age. Thus Sir Roger acts as the presursor to several similar character portraits in the fiction of next two centuries.

in the second group of essays, Addison stirised the foibles of men and womn. He was a mild, yet powerful censot of mariners. "Woman on Horseback", "Dissection of a Beay's Head", "Dissessection of a Conquette's Heart" - such essays bring out the humour, satire and irony employed by Addison in educating the society.

Addison also wrote a few critical essays, which ventured to popularize the great literary pieces. His essay on "The Ballard of Chevy Chase," "Stage Realism", etc. belongs to this category. His devoted his Saturday numbers to air his views on Paradise Lost. There are about 18 essays on Paradise Lost published every Saturday beginning on January 5, 1712.

Addison was satirised by Alexander Pope in Epistle to Arbuthnot following a misunderstanding between these associates. Addison is represented as Atticus in this satire.

THE SPECTATOR'S ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF

Summary

The first essay, as the title "The Spectator's Account at Himself indicates, is a portrait of the painter. That is, he is describing the imaginary writer of the newspaper .Addison understands the curiosity of the reader to know about the author. So he sets out in this essay to introduce the person engaged in the work. Addison has the charge of "compiling, digesting, and correcting" and hence bagins with his story. he belonged to a 600 year old family. His father was a justice of Peace.

Naturally his mother dreamt that "her child was to be a judge". Addison as an infant was of serious disposition and he comments about it thus:

I threw away my rattle before I was two months old, and would not make use of my coral till they had taken away the bells from it.

Even as a teenager, he was a reserved person but a favourite of the shoolmasters. He applied himself to studies diligently. On his father's death, he left the university and went abroad in search of knowledge. Later he frequented the public places in London. he was seen in coffeehouses and theatres. Wherever there was a small crowd, he mingled with the people but without revealing his identity. He lived in the world, "rather as a spectator of mankind, than as one of the species. "Inother words, he was clever enough to be "merchant, artisan, soldier or statesman", in theory to suit the crowd he was in. As a spectator, watching and hearing things from a distance, he could understand everything. As far as possible, he remained neutral and avoided party disputes. In short he acted "as a looker-on" in life as well as in his paper.

His friends used to remark that it is a pity that such a lot of information and observations are in the possession of a "silent man". So in order to make his life purposeful, he decided to publish "a sheet full of thoughts" every morning for the benefit of his contemporaries. His aim in doing it is "pleasure with instruction" a contribution to "the diversion or improvement of the country".

He chooses not to reveal three things -"his name, age and lodgings". The reason is he enjoys the "obscurity" and hates being recognised and honoured in public.

He plans to talk about his associates in the next issue of The Spectator, which is centred on a club. Items to be included and all other matters are discussed and finalised at the club, which meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Since they have accepted Addison as their representative, readers can correspond in the address "To the Spectator, Mr. Buckley's Little Britain".

Critical Comments

If with Bacon, essay was a string of meditations, Addison created a perfect style for the essay from turning it into "a chat of man who like to talk, not the product of an imperative need of artistic expression.

Addison's essays are entirely discursive. They start with a certain subject and follow any line of thought and fill up the pages with abstrct speculations or moral reflections sprinkled among anecdotes. In this essay on "The Spectator's Account of Himself", he begins with the intention of introducing the men behind it. He fills up the essay with anecdotes from his like his life mother's dream about him, his college days, his travel etc.

As he describes the style of functioning as a writer in The Spectator, he throws in abstract opinions like: "standers by discover blots, which are apt to escape those who are in the game".

The genial humour, the trademark of Addison's prose style is best exemplified in the humourous self portrait presented in this essay. The disposition to be silent, is a personal trait very humorously hinted at the .in the essay.

I had not been for long at the university, before I distinguished myself by a most profound silence: for, during the space of eight years, exepting in the public exercise of the college; I scarce uttered the quantity of an hundred words; and indeed do not remember that I ever spoke three sentences together in my whole life.

He sums up his personality with a tinge of irony, by describing himself as "an old unaccountable fellow, that had a great deal of learning, if I would but show it, "His love of quiet observation is again humourously hinted at, free from all bitterness: "I always mix with them, though I never open my lips but in my own club".

Just as in this autobiographical essay, he has exhibited an easy going and prudently contented attitude tolife in his essays. It shows a balanced unimpeded flow of sentences. The essay, like any other essay of Addison, is a product of a gentleman's observation and mild moralising and quiet humorous satire.

Dr. Johnson's comment on Addison's essays in general applies well to this essay:

He copies life with so much fidelity that he can be hardly sai d to invent, yet his exhibitions have an air so much original, that it is difficult to suppose them not merely the product of imagination.

Addison's persona; traits and the autobiographical touches are presented with imaginative representation through the use of humour.

Style of Addison

Dr. Johnson paid the highest tribute to Addison when he states; "whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious must give

his days and nights to the volumes of Addison." Addison invented a "middle styel", something in between the formal scholarly writing and free every day speech. The middle style was best suited to address a wider circle of readers on a avariety of subjects. That is the language needed for essays, novels, speeches, newspapers and conversation. It is a lucid and simple style and Addison could proudly claim that he had "brought philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea tables and in coffeehouses". He introduced the intimate tone which is characteristic of the true essay. His short sentences without any subordinate clauses heralds the conversational style, which is quite suitable for informal arguments and descriptions. SInce he does not handle complex thoughts, his essays are not as packed as Bacon's still they are concise and brief.

Addison understood the beauty of the metaphor and he said: "A noble metaphor, when i tis placed to an advantage, casts a glory, around it, and darts a lustre through a whole sentence". We find him using simple metaphors to make his sentences glow. For example, the school master strongly believed that Addison's natural abilities would stand him a good stead even when he grows up. In this context, he uses metaphor from the wearing of clothes. "My parts were solid, and would wear well." Addison se4ldom quotes, but when he does the quotation is usually short mostly just a phrase.

Through Addison's essays, essay - writing gained two new elements: genial humour and irony and individual characterisation. Through the pen portrait of Spectator Club members, he not only struck an informal note on the essay from, but also paved the way for the development of character, thus was in a sense the forerunner of the novel

Topics for discussion

1. Addison's prose style
2. Use of humour by Addison
3. Elements of characerisation in Addison's essays.
4. Humourous portrait of Addison in The Spectator essay no. 1

Short Answer Questions

1. Name the countries Addison visited.
   All the countries of Europe and Grand Cairo in particular
2. List the items that Addison has not spoken of in his account of himself.
   His name, age and lodgings.
3. Name the coffeehouses mentioned by Addison in the essay.
   Will's - patrinised by literary men
   St. Jame's Coffeehouse
   Grecian, oldest coffeehouse in London
   Jonathan's scene of action in the South Sea Bubble of 1720
4. When does the Spectator Club meet? On Tuesdays and Thursdays.
5. Identify the newspaper Addison mentions in the essay. Postman.
6. What is Addison's role in the paper?
   He is in charge of "compiling, digesting and correcting".

Passages for annotation

1. I live in the world, rather as a spectator of mankind, than as one of the species.
2. Standards by discover blots, which are apt to escape those who are in the game.

He is observing the world as an on-looker, not as a participant. As a silent listener, he is able to collect all information. Observing the people at public places, without revealing his identity, he is able to gather a lot of facts. Thus he has equipped himself thoroughly with duties of a husband and father, errors in business, etc., even though he lacked practical experience. He justifies his method of saying that by standing aside, without getting involved, he will get a better view of the whole scene. The old proverb "Lookers-on see most of the game" also supports this view.

I has the reputation of a very sullen youth, but was always a favourite of my schoolmaster, who used to say, that my parts were solid, and would wear, well. Parts natural abilities.

Would wear well-would stand the wear and tear of time. He is using a metaphor from the wearing of clothes. He means to say that his natural abilities of school days would last and stand him in good stead even when he grows up.

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SYLLABUS
PAPER - II
BRITISH LITERATURE SURVEY
FROM THE AGE OF CHAUVER TO THE ROMANTIC AGE

MAX. MARKS - 120

A-POETRY

1. Text for study in Detail

Geoffery Chaucer	: The Prologue to the Chnterbury Tales liner 1-10
John Donne	: 1. "The Canonization
	2. "Holy Sonnet XIV batter my here.
William Words Worth	: "Intimations of immortality for Recollectios of Early Childhood".
S.T. Coleridge	: "Kubla Khan"
P.B. Shelly	: "Ode to the West Wind"
John Keats	: "Ode to Nightingle"

II. Texts for General Study.

Geoffery Chaucer	: "The Prologue to The Canterbury Tales".
Edmund Spencer	: "Prothalamion"
George Herbert	: "Constancy"
John Milton	: 1. "Paradise Lost Book IX.
	2. "On His Blindness"
	3. "On His Deceased Wife".
John Dryden	: "Mac Flecknoe"
Thomas Gray	: "Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard".
Alexander Pope	: "Epistle to Dr. Aubuthnot - the Atticus passage"
William Blake	: 1. The Tyger"
	2. "The Lamb"
	3 & 4. "The Holy Thursday"
	5 & 6. "Nurse's Song"

B - DRAMA

1. Text for study in Detail

Shakespear : Hamlet

II. Texts for General Study

Christopher Marlowe : Edward II
Ben Johnson : Volpone
John Webster : The Duchess of Malfi
R.B. Sheridan : The School for Scandal

C - PROSE AND FICTION

1. Text for study in Detail

Francis Bacon : 1. "Of Studies"
2. "Of Discourse"
Joseph Addison : "The Spectator No. o"
Chales lamb : "Ths South Ses House.

II Texts for General Study

Daniel Defoe : Moll Handers
Henry Fielding : Tom Jones
Jane Austen : Pride and Prejudice
Walter Scott : The Heart of Midlothian

Backup of Marks: 4 Anotations + 3 Essays + 3 Short notes + 10 obj.
(8x4+20x3+6x3+10 = 120)

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