स्व–निर्देशित अध्ययन सामग्री
Self-Instructional Learning Material

Master of Arts (English)

(M.A. English)

First Year

English Literature from Chaucer to the Restoration Period Excluding Shakespeare

Paper-I

दूरवर्ती अध्ययन एवं सतत् शिक्षा केन्द्र
महात्मा गाँधी चित्रकूट ग्रामोदय विश्वविद्यालय
चित्रकूट, सतना (म.प्र.) - 485334

M.A. English (Paper-I)

English Literature from Chaucer to the Restoration Period Excluding Shakespeare

Edition - 2015

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Publisher :
Registrar
Mahatma Gandhi Chitrakoot Gramodaya Vishwavidyalaya Chitrakoot (MP)

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(Naresh Chandra Gautam)

SECTION A : Authors/texts for Detailed Study

UNIT I:

1. Chaucer : Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*
2. Marlowe : Dr. Faustus
3. Milton : Paradise Lost, Book I

UNIT II:

1. John Donne : The following Poems :
a. A Lecture upon the Shadow;
b. Love's Deity
c. The Good-Morrow;
d. Death, Be not Proud;
e. The Blossom

UNIT III:

Bacon : The following Essays:
Of Truth; Of Great Place; Of Studies;
Of Delay; Of Friendship
John Dryden : *Mac Flecknoe*

SECION B : Authors/texts for Non-detailed Study

UNIT IV:

Spenser : The *Faerie Queene,* Book I
Milton : *Samson Agonistes*

UNIT V:

Webster : *The Duchess of Malfi*
Browne : *Urn Burial* Chapter IV and V
Congreve : *The Way of the World*

BLOCK INTRODUCTION

In Unit I we introduce you to three great poets—Chaucer, Christopher Marlowe and John Milton. We shall familiarize you with their life and works, and the age in which they wrote. For your study we have included Chaucer's Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*, Christopher Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Besides, we have discussed some of the salient features of their works. This Unit will give you enough understanding of these poets and their singular masterpieces.

In Unit II we will familiarize you with another great poet of his times— John Donne. We shall tell you about his life and also analyze some of his select poems—A Lecture upon the Shadow, Love's Deity, The Good Morrow, Death Be not Proud, and The Blossom.

In Unit III we have selected Francis Bacon and John Dryden. Our objective is to familiarize you with their life and some of their select works. We have selected some of Bacon's more popular essays — Of Truth, Of Great Place, Of Studies, Of Delay, and Of Friendship — and also John Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe* for critical analysis.

In Unit IV our objective is to acquaint you with the life and works of two other great men of letters — Edmund Spenser and John Milton. Here we will discuss Spenser's *The Fairy Queene* and Milton's *Samson Agonistes*. We shall further go into the salient features of these works and answer some of the important questions.

In Unit V we have selected John Webster, Thomas Browne and Congreve for our study. Our objective shall be to enlighten you regarding their lives and also bring into discussion some of their most important works. Here we shall study Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, Thomas Browne's *The Urn Burial* and Congreve's *The Way of the World*.

UNIT-I CHAUCER, MARLOWE, MILTON

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

In Unit I our objective is to introduce you to three great poets—Geoffrey Chaucer, Christopher Marlowe and John Milton. We shall familiarize you with their life and works, and the age in which they wrote. For your study we have included Chaucer's Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*, Christopher Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Besides, we have discussed some of the salient features of their works. This Unit will give you enough understanding of these poets and their singular masterpieces. You will be able to:

- Discuss life ad works of these authors.
- Give an outline of their works.
- Critically evaluate their works.

1.1 GEOFFREY CHAUCER

1.1.1 THE AGE OF CHAUCER

The Age of Chaucer

Or

Social and Political Background to Chaucer

An Age of Ferment

Chaucer's age (1340-1400) was an age of ferment in English history, having much the same character as the age of Queen Elizabeth. Chaucer was born in the reign of Edward III, lived through that of Richard II, and passed away the

year after Henry IV ascended the throne. The old taste was yielding place to the new, and the Renaissance influence was playing havoc with medieval beliefs and habits of mind.

An Upsurge of Nationalism

It was an age in which there was a great upsurge of nationalism, and England was emerging as a strong nation. It was the period of Hundred Years War. England won glorious victories at Crecy and Poitiers. This gave her self-confidence and fanned the patriotism of her people. England was also becoming a united nation. Wales and Ireland had been absorbed, and the conquest of Scotland completed the United Kingdom. At least for the time being, as **Hudson** remarks, "Every fresh triumph served to give further stimulus to national ambition and pride."

Discontent and Unrest

Chaucer's age was an age of discontent and unrest. The Hundred Years' War surely made England a united nation and a colonial power, but it also imposed unheard of hardships upon the people. The prolonged conflict resulted in increased burdens for the people, and the peasantry groaned under the heels of crushing taxation. The Great Plague known as the Black Death, which had swept over England when Chaucer was only nine year old, made matters worse. It destroyed the population of England. Discontent among the people was widespread. While the people were starving and wallowing in utter poverty and misery, the king and his courtiers were leading a life of luxury and extravagance. The Peasants' Revolt of 1381 burst like a volcano and shook the very foundations of English Society.

Corruption in the Church: Lollard's Movement

Corruption was widespread in the Church as well. As Hudson writes: "The greater prelates heaped up wealth, and lived in a Godless and worldly way; the rank and file of the clergy were ignorant and careless; the mendicant friars were notorious for their greed and profligacy." John Wycliffe, "the morning star of the Reformation", and poets like Langland and Gower freely condemned the growing corruption in the Church, and through their teachings sought to revive the real Christianity. Thus the ideas of the Reformation were already becoming a force in the age of Chaucer.

Rise of the Modern Spirit

Chaucer's age was an age of transition in which medieval habits of mind were giving place to the modern spirit. The democratic spirit was growing. The Peasants' Revolt did much to deteriorate the feudal system and give self-confidence to the people. This led to the disintegration of the feudal system. The authority of the king and the barons was undermined while that of the Parliament grew apace. A new and prosperous merchant class was coming into prominence and power was passing into its hands from the hands of the feudal lords. Corruption did much to weaken the hold of the church. Its authority was further weakened by the anti-papal agitation**.**

Humanism and the Literature of the Age

The spirit of new learning accelerated the transition from the medieval to the modern. This was the spirit of the Italian Renaissance, which was to reach its full blossoming in England only during the Age of Queen Elizabeth. Chaucer played a most important role in the importing of this spirit from Italy to England. There was vast intellectual awakening and an unprecedented spurt of literary activity. It was the heyday of English poetry. English became a national language from a dialect. The age also witnessed the foundation of an English prose style. Humanism was one of the potent formative influences of the age of Chaucer.

The Rise of New Chivalry

The transitional nature of the age is reflected in the changed mind-set towards chivalry. The knights of the middle ages went to distant lands in search of adventure and fought and laid down their lives for some noble cause. The Knight of Chaucer represents this old age of chivalry, while the Squire, his son, is a representative of the new chivalry, which was rising at the time. He is given to enjoyment of life. He wears a fine dress, can sing and play on the flute, and he goes to the battle not for the sake of religion, but in the hope of winning the favour of his lady.

Chaucer's Age: A Meeting Ground of Many Forces

It's an age of intense social, political, religious and literary activity. It is the meeting ground of the Medieval and the Modern, the Renaissance and the Reformation, the Old and the New, and the Religious and the Secular. In short, it

is a remarkable age—an age in which men like Chaucer can make their mark. Thus the age of Chaucer, in the words of **Kittredge**, is a singularly Modern age.

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1.1.2 LIFE AND CAREER OF CHAUCER

Life and Career of Chaucer (1340-1400)

Chaucer's Birth and Parentage

Chaucer, son of a flourishing Vintner (dealer in wine) was born in London about the year 1340. His early life was passed in London. There are no specific records to show that he was ever educated at a University. Whatever scholarship he acquired was the result of his own hard work.

Chaucer at the Court

In the year 1357, at the age of seventeen, he was appointed as a page in the household of Blanche, the Duchess of Lancaster, the wife of John of Gaunt, the third son of king Edward III. In 1359, when Edward invaded France, Chaucer went with the army. He was captured by the enemy, but was ransomed afterward by his patron. On his return to England, he was appointed as valet, or personal attendant, to His Majesty and soon rose to the coveted position of a *Squire* at the Court.

His Marriage

About the year 1363, he married Philippa, one of the ladies of the queen's household. A generous pension was granted to Philippa on the eve of her marriage and, so that the newly married couple may live comfortably, a pension of 20 marks a year was granted to Chaucer himself in 1357. Philippa died in 1387, and Chaucer did not marry a second time.

His Mission Abroad

John of Gaunt was Chaucer's most dominant patron; and it is his influence, which accounts for Chaucer's quick and steady promotion. From 1370 to 1379, Chaucer was sent abroad several times on important diplomatic missions. During the course of two of them, he visited some important towns of Italy, and it

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is almost certain that he came in contact with *Petrarch* and *Boccaccio* who was living at the time. The Italian mission affected not only his material prosperity, but also his literary development.

Court Favours and Prosperity

Chaucer continued to grow in favour at the court. In 1374, he was granted a daily pitcher of wine, and soon after he was appointed as Controller of Customs of wool, etc. in the port of London. As his job required his presence in the city, he leased out a house at Aldgate, London, on favourable terms. In 1382, he was also granted the controllership of petty customs. He was allowed to appoint permanent deputy to perform his official duties. He could now give up his house at Aldgate and move to Greenwich to devote more time and attention to the vocation of a poet. New honours, including his appointment as Justice of Peace for Kent in 1381 and his election to Parliament from this very county marked the end of this happy and prosperous period.

Chaucer in Financial Difficulties

Shortly after the death of King Edward and the accession of the boy king, Richard, John of Gaunt had to go to Spain, and during his absence his brother and rival, Duke of Gloucester, became powerful at the court. Chaucer suffered the change immediately. He was deprived of both of his Controllerships and the loss in terms of money was great. On the death of his wife, her pension also lapsed.

Chaucer as Clerk of the Works and Sub-Forester

With the fall of Gloucester in 1389, Chaucer once again enjoyed peace and prosperity for a while. He was appointed Clerk of the work to His Majesty and then the Commissioner of Roads.

Financial Difficulties and Death

Despite all these favours, his financial difficulties increased. New pensions were frequently granted to him, but he had to sell them out for ready money. On several occasions he was saved from the clutches of the law by court favour. On the accession of Henry IV to the throne, a heavy pension was granted to him. But he did not live long to enjoy this new outburst of good fortune. He died in 1400, and his grave was the first to mark the poet's corner in Westminster Abbey.

1.1.3 WORKS OF CHAUCER

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Works of Chaucer

Or

The Periods of Chaucer's Career

Or

Influence of Chaucer, Three Periods of Chaucer

Or

Evaluation of Chaucer's Genius

Three Periods of Chaucer's Career

It is customary to divide Chaucer's career into three periods. The French, the Italian, and the English, of which the last one is the most important and original.

1 The French Period

(a) **The Romance of the Rose:** When Chaucer began to write, the French influence predominated. His genius was fed by French poetry and romance, which were the favourite reading of the elite during his youth. French love poetry appealed in a strong way to his imagination. He was considerably influenced by two French writers, De Lorris and De Meung, and translated into English their lengthy romance, *The Romaunt of the Rose*. This lengthy translation runs into 8000 lines and consists of a long discourse on drawbacks of marriage and the frailties of women.

(b) **The Book of the Duchess:** Another poem of this period is "*The Book of the Duchess*"—a lengthy allegory on the death of Blanche, the wife of his powerful patron.

(c) **The Complaint Unto Pity**

(d) **The A.B.C.:** Another poem of this period though much shorter, named, *The Complaint Unto Pity*, is remarkable for its skilful use

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of the French seven-lined stanza or, rime royal, which marks a new departure in English versification.

The French Period—a period of apprenticeship: The French period is basically a period of apprenticeship. It was in the influence of the French masters that he learned classical restraint, a taste for the good things of life and to be witty rather than satiric.

2 The Italian Period

(a) T**he House of Fame**

(b) The Parliament of Fowls: The Italian period of Chaucer's career dates from 1372 when Chaucer was on a trip to Italy and possibly came into personal contact with the great Italian masters. Chaucer's *The House of Fame* bears close resemblance to Dante's *Divine Comedy*. *The Parliament of Fowls* one of Chaucer's best works, contains passages, which have been directly taken from Dante.

(c) T**roilus and Cressyde:** From Boccaccio he borrowed freely "with a royal bettering in the borrowing." *Troilus and Cressyde,* a masterpiece, has been taken bodily from the *Filostrato*, though abundant additions and omissions make the work entirely Chaucer's own. While in the Italian poem the stress is largely on passion, Chaucer is more concerned with the study of character.

(d) **Boccaccio And The "Tales"**: The idea of *Canterbury Tales* is taken from Boccaccio's *"Decameron"*, though the work as a whole is Chaucer's own and belongs to the last of the English period.

(e) The Legends of Good Women: Towards the close of the Italian period belongs the unfinished *Legend of Good Women.* The broad plan of this work has been borrowed from Boccaccio's *"Mulieribus"*.

3 The English Period:

The last period of Chaucer's poetic career extending from 1384 to 1390 is known as the English period. Instead of being simply imitative, he becomes independent, relying upon himself completely. The greatest work of this period, *The Canterbury Tales*, marks the dawn of a new era, and entitles Chaucer to the

claim of being called the "*Father of English poetry"* and the *"Father of English Novel"*.

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"The Canterbury Tales" and "The Decameron": The broad plan of the work is borrowed from Boccaccio's *Decameron*, but it has been much improved upon in the process of borrowing. In Hadow's words, "While Boccaccio's story-tellers are all drawn from one class, Chaucer's range from Knight to Miller, from the aristocratic Prioress to the bourgeois wife of Bath, and the fact of their being on a pilgrimage affords opportunity for incidents on the way and the introduction of fresh characters." Thus, we find more of variety, more of interest and more of realism.

Conclusion

The short account of Chaucer's literary career reveals his indebtedness and originality. He borrowed unreservedly but he was not a plagiarist. He was a very original genius who has left the impression of his powerful personality on everything he wrote.

1.1.4 CHAUCER'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS RELIGION

Chaucer's Attitude towards Religion

Or

Chaucer's Ecclesiastical Characters

In the late 14th Century, the Church had grown very corrupt. The Greater prelates heaped up wealth, and lived in a Godless and worldly way. The rank and file of the clergy was ignorant and careless. The mendicant friars were notorious for their greediness and profligacy. The result was pervasive discontent among the people and the emergence of reformers, like Wycliffe, thundering against the disgusting state of affairs that existed in the religious world of the time. The Lollard movement aimed at the reform of the Church and the revival of true Christianity.

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As a man of the world, Chaucer too could not remain indifferent to the abuse of the Church. But he was a poet and not a social and religious reformer. It would be a fault to think him to be a Lollard or a Wycliffite. He was a devout Christian who believed in the creeds of Christianity and was inspired by the life and suffering of Christian saints. We never find him condemning religion as such; he merely deplores its corrupt, greedy and selfish ministers. His ironical portraits of the different ecclesiastical characters reveal that Chaucer is impartial and realistic and paints both sides of the picture. While through the portrait of the fat, pleasure loving monk, the wanton Friar, the Pardoner, etc. he castigates the levity of the characteristic Church dignitaries of his age, he also offers the portrait of the good Parson such as were becoming rarer in the age. A brief consideration of the ecclesiastical characters of *The Prologue* would throw a lot of light on his attitude towards religion.

The Friar

Chaucer's *Friar*, for example, is corrupt and greedy. He doesn't care for religion, or for his duties. He loves merry making and drinking. He frequently visits inns and other places of public entertainment. Chaucer satirically remarks that he is very charitable, as he has married off many a young woman at his own expense. He is so greedy that he accepts petty farthings even from those who find it difficult to keep body and soul together. He likes to befriend rich franklins and worthy women, and with seller of victuals also. He keeps away from the poor and the needy.

The Monk

The Monk is a pleasure-loving individual. He has grown fat like a lord, as he leads an easy life and passes his time in eating, drinking and merry making. He is completely unsuited to his vocation. He is fond of fine dresses. He wears fur-lined sleeves, gold pins, and love knots. He is fond of hunting and has fine horses and hounds in his stable. He hates study, or the strict rules and discipline of the cloister. In brief, he is a flourishing man of the world, well suited to be an Abbot—a position he aspires for.

The Pardoner

The Pardoner **is** a complete cheat. His bag is full of relics, which he sells to gullible housewives. He makes a good earning in this way. He is a rogue, and many are the devices he uses to deceive simple folk. He sings merrily and sweetly and attracts people in this way. Chaucer has a poor opinion of him and his relics.

The Summoner

The Summoner is an unattractive person, with a repulsive red face spotted all over. The children are afraid of him. He loves garlic, onions and red wine. He is a thorough hypocrite who would permit people to continue in their sins and grant them absolution for a small consideration. He would know the secrets of young men and women and then exploit them to his own advantage.

The Prioress

The Lady Prioress, though a nun, is not at all self-sacrificing or scholarly. She is mincing creature with fine courtly manners. She smiles pleasantly, and sings the service divine beautifully through the nose. She is accustomed to society and knows how to carry a morsel to her mouth, so that not a drop falls on her fine dress, and her fingers also do not get dirtied. She is so full of the *milk of human kindness* that she would weep if she saw a mouse caught in a trap or a wounded hare. She wears a fine fashionable dress with a gold broach on which are engraved the words "Love wins everything." The motto is ironical, for it is not clear whether the love, which conquers all, is secular love or divine love. From the context it appears more probable that it means secular love, and this makes the Prioress a votary of Saint Venus. Society claims all her time and energy, so that she has none left for her duties.

The Good Parson

All these ecclesiastical characters symbolize the various aspects of the church life of the day. Contemporary poets like Gower and Langland and reformers like Wycliffe have also presented similar pictures of the churchmen of their times. As an amusing contrast to these corrupt dignitaries, Chaucer gives us a pleasing picture of the poor Parson *"a shepherd who protects his flock from the wolf and is not a hireling"*. He preaches sincerely and correctly and tries to practice what he preaches. He takes good care of his flock and visits the sick and

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the suffering at the farthest corner of the parish. He leads a simple, virtuous life of commitment and service. He is the instrument of divine mercy and love. All would be well, if his example is universally followed.

General Estimate of Chaucer's Attitude Towards Religion

Chaucer's attitude towards religion is realistic and convincing. He is very alive to the evils and abuses of the day. He brings together caustic observation of the weaknesses and hypocrisies of man, with innate reference for all that is pure and noble. Hadow further remarks: " He recognizes and rebukes the hypocrisy of many who minister in the name of the Holy Church, but he is quick to separate wanton friar and idle priest from the religion whose dignity they profane." Chaucer recognizes that religion lies in the spirit rather than in the observance of forms and ceremonies.

1.1.5 A GENERAL ESTIMATE OF CHAUCER

A General Estimate of Chaucer

Or

Chaucer's Greatness As A Poet

(1) Chaucer as a modern (2) His Narrative skill

Chaucer: The Earliest of the Great Modern

Chaucer has been called the Father of English Poetry and **E. Albert** calls him, " the earliest of the greater moderns." Chaucer is placed at the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the modern age. He has also been called, "the Morning Star of the Renaissance." His poetry reflects the medieval spirit as well as that of the Italian Renaissance, which was making its first influence felt in England in his age. There can be no greater tribute to his genius than the fact that, for the next one hundred and fifty years, there was none to equal him and that he is enjoyed with the same interest today, despite the lapse of five centuries, during which time the English language has undergone radical changes. He stands head and shoulders above his contemporaries and successors.

1. Chaucer's Modernism

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(a) His Realism: In his C*anterbury Tales* Chaucer comes to his own, as his *Prologue* is an epitome of 14th century England. With great force and realism he has painted the life and people of his times. His realism is nowhere seen to better advantage than in the description of his characters. Says **Ward,** "Chaucer is the first painter of Character". He stands in much the same relation to the 14th century as Pope does to 18th century England and Tennyson to the Victorian Era.

(b) The Renaissance Note in His Poetry: Not only did Chaucer reject the medieval poetic tradition but also broke free from theological trammels of the middle age. Ecclesiastical ideas and medieval habits of mind were still the controlling elements in Chaucer's period, but in him the spirit or the Italian Renaissance breaks their influence. He is the "Morning Star of the Renaissance," the first great representative of modern humanism; " it is through him that its free, secular spirit first expresses itself in our (English) poetry."

(c) His Humour—the Modern Note: Humour is the life and soul of Chaucer's works. His humour is many-sided and all pervasive like that of Shakespeare or of Dickens. His eyes take on a merry twinkle as they fall on folly or evilness of human nature. He is a true humourist, for he has the ability to keep up a joke even at his own expense. He never lashes bitterly at folly or vice, but ever looks on and smiles. His humour is characteristically English and he is the first of the modern humourists of England.

(d) Chaucer—the Maker of Modern English: By freeing himself from foreign sway and by using his own native language as the medium for his art, he became the founder of modern English Poetry. While even poets of his own age like Gower used Latin and French, he concentrated his energies on the development of his native tongue and made it a fit medium for literary expression. L**owes** aptly estimates Chaucer's greatness in this respect and says, "He found English a dialect and left it a language."

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He is undoubtedly what Spenser called him, "The well of English undefiled."

(e) Chaucer's Versification—the Modern Note: Chaucer is one of the most musical of English poets. His English seems very difficult at first: but it can easily be mastered with a little labour and perseverance, which is, as **Hudson** remarks "amply repaid by the pleasure we are sure to find in the felicity of his diction and the melody of his verse. Regarding Chaucer's metrical skill Long remarks: "Chaucer's poetry is extremely musical and must be judged by the ear rather than by the eye. To the modern reader his lines appear broken and uneven: but if one reads them over a few times, he soon catches the perfect swing of the measure, and finds that he is in the hands of a master whose ear is delicately sensitive to the smallest accent." On his contribution to English versification **Hudson** writes, "Under his influence rime gradually displaced alliteration in English poetry."

(f) Chaucer—his Modern World: Chaucer's realism, his humour, his characterization, his rejection of medieval conventions, his zest for life, his catholicity of outlook, his humanism, and lastly, his service to the English language and versification but all give him the right to be called, "*the earliest of the great moderns."* Chaucer's great contemporaries like Gower, Langland, and Wycliffe are for laborious scholars.

2. Chaucer's Descriptions

Chaucer's portraits are masterpieces. He had the seeing eye, the retentive memory, the judgment to select and the capacity to expound, and hence the brilliance of his descriptions. **E. Albert** writes, "Chaucer's best descriptions of men, manners and places as when giving details of conventional spring mornings and flowery gardens, have a vivacity that makes his poetry unique." On his love of nature **Hudson** says, "A specially charming feature of his poetry is its fresh, out of doors atmosphere". It must be admitted that his nature-description are one-sided. He is devoted to only the calm, the gentle and the peaceful in nature and does not describe the wilder aspects of nature as the mountains, the oceans and the storms.

Numerous Merits: "The Father of the English Novel."

His mastery of the art of narration has led many to call Chaucer the father of the English Novel. Chaucer is called the father of English poetry, although it would be less flattering, surely truer, to call him the father of the English novel. His *Troilus and Cressyde* is the first English novel in everything except that it is written in verse. It is a long love story and it has all the elements of a modern novel. It has plot, humour, dialogue, irony, conflict, suspense, etc. That is why **Long** calls his *Prologue to the Canterbury Tales,* "the prologue to modern fiction," and **Grierson** says, "As a teller of merry tales in verse, he burns only in *Tom O' Shanter."* **S.D. Neill** aptly remarks, "Had Chaucer written in prose, it is possible that his *Troilus and Cressyde* and not Richardson's *Pamela* would be celebrated as the first English Novel."

Conclusion

Despite his limitations, Chaucer's place as the father of English poetry remains undisputed. He may not be a poet of the very first order, we may not get from him moral and philosophical guidance or spiritual sustenance, he may not rise to the highest tragedy or pathos, but we get from him a lot of zest for life and a refreshing enjoyment of all that is beautiful in nature and life. We get from him sanity and balance and humanity.

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"The Prologue" Summarized

Or

Chaucer's Pilgrims

The Prologue: A Wonderful Picture-Gallery

In the *Prologue to the Canterbury Tales,* Chaucer explains to his readers the broad plan of his masterpiece, and then sketches the several characters of the work. First of all, there is a brief introduction, "filled with the most cheerful images of the spring", and then the poet narrates vividly, the person, and the character of each member of his group of pilgrims. The prologue thus becomes a great picture-gallery. It extends to about 855 lines, and the sketches of the various pilgrims are thoroughly original and national.

The Time, the Place, the Pilgrims

It was the month of April—the pleasant season of spring—when people like to go on pilgrimages. One such holy place is the shrine of the murdered Saint Thomas a Becket, in Canterbury. Pilgrims visit this place in large numbers from all part of the country. On a particular day in this pleasant month, the poet was staying at the Tabard Inn in Southwark, on the road to Canterbury. A group of twenty-nine pilgrims came there, and the host, Harry Bailly, entertained them with the best that he could offer. The poet conversed with them, and soon became as one of them. He agreed to go along with them. Prior to giving an account of the pilgrimage, the poet describes the dress, the character, and the appearance of every one of the pilgrims. He begins with the Knight.

The Knight

The Knight was a worthy man. He loved truth, freedom, honour and courtesy. He was chivalrous and had been to far off countries, both Christian and heathen, in the wars on behalf of his king. He had also fought fifteen mortal battles for the sake of his religion. No man had travelled farther than he, and he had been him for his merit. Though he was very brave, yet he was as modest as a

maid. He had never spoken impolitely to any person in all his life. In brief, says Chaucer,

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"He was a very perfect gentle knight."

He was dressed modestly. His dress was all soiled, and covered with dust, for he had rushed straight from the battlefield to the pilgrimage. He was so devout that he did not even care to change his dress.

The Squire

The Knight is representative of the fast vanishing chivalry of the Middle Ages. His son, the young Squire, on the other hand, stands for the new chivalry of the age of Chaucer. He is a young man of about twenty years, of medium stature and curly hair. He is in good health, strong and active. He has fought a number of battles in different lands, and taking into account his youth, he has borne himself with credit. But he does not fight for his religion or his king. He goes to the wars as he hopes, in this way, to win the favour of his lady-love. He is fond of the good things of life. All the day he would sing songs, dance, or play on the flute. He is so passionately in love that he cannot get any sleep at nights. He enjoys dressing fashionably and well. His gown is short with long sleeves, and is embroidered all over,

"Embroidered was he as it were a mead

All full of fresh flowers, white and red."

He is inquiring, modest and helpful. He is always ready to serve his father.

The Yeoman

The Knight has brought just one yeoman with him, and no other attendants. This yeoman is dressed in green and carries with him a sheaf of peacock arrows, all bright and sharp, and a bow. He appears to be a forester, for he has a Christopher on his breast and carries a horn tied to his green belt. A dagger hangs on one side, and a sword on the other.

The Prioress

There is also a nun, a prioress, called Madam Eglantine. She is simple and shy, given to affectation. She sings the service divine in a nasal voice. She does not know the French of Paris, but can speak French of the school of Stratford Atte

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Bowe very well. She has fine table manners, and lets no morsel fall on her dress. She is sophisticated and delicate and does not soil her fingers in the sauce. In her manners she is pleasant and friendly and tries her best to emulate the behaviour of the court. She is stately and dignified. She is of such a charitable nature that she weeps to see a mouse in trouble, whether dead or bleeding. She has small hounds that she feeds well, and she weeps if one of them dies; or some one strikes it sharply. In short, with her,

"And all was conscience and tender heart."

Her mouth is small and soft, and her forehead nearly a span wide. She is certainly not under grown, i.e., she is rather fat. She is fashionably dressed. She wears coral beads studded with green beads and from it hangs a beautiful golden brooch with the inscription "Love conquers all." She has a nun and three priests as her attendants.

The Monk

A Monk, fat and prosperous like a lord, is also one of the company. He is fond of hunting and has several good horses in his stable. He doesn't care at all for the text of the Bible, which says that hunters are not good men, or that a Monk should better stay within his monastery. He does not study, or labour with his hands, for he believes such things worthless. All his time is devoted to hunting, eating and merry-making.

He does not care for abstinence enjoined upon him by the rules of his cloister. He dresses in the finest fashionable manner. He wears fur-lined sleeves, gold pins, and love knots. His bald head and face shine as though he were anointed all over. His eyes roll brightly in his head. In short, he is,

"A manly man, to be an Abbot able".

The Friar

There also is a Friar. He is a wanton and merry fellow, and in all the four orders of friars there's was none to equal him in gossip and flattery. He is a noble pillar of his order. He is very well acquainted with rich franklins, rich women and barmaids. He considers it below his dignity to associate with lepers and beggar women. In his view it is not profitable to have dealings with people who can give

no money. Chaucer ironically remarks that he is a very good beggar and accepts even a penny from a widow who has nothing else to offer.

He leads a life of pleasure regardless of his religious duties. He has married many a young woman at his own cost. He carries with him a large number of knives and pins for pretty maids and sings sweetly and merrily to attract them. He has greater power to hear confession and grant forgiveness than a curate, and he does so only for the sake of money. He is like a master or a pope, and not at all like a poor threadbare scholar. The most striking fact about his personal appearances is that,

"His eyes twinkled in his head aright

As do the stars in the frosty night."

The Merchant

A Merchant is also one of the groups of pilgrims. He is a rich, flourishing man and carries on a prosperous trade wiih a number of countries. He is conscious of his own importance, and sits high on a horse. He has a forked beard, and is richly and fashionably dressed. He can argue well and manage his business so successfully that he is in debt to no one. He is, in short, a worthy man.

The Clerk of Oxford

The Clerk of Oxford is the most remarkable character of all. He does not care for money, or any worldly office. He loves books and study more than any worldly wealth or position. Therefore, he is threadbare and poor. The money, which his friends give him, he spends it on books. He prefers books on Aristotle to a warm coat, a wealthy living, a fiddle or a gay harp. His talk is to the point and full of wisdom. He is a real scholar who,

"Of study took he most care and most heed,

Naught a word spoke he more than was need."

The Sergeant of Law

A Sergeant of Law was also one of the company. He, too, was a real scholar like the Clerk of Oxford, and knew by rote all the law cases and decision of the judges from the Conquest downwards. He was wise, prudent, discreet and worthy of respect in every way. He had often acted as Justice of the Peace and as

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he enjoyed a good reputation, he got many robes and much fees. He knew all the tricks of his trade, and appeared much busier than he really was. He could draw deeds so well that none could find fault with his writing. He was dressed in a coat of mixed stuff of colour and had a girdle of silk with small ornaments.

The Franklin

The Sergeant had a Franklin with him. The Franklin grew a beard white as a daisy, and had a ruddy complexion. He was a jolly old man, so fond of eating and drinking that he appeared to be the very son of Epicure, the well known Greek philosopher. He was a perfect St. Jullian in hospitality. His table was always laden with delicacies, and he had a good cellar of wine. His bread and ale, his baked meats and fish, were of the best quality. He kept partridges in cages, bream and pise in his fishponds. His cook never dared to make the sauce too strong. He often acted as President at the Session, and was also a Knight of the shire. He had been a Sheriff and an Auditor as well. There hung a dagger and a milk-white pouch from his girdle. The poet remarks that there,

"Was nowhere such a worthy vavasour"

The Haberdasher, Carpenter,

Weaver, Dyere and Tapicer

A Haberdasher, a Carpenter, a Weaver, a Dyere and a Tapicer were also with the company. They were all dressed in the clothes of a great and solemn guild. Their dresses were fresh and clean. They were all fair citizens fit to sit on the dais in the guilt hall, or to become aldermen. Their wives, too, were aware of their dignity. When they went to visits they had their mantles carried royally before them, "as well for show as to keep them from cold at table."

The Cook

They had also brought a Cook with them to serve them in case of need. He was very skilful, and could roast, boil, fry, prepare soups of different kinds, and bake a pie better than any other cook. But his face was marred by a repulsive gangrene on his chin.

The Shipman

There was a Shipman who lived at Dartmouth in the west. He owned a fine ship called Magdalen. He wore a gown of coarse cloth, and carried a dagger hanging by a lace. He was an experienced sailor; the sun had made his face brown and many a storm had shaken his beard. In other words, he had sailed to very far off places and faced storms. He was an expert navigator and was quite familiar with all the currents, dangers, harbours and weathers. He wasn't very honest, and did not hesitate to steal wine from the casks of the merchants (his customers) when they were asleep. If he won a battle, and captured some prisoners on the sea, he would not hesitate to throw them overboard, and thus, "he sent them home to every land."

The Doctor of Physic

The Doctor of Physic was also with the company, and he "was a very perfect practitioner". No one could equal his knowledge in physic, in surgery and astronomy. He looked at his patients very carefully, so as to know the exact moment at which to apply the correct remedy. He could recognize the cause and the cure of every disease. The chemist was his old friend, and so his patients could get the medicine. His diet was never superfluous, but always very healthful. He was too busy to study the Bible. He kept what he had earned during the plague. Chaucer ironically adds,

"For gold in physic is a Cordial

Therefore, he loved gold in special."

The Wife of Bath

There was also a good Wife of Bath. Unluckily, she was a little deaf. The fame of the cloth made by her was finer than that of Ghent or Ypres, two well-known cloth centers of the continent. There was not a woman in her parish that dared go before her to the Church. She had a higher status as was also revealed by the handkerchief of a fine texture that she wore on her head on a Sunday. She was bold-faced and gap-toothed, but had ruddy complexion. She wore a hat as broad as a shield, well spurred shoes, and straight tied hose, and a riding skirt about her large hips. She married many times. She took pleasure in good society and was an expert in the art of lovemaking.

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This was not her first pilgrimage. She had been three times to Jerusalem. And had also been to a number of other distant lands.

The Poor Parson

The Poor Parson, who was also one of the company, was a religious man. He was scholarly, and taught the gospel faithfully. He was hard working and kind by nature. He was never harsh in the collection of tithe; rather he gave it to the needy parishioners. His parish was wide, yet he would visit the farthest corner, even in rain and thunder, if any of his parishioners happened to be sick or in trouble. He tried to draw men to righteousness by fairness and good example. He practiced what he preached. He stuck to his parish and his poor position, and did not, like other clergy of time, go to London in search of more profitable employment. He was a good shepherd, and took good care of his flock. He showed no fear or favour in the discharge of his duties. He would snub the impious and the stubborn severely, even if they were men of position and influence. In brief, the poet says, there nowhere was a better priest.

The Ploughman

His brother, the Ploughman, was the humblest of the company, and who was equally virtuous. His humility is seen in the fact that he rode upon a mare. He was a good man and a true labourer. He loved God with all his heart, and his neighbour like himself. He lived in perfect peace and charity, and always paid his tithe regularly. After working on his own allotment, and on the field of his lord, he was prepared to work for any needy man without any hire for the sake of Christ.

A Reeve, a Miller, a Summoner, a Pardoner and a Maunciple were also members of this company of pilgrims.

The Miller

The Miller was a well-built, healthy man, a thickset fellow with strong shoulders. He always won prize in wrestling. His beard was red like that of a fox, and as broad as a spade. There was a mole upon the top right of his nose, and on it there was a tuft of hair as red as the bristles of a sow. His nostrils were black and wide. He carried a sword and a shield. He was deceitful and cheated his customers in different ways. He could blow well upon a bagpipe. He was dressed in blue coat and white hood.

The Maunciple

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The Maunciple was a very clever man of business. He purchased provisions for a group of more than thirty lawyers. A few of them were shrewd enough to have been the stewards of some lord and in that capacity to manage his estate well. But this Maunciple, though illiterate, could over-reach them all, and there was none to match him in cunning.

The Reeve

The Reeve was lean and choleric. His beard was close shaven, his hair was shorn to his ears, and his front was like that without any calf. He could know quite well from the dry weather and rainfall, the exact yield of seed and grain in that season. He knew all about the poultry, the cattle and the stock of his master. No bailiff, herdsman, or labourer could trick him. As a result they were all afraid of him as of the plague. He had secretly feathered his own nest, and so was richer than his master. He frequently obliged him by lending him his own goods, and got thanks, and occasionally even a gown and a hood from him as presents.

He was a skillful Carpenter and rode a good horse, called Scot. He lived in Northfolk. He wore a blue overcoat and carried a rusty blade by his side. His coat was tucked up like that of a friar, and he ever rode last in the group.

The Summoner

The Summoner had a red face, full of pimples. No ointment or medicine could cure him of these pimples. His face was so dreadful that children were afraid of him and ran away from him. He loved onion and garlic and strong wine, red as blood. When drunk, he would cry and speak loudly. Then he spoke no word except Latin, of which he knew but a few words He uttered them frequently, and thus earned a reputation of learning.

Chaucer sarcastically remarks that he was a kind, sympathetic man, for he would allow a man to keep his mistress for twelve months, and pardon all his sins, if he were offered merely a quart of wine. This shows his tender nature. He assured such people to have no fear of excommunication for they had his blessings. He had all the young people of his diocese in his control, as he knew their secrets.

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The Pardoner

The Pardoner was his friend. He said that he had come directly from the court of Rome. He sang love songs in a loud voice. There was no other Pardoner like him anywhere. In his bag he had a pillow-cover, which he said was the veil of the Virgin Mary. He had numerous other relics by which he cheated people, and took away their money from them. He sang sweetly and merrily to extort money from people.

His hair was yellow as wax, and smooth as flex, and it was spread all over his shoulders. He wore only a cap on his head and he thought that he was dressed in the most recent fashion. His voice was as small as that of a goat. He had no beard; his face was as smooth as if he had been just shaven.

The Host of the Tabard Inn

The Host of the Tabard Inn was a large imposing person fit to be the master of ceremonies of some great man. He was bold of speech, wise and well-mannered. He entertained the company with the very best, and served them strong wine, good to taste. The poet says that no better citizen lived in Cheapside.

His Proposal

He was a cheerful fellow. In order to beguile the time, and make their journey interesting, he proposed that each one of them should narrate two tales on the way to Canterbury, and two more entertained to a hearty supper on their return to the inn. He himself offered to ride with them at his own cost, and to act as the Judge.

The Unanimous Acceptance of The Pilgrims

All the Pilgrims agreed with his suggestion and swore to abide by his judgment. Consequently early next morning they started on the journey. When they were a mile out of the city, lots were drawn to decide who would narrate the first tale. The lot fell to the Knight, and all were very glad of it. As they rode forward, the Knight began his tale. Thus ends the *Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales*.

"The Prologue" As A Picture Gallery

Or

Chaucer's Art of Characterisation

"The Prologue": A Rich Picture Gallery

"*Chaucer is the first great painter of Character in English Literature.*" In fact "*Next to Shakespeare he is the greatest in the field.*" His *Prologue* is a veritable picture-gallery, and his pilgrims are like twenty-nine portraits hung on the wall. He characterizes each of these pilgrims with the minute details of their dresses, physical features, habits, peculiarities of manner, speech, etc.

Chaucer's Portraits—Realistic

In his character portrayal, Chaucer follows the methods common to all painters, the only difference being that he paints with words and not with a brush. A painter goes to nature, and paints from direct observation. Chaucer, moreover, makes nature his guide and model. Many of his characters are drawn from real life, from known acquaintance. For example the host Harry Bailly is drawn form an actual host known to Chaucer. Similar is the case with the Wife of Bath and the Oxford Clerk. They are neither saints nor devils but living and breathing human beings. They have the force of reality. His picture gallery thus consists of real men and women.

His Casual and Unsystematic manner

In many respects, Chaucer follows the methods of the primitive portrait-painter. He is equally unsystematic and haphazard. Details in his portraits follow each other casually. Touches of dress or equipment alternate with remarks referring to character, these lapse for a while and then resurface. This casual or conversational style imparts the touch of reality to his portraits—it is the art, which conceals art.

His Liking for Bright Colours

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Like a primitive painter, Chaucer shows a noticeable preference for brilliant colours, both in dress and appearance. On entering his picture gallery, one is at once impressed by the brightness of his portraits. For example, the gown of the Squire is embroidered.

"As it were a mead

All full of fresh flowers, white and red."

Similarly, the Forester is clad all in green and the hose of the Wife of Bath is "of fine scarlet red." The face of the Summoner is "fiery red" and the Miller has a reddish beard. The atmosphere of Chaucer's portrait-gallery is sunlit, bright, radiant and colourful.

The Use of Contrast

Occasionally, the principle of contrast is used to enhance effect. For instance the Franklin has a ruddy complexion, which is set off by his beard, white, "as is the daisie". Duller colours are often used to throw into sharp relief the bright colours by their side. For example, the fustian doublet of the Knight, which is all soiled, the poor Clerk's 'threadbare cloak' and the Man of Law has a "greyish coat".

His Use of Apt Similes and Metaphors

Chaucer employs apt similes and metaphors to make vivid his characters. His similes are ever drawn from the common, the familiar and the homely aspects of life and nature, such as are likely to be well-known to all readers. His pictorial imagination constantly uses such imagery as makes his character sparkle and glow as on a painter's canvas. For example, the merry nature of the Squire is depicted in a single line by saying the "he was as bright as is the month of May." The brightness of the Friar's eye is his most peculiar attribute and it is emphasized through an equally apt image:

"His eyes twinkled in his head aright,

As do the stars in a frosty night."

The Use of Sounds

In his illuminated and sunny portraits of the *Prologue,* Chaucer surpasses the art of the painter. He has one advantage over the painter—he can make use of sounds, which an artist with the brush cannot do. Thus he hears the jingling of the bells of the Monk's Palfrey, note the nasal tones of the Prioress, and the lisping of the Friar.

Rich Variety of Chaucer's Characters

Chaucer, like Shakespeare, highlights one set of characters by presenting it as a foil to another. Thus, for example, the polished and delicate Prioress is contrasted with the coarse and broad speaking Wife of Bath. The Reeve, the Miller, and the Cook are several other men and the broad speaking, gap-toothed Wife of Bath. It would be appropriate to say according to the proverb, that, "here is God's plenty".

His Characters: Both Types and Individuals

Chaucer's characters are types as well as individuals. They are the symbols of some particular class, age-group, or profession, but they also have their own uncharacteristic traits, their own peculiarities, their own ways of talking and doing things. For example, his Knight is a typical Knight of his age symbolizing the fast fading chivalry of the Middle Ages. But he is also an individual who, for his personal qualities, had been honoured in foreign lands above all other knights and who had been the guest of honour at many a feast. His son, the young Squire, represents the jollity of youth as well as the spirit of the rising chivalry of the times. He is not, like his father, interested so much in war and adventure as in singing, dancing and lovemaking. He is also an individual who has a weakness for bright colours and fine apparel.

"Embroidered was he, as it were a mead

All full of fresh flowers, white and red".

Thus Chaucer's assortment of portraits represents his age in its entirety.

The Ecclesiastical Characters

Similarly, his ecclesiastical characters represent the deterioration of the Church and the corruption that had overtaken the clergy of times. His Monk, the

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Friar, the Pardoner and Summoner have all forgotten their duties, have grown greedy and self-seeking and are given to all sorts of corrupt practices. They have been individualized by their personal peculiarities and oddities. For example, his eyes individualize the Monk:

"His eyes steps and rolling in his heads,

That seemed as a furnace in his head."

He is individualized by his bald head which shone like mirror. Some of his characters, like the Prioress and Friar, have been brought to life by giving them a name. We believe that they are men and women whom Chaucer must have met and minutely observed. At times, some physical peculiarities are emphasised to add individuality to some characters. For example, we have the forked beard of the Merchant, the Miller's famous wart surmounted by a tuft of hair, and the pimply face of the Summoner.

Balance Between the Type and the Individual

Chaucer, moreover, knew how to strike a delicate balance between the individual and the type. His characters present their typical natures without ceasing to be individuals. In this connection Legouis makes the remark, "More general traits would have turned the picture into a frozen symbol, and uninteresting abstraction; more individual traits would have confused it by depriving the mind of obvious means of identification."

The University of Chaucer's Characters

Another thing worth considering about his characters is their universality. They are not of an age but of all ages. "They are timeless creations on a time determined stage." The Squire, the Monk, the Prioress, the Franklin, the Wife of Bath etc. may have changed their names, the title by which they are known, but have changed all human beings, having the same passions, desires, aspirations and in their company, for we all recognize in them an element of our own selves. Chaucer's portrait-gallery is representative not only of his age, but also of humanity in all ages and countries.

Steady Evolution of the Characters

His characters are not static—they constantly grow and develop like real men and women. The characters, which are depicted in the *Prologue,* and hung on

the wall, so to speak, are taken out of the frame, and as they talk to each other, narrate their own tales, and comment on the tales told by others, they expose a hundred aspects of their natures. They are shown to us as moving, acting, talking and dispute just like real men and women. In this way the outlines that have been given in the *Prologue* are enriched and enlarged. Chaucer has this advantage over the painter that his figures can move and while that of the painter remain where they are—they manifest no growth or change. As the pilgrims proceed on their journey, they cut jokes and narrate tales at each other's expense, and thus enable us to see the other face of the picture as well. For example, the Friar's Tale is directed against the Summoner. The Summoner's tale is at the expense of the friar and is his reply to the Friar's Tale. In this way, they reveal each other's real nature. This is true of all the characters, but more so of the Wife of Bath and the merry host of the Tabard Inn.

Conclusion

Thus Chaucer is a master of the art of Characterisation, as great as Shakespeare, Fielding or Dickens. Some of his creations rank among the immortal figures of English Literature. Pandarus *(Troilus and Cressyde)* is the first great comic creation in English; and Chaucer's Wife of Bath is the first complete character-sketch of a complex woman. His characters are so numerous portraits hung on a wall—his picture-gallery is crowded and varied.

1.1.8 SOME IMPORTANT EXPLANATIONS

Lines 47-50. Full worthy was he in his liege-lord's war,
And therein had he ridden (none more far)
As well in Christendom as heathenesse,
And honoured everywhere for worthiness.

Explanation: These lines refer to the role played by the Knight. The Knight is representative of the order of chivalrous and adventurous heroes of Medieval England. This particular Knight has been identified by some critics as Jean Seigneur de Roubais, a French Knight who died in 1449. As regards his merits

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Chaucer says that he was a true Christian who fought in wars to defend and uphold the glory of Christianity. He was very conspicuous by his bravery in the wars of his lord and master. He had widely travelled both in Christian lands and heathen countries in the course of military expeditions. No other man had travelled over such a vast and varied area in his lifetime. Everywhere he won respect and acclaim for his chivalry and military achievements. He was both great and good in his life and deeds.

Lines73-78. But now, to tell you all of his array,
His steeds were good, but yet he was not gay.
Of simple fustian wore he a jupon
Sadly discoloured by his habergeon;
For he had lately come from his voyage
And now was going on this pilgrimage.

Explanation: These lines refer to the individual traits of the Knight, one of the pilgrims going to Canterbury to pay homage at the shrine of St. Thomas. His horse was of poor mettle, who could not serve him fine. The Knight was a man of adventure and his horse should have been dignified according to his stature. But the Knight's clothes, too, were not fine and good-looking. He wore a short coat of coarse cotton cloth because he thought that a Knight should impress by his brave deeds and not by clothes. Gaudy and showy dresses of the people of the upper classes were considered shameful and sinful in those heroic times. So how could this Knight be gaily-clad when he was so ardently religious as to have come for this holy journey straight from some expedition and still in his battle dress. This shows that the Knight was not deficient in Knightly virtues and religious devotion too.

Lines 446-452. But she was somdel deef, and that was scathe.
Of clooth-makyng she hadde swich an haunt,
She passed hem of ypres and of gaunt.
In al the parisshe wif ne was ther noon

That to the offrynge bifore hire sholde goon;
And if ther dide, certeyn so wrooth was she,

That she was out of alle charitee.

Explanation: These lines from Chaucer's "Prologue to Canterbury Tales" introduce us to a woman named 'The Wife of Bath' who had arrived at the inn at Southwork(London) and had joined the group of pilgrims already gathered there by accident in the course of their journey to the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury.

Chaucer has put a lot of humour in his descriptions. Despite her physical disability, she has skill in a certain craft. She also has a sense of self-importance. She is slightly deaf. It was said a blow struck by her fifth husband caused her deafness. She was admittedly a much-married woman. She was expert in cloth-making and the stuff she produced was of a surpassing quality in comparison to that produced by weavers of Ypres and Ghent.

Finally, we are told that she would not like any other woman to precede her in the matter of offering alms at the offertory, so awake was she of her position. If any woman dared and went before her in the business, she would become beside herself with rage and forget all charity. Being the richest woman of her place she was entitled to lead others at the function.

In conclusion the 'Wife of Bath' was jealous and ill tempered. She was violently self-conscious in religious duties as well. She exhibited no Christian virtues even in the presence of the clergy.

1.2 CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

Early Life

Christopher Marlowe was born in Canterbury in 1563. He was baptized in St. George Church of Canterbury on 26th February 1563. His father Mr. John belonged to the guild of shoemakers, and his mother Catherine Arthur was the daughter of the rector of St. Peter's Church.

His Education

Marlowe was admitted to King's School on 14th January 1578. He learnt Latin at King's School. He proved himself a very promising and brilliant scholar. After a brief stay at King's School, he was admitted to Cambridge. He obtained one of the fifty scholarships to King's School. At the age of seventeen he obtained one of the three scholarships from King's School to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. They were given on the understanding that the student intended to take holy orders for six years. He was thought to prepare himself for the profession of a clergy. His scholarship was renewed for another three-year period on condition that he took holy order.

Marlowe made a profound study in theology. He obtained a degree in Arts. He pursued the study of Latin language and literature and Greek. He had knowledge of History. He got ample opportunity to read books in the Corpus Christi and the University Library. He took interest in astronomy and made frequent use of similes and metaphors. He got many opportunities of witnessing plays acted by the students of the University. This fostered his taste for the drama and later he began to write for the stage even as a student of Cambridge. Marlowe took his B.A. degree in 1584. He had gone missing from University for a considerably long time. He got his M.A. Degree in 1588 at the recommendation of the Privy Council. He could not take holy orders at the end of his academic career. He was not happy with his degree.

His Later Life

Marlowe left Corpus Christi in 1588. He left for London to start his career as a playwright. He rose from an actor to be a maker of plays. He worked as an

actor before writing his first play. He worked as a secret agent for the duration of his University career. He once said, "I profess myself a spy, but am not one for the gain, but to serve my country." He translated some Latin poems in his early life. In London, he got quite familiar with some prominent political and literary personages. He met George Chapman and Sir Walter Raleigh. He had good relations with Thomas Nashe, who was one of the University wits. He had intimate terms with Thomas Kyd also. His reputation as an atheist was established in 1588, after the publication of *Perimedes the Blacksmith* by Greene. He got involved in an unfortunate brawl and consequently he had to undergo a brief imprisonment. Many dramatic companies performed his plays, which is proof of his success in his own day.

His Reputation and Evil Days

The well-known dramatic companies of Lord Admiral Howard of Effingham performed the plays of Marlowe. Some jealous rival writers had contempt for his braggart blank verse and his drumming decasyllable, but the public recognized his merit. He was hailed as the 'Morning Star of Song' and 'The Young Apollo of the Age.' In October 1589, he was taken on summon before the Newgate session and obtained release on bail. It was a breach of peace with regard to the theatre.

In 1593, Marlowe had to undergo great privations. He had to leave London due to plague. Some atheistical documents were detected in the room jointly hired by Marlowe and Thomas Kyd. Marlowe was summoned before the Privy Council to answer for his alleged heretical views. After some time a formal indictment for blasphemy was drawn up against him by Richard Baines. He was a secret agent of the government. He became the Queen's informer and received for his disclosures. His dealings with dubious characters and scoundrels proved fatal as Ingram Frizer killed him in a tavern brawl in Deptford in 1593. He had a dagger wound over his eyes. It is supposed that Marlowe attacked Frizer and the latter killed him in self-defense. Contemporary scholars paid a warm homage to him after his death. George Chapman completed Marlowe's unfinished poem, "Hero and Leander". His death was grieved over by Dekker.

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The period (1587-1593) was a short period of Marlowe's dramatic activity. He wrote six plays during this period. The subject of these plays is the lust for empire, the lust for wealth, the lust for knowledge, and the lust for beauty. All the plays are filled with power, passion and poetry. He wrote real tragedy in pure blank verse. They present an atmosphere of terror, intensity of purpose, sublimity of mind, and imaginative brilliance.

Tamburlaine

The play has two parts. The first part was published in 1587 and the second in 1588. From a mere shepherd, the hero becomes the most powerful man in the world. The first part of the play describes the rise to power of the scything shepherd robber Tamburlaine. He conquers the Turkish Empire. Part second deals with his conquests, which extend to Babylon. He burns a town in honour of a funeral of his wife Zenocate. One finds passages of pure poetic beauty in this play.

The Jew of Malta

This play was published in 1589. Its theme is that the power of wealth rules the kingdom. The Grand Seignior of Turkey demanded the tribute of Malta. The governor of Malta decides that the Jew of the Island should pay the tribute. A rich Jew Barbas resists the decree. He tries to poison his daughter Abigail and also manages to murder her lover. The Turks besiege Malta and the Jew betrays the fortress to them. As a reward he was made the governor of Malta. He shows cunning plan to destroy the Turkish commander and his force at a banquet, but is himself betrayed and dies.

Edward Second

It is a historical drama in blank verse. It shows the recall by Edward Second of his favourite piers Gaveston. The play presents the revolt of the barons and the execution of Gaveston, the estrangement of Queen Isabella from her husband, and her rebellion against the King.

The Massacre of Paris

The play describes the massacre of St. Barthalomew. The unlimited ambition of the Duke of Cuise is peculiar.

The Tragedy of Dido

This tragedy is written by Marlowe in collaboration with Nashe. There are many lapses of taste in the play.

Hero and Leander (1589)

It is an unfinished poem. It was completed after his death by George Chapman. His great contribution was the introduction of poetry into the English drama. The poem shows the lyrical power of Marlowe.

1.2.1 DR. FAUSTUS

Dr. Faustus

The Inwardness of Marlowe's Play

The story of *Dr.Faustus* is closely founded on the popular Faustus legend. However there are differences of emphasis. In the earlier versions of the Faustus legends, the interest was centred on the Doctor's diverse exploits and exhibition of magical powers. In Marlowe's play these are relegated to the Chorus and to a few comparatively brief scenes, if, really, these scenes are altogether Marlowe's work, which with the exception of Helen's appearance are written with indifference. They are, mostly, the fillings in, introduced for the sake of story's wholeness and for furnishing the comic relief, which was demanded by a popular Elizabethan audience when invited to view a tragedy. But with Marlowe the interest almost wholly veers round the presentation of Faustus in his drama, his initial resolve is subsequent vacillations of his mind, and in his agonizing death. These form the main incidents of the drama and give to it its much-needed greatness.

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The play opens with a chorus-speech by which Marlowe, after the manner of the ancients and less frequently of the Elizabethans gives the required exposition. Faustus and his circumstances are briefly introduced. He is a profound scholar, yet he is poor. The curtain, which hides the inner stage, is down and Faustus is shown in his study. He is not satisfied with his present studies, and wants to study magic. In the end of the first scene his resolve to pursue magic is final. Exhorted by Valdes and Cornelius, he is carried away by his vision and decides to give himself over to magic.

This night I'll conjure, though I die therefore.

There is much skill in this simple quiet opening. Next we are shown Faustus in meditation surrounded by his books. The silent entry of the Angels, their whispered advice and Faustus' enraptured cry as he thinks of the glorious future offered to him, make a very impressive representation, if seen in a setting akin to the Elizabethan stage. The weirdness of the play is suggested from the very outset. The figures of the Good and the Evil Angels, brought in at the beginning and at brief intervals all through the play, are Marlowe's own addition to the story. They symbolize Faustus' conscience and his forbidden desires. When they emerge in his moment of doubt, the conflict within is vividly externalized.

The Comic Interlude

Between the opening and the conjuration of Mephistophilis, and again between the arrival of Mephistophilis and the signing of the bond, we come across two comic interludes. The comedy in these intervening scenes is certainly weak, but there is sufficient reason for these two insertions. It may be taken, as an example of the practice, which was common with our older playwrights and often justified by its dramatic effectiveness, of setting a tensely emotive scene against one of a frivolous tone wherein there is an element of parody. There definitely is a point in the Clown's gruesome reply to Wagner, which comes immediately after Faustus is resolved on his bargain with Mephistophilis:

> *"How/ My soul to the devil for a shoulder of mutton, though 'twice bollo-raw : not so, good friend : by'r Lady I had need have it well roasted, and good sauce to it, if I pay so dear."*

Mephistophilis is Conjured

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In the third scene, Faustus summons Mephistophilis. The scene is conceived and written with the same simple intensity as the opening scene. Possibly it is the quiet dignity of the Spirit, which impresses us all. He speaks as one who has come reluctantly and with no desire to entrap Faustus. His replies to Faustus' eager queries are almost abrupt, and twice he reminds Faustus of the real cause of his appearance:

For when we hear one rack the name of God

Abjure the Scriptures and his Saviour Christ.

We fly in hope to get his glorious soul.

He also tells him of the hell that is permanently his.

Signing of the Contract

The central incident of the play, the signing of the contract with the Devil, has nothing in its wording so excellent as some of the earlier passages. Marlowe has forcefully portrayed Faustus' excitement, his panic and his almost hysterical haste to put his new power to the test. Before the scene that follows an interval of time is supposed to have passed. Faustus has been enjoying for some time the pleasures, which his newly gained power has given him.

Have not I made blind Homer sing to me

Of Alexander's love and Oenon's death/

And hath not he, that built the walls of Thebes

With ravishing sound of his melodious harp,

Made music with my Mephistophilis?

Judged against such delights, which are of Marlowe's own imagining and in which their nature reflects his own poetic temper, the later physical exploits of Faustus taken from the traditional stories are simply crude.

Faustus Remorse: Lucifer Appears

There is again a fine moment when remorse falls on Faustus and his guardian angels are beside him with wise counsel and in answer to his cry,

Ah Christ, my Saviour,

Seek to save distressed Faustus's Soul

Lucifer himself appears and tempts his victim back to inconsiderate revelry. "The pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins which the Devil offers as a pastime is another of Marlowe's addition to the story." Such a procession, common in mediaeval literature, was repeatedly made use of as a spectacle in the early drama and finds fitting place here. There is indeed more than usual force in the grotesque self-descriptions, which Marlowe gives to the Sins.

Faustus Displays His power

The six scenes that follow provide a display of Faustus' power. A few of these showing Faustus' magic powers have been taken from the old story and roughly put into dramatic form. Exploits marked by a strain of low comedy, have been chosen intentionally. The following at the Pope's Court undoubtedly appealed widely in Protestant England, the outwitting of the Emperor's Knight is such stuff as can be found frequently in the older comic plays, and the jest of Faustus' leg has a crude farcical effectiveness that must have won admiration on the stage. Marlowe's responsibility for all this jarring buffoonery is usually considered as highly doubtful. On the other hand, it is to be noted that he had made no attempt to invent for himself any incidents wherein Faustus' magic power might be more admirably exhibited. Like many others among the Elizabethans, he appears to have been content to follow strictly the original story.

The Last Scene

The last scene of the play culminates in three great emotional moments. The first is the re-appearance of the Old Man whose words bring Faustus to desperate repentance and this old man is followed by the ever-watchful Mephistophilis. The second is Faustus' cry of ecstasy as he gazes on the beauty of Helen of Troy, for whose love he will once more readily forget the danger to his soul. And finally there is the death-scene. The subdued talk of the scholars as they bid farewell and go to pray for their master is a masterly prologue to the overwhelming agony of Faustus' last hour. With the entry of the chorus and his simple, sober comment, the play is wound up with that quiet ending which a great tragedy demands.

1.2.2 THE GREATNESS OF MARLOWE AS A DRAMATIST

The Greatness of Marlowe as a Dramatist

Or

The Merits and Demerits of Marlowe as a Dramatist

Or

A General Estimate of Marlowe as a Dramatist

The University Wits were the first genuine fashioners of the Elizabethan drama, and of them Marlowe was infinitely the greatest. He situates himself at the head of the rich and catholic stream of English drama.

Marlowe and the University Wits

At the time this group started writing under the new condition of a permanent theatre and increased demand for entertainment, the English drama was crude and immature. One or two of them had already heralded the change before Marlowe's first play appeared. But praiseworthy as these plays are, none can compare with the earliest work of Marlowe in far reaching importance. First, it was he, more than any other, who helped to draw English drama away from the old Morality play and Interludes, and set it firmly on the road to greatness.

Imparted Tragic Dignity

This was his Preface to *Tamburlaine,* a play that in theme and manner surely justifies its challenging introduction. Secondly, it was with *Tamburlaine* that the English tragic drama was dignified with high passion and poetry. Its two parts give the story of *Tamburlaine,* a shepherd, but one who dreams of world conquest, fulfils his ambition marvelously, and dies in his triumph. The real distinction of the play lies in the convincing manner in which Marlowe, in a few scenes, has suggested his high tempered hero, and the passionate strength of

language with which he has gifted him. The indelible impression of *Tamburlaine* is manifest in all subsequent Elizabethan plays.

Imparted Music and Poetry

It is in this play that there sounds the new amazing music of Elizabethan Drama. With the poetry and blank verse of *Tamburlaine,* as Harold Osborne says, *"*Marlowe created a revolution in the poetry of the stage"**.** Blank verse had first been used in *Gorboduc,* but Marlowe took a massive stride forward, and imparted flexibility and spontaneity to it. The ringing march of Marlowe's verse became echoed in a score of plays even in the early history plays of Shakespeare. As R.S. Knox writes," Indeed, trumpet blast was there repeated so thoroughly and tricked so skillfully with the Marlowesque flourishes and grace notes that critics are often at a loss to decide whether Shakespeare is merely imitating or whether Marlowe himself had a share in these plays."

Introduced "Character"

"*Tamburlaine* brought Marlowe into fame, but his highest achievement in drama is his second play, *Doctor Faustus.*" In the former, he had imaginatively pictured a man whose lust was for limitless power, a shepherd who had set his destiny at the world's highest point, i.e. the most powerful throne. This very idea of a passionate struggle to reach beyond the grasp of ordinary mortals is again his theme, but the ambition, which Faustus tries to pursue, is godhead itself. The Faustus legend develops in Marlowe's plays into a symbol of infinite aspiration ending in misery and remorse. The final scene when Lucifer claims the doctor's soul impresses the reader with an awe and pity unmatched in the entire pre-Shakespearean drama. Harold Osborne aptly remarks, "*Dr. Faustus remains at once the greatest of one-figure plays and the highest development of drama within that limitation*."

Improved Skill in Plot Construction

The Jew of Malta and *Edward II* are the only other plays that need be considered in estimating Marlowe's dramatic merits. These show themes that have an additional real background of history than either of his former plays, as the interest is more in the story that veers round the hero. "*Marlowe has*", says **R.S. Knox, "***set aside the loose epic manner of construction and tried to weld his matter into a regularly developing plot.*" He effects this eminent success in

Edward II, which may be regarded as our first artistic historical play. Consequently, it takes rank amongst the very best of the Elizabethan Historical drama. *The Jew of Malta* is proof enough of Marlowe' s ability to shape his matter into a fitting form.

The Autobiographical Note

A renowned critic writes, "*What he writes reveals the man, the spiritual man*." The autobiographical note is very strong in all Marlowe's plays. He himself can be easily identified with those superb self-centred heroes of his, who rebel against the clogs of ordinary life. With his heroes he ascends for a moment above life's limitations to an imagined world where his own ardent aspirations are accomplished. We can pronounce with confidence that Tamburlaine, reveling in the splendour of worldly power, and Faustus, ensnared by the desire for unlimited knowledge, are the spiritual Marlowe, with much more confidence than we can say that Hamlet is Shakespeare.

Marlowe's Limitations

The tendency in Marlowe to choose as his central figure men of surpassing ambitions, through whom he can reflect his own high temper, obviously restricts the range of his characterization. There is in his plays nothing of that variety of character, which Shakespeare offers. It is an established fact that his plays lack the interplay, which is the very essence of drama. Outside *Edward II* he hardly steps down to interest himself in mere average men and women. In his other plays, the massive figures like Tamburlaine, Faustus, the Jew dominates, and the rest are mere accessories, dull shadows.

Perfection of Blank Verse

Blank verse had obviously, been used in drama before Marlowe. It had been introduced in *Gorboduc,* the play in the classical style, and had fittingly been employed by other dramatists since then. But it was Marlowe's example that ensured its strong potion in later drama. It was he who, as one critic writes, "First unlocked the secrets of blank verse and taught his successors how to play upon its hundred stops." In his highest moments, as in Tamburlaine's vision of Zenocrate in heaven, or in Faustus' vision of Helen, or in Faustus' death-scene, Marlowe's verse has a freedom and rhythmical splendour that set it beside the best verse-music in our language.

Magnificent Diction

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In his preface to Tamburlaine Marlowe promised the use of, "high astounding terms", and it is the magnificence of his language, even when it results in rhetoric rather than in poetry, which makes certain the ringing march of his lines. **Ben Jonson's** praise of his "*mighty lines"* is justified and reasonable. He was, indeed, the first great poet who handled the new meter effectively and efficiently. He was the first great poet who tried his hand at the dramatic form. As **Swinburne** writes, "*Before him there was neither genuine blank verse nor a genuine tragedy in our language. After his arrival the way was prepared, the paths were straight, for Shakespeare.*"

1.2.3 CHARACTER OF DOCTOR FAUSTUS

Character of Doctor Faustus

Or

Dr. Faustus: a Renaissance Figure

Or

Dr. Faustus as a Tragic Hero

A Towering Personality

Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* contains a number of characters but they are all mere shadowy figures, just outline-sketches designed to throw into sharper relief the character and personality of Faustus, the central figure in the play. Like other heroes of Marlowe, Faustus is a towering personality who dominates the action from the beginning to the very end, and it is on him that the attention of the readers is focused throughout. Faustus is a great tragic figure, a great Renaissance scholar symbolizing the spirit of those strange times. He is also a self-portrait of the dramatist himself.

Inspiration from English Faustus Book

Faustus is not entirely the creation of the dramatist's imagination. His character and career bear close resemblance to those of the legendary Doctor

Faustus of the *English Faustus Book*. But, Marlowe has taken from the *English Faustus Book* just the bare facts, the dry bones, and has breathed into them a new life and spirit by the power of his own imagination. He has transformed the medieval sorcerer into one of the greatest of dramatic figures and has imparted to it a new dignity and psychological significance. He has made him into a symbol of man's insatiable curiosity, of man's hunger for Infinite Beauty and Power, and the heart of conflict between Good and Evil that eternally rages within and without him.

His Inordinate Ambition

The play opens at a crucial point in the life and fortunes of Faustus. He is entirely discontented with what he has learnt at the University. He is well versed in Theology, in Medicine, in Law, in Philosophy and Logic, and the fame of his scholarship has spread to far-off places. Still he is dissatisfied for his heart craves for "knowledge infinite". Infinite aspiration, inordinate ambition and an insatiable thirst for knowledge, which he seeks to satisfy even at the cost of his soul, make him a grand tragic figure. Only magic can perform what he longs for, and therefore he enters into the dreadful contract with the Devil. He believed full enjoyment of "knowledge, power, and omnipotence" to be a god on earth, and so does not falter from bartering away his soul to the Devil.

A Grand Tragic Figure

Doctor Faustus is made of stuff great tragic heroes are made. Inordinate ambition, the desire for unlimited knowledge, and the daring to practise what must only be wondered at from a distance, make him a grand tragic figure. Insatiable ambition to acquire forbidden knowledge in order to rise above the human condition is the tragic flaw of his character, and his resolute pursuit of it, at all costs, makes Faustus a grand tragic figure, one of the grandest in the history of English tragedy. It is not that he has no faith in God and His heaven, or that he is devoid of any conscience. He has a conscience, believes in God and His Mercy as well, yet he abjures God and goes over to the Devil's party. As a consequence he suffers from a deep spiritual anguish.

The Inner Conflict

A terrible conflict between Good and Evil, between his conscience and his cravings, rages within him. The Good Angel and the Old Man, on the one hand,

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and the Bad Angel and Mephistophilis on the other symbolize this conflict. On many occasions he tries to retrace his steps, but he has gone too far and what has been done cannot be undone. Mephistophilis and Lucifer see to it that he does not rebel or turn back. They threaten, persuade, and tempt him by all means. The dramatist has given us a peep into the suffering soul of Faustus, and it is this stress on psychological conflict that makes *Doctor Faustus* the greatest tragedy in pre-Shakespearean English Drama. **Una Ellis Fermor** aptly remarks: "Faustus remains, then, an almost unmatched record of spiritual tragedy in a medium capable of isolating the spiritual elements and preserving them unmixed with any of the spiritual elements of Life."

His Eternal Damnation

This inner conflict in Faustus reaches its climax in the last scene, the death scene. In a very pathetic colloquy Faustus expresses his poignant desire of freeing himself from the clutches of the Devil. He longs for God's mercy, has visions of Christ's blood, wishes the time to come to a stand-still, but the doomed doctor knows all is in vain.

The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike,

The Devil will come, and Faustus must be damned

The mid-night strikes, the Devils come and carry off his soul, "The wages of sin is death", and Faustus suffers eternal death and damnation. The death scene remains one of the most poignant and moving scenes in the whole range of English drama.

Dr Faustus: A Great Renaissance Figure

Marlowe's Faustus is a great Renaissance figure, symbolizing intellectual curiosity, will to power, and appetite for the delight of the scenes, all characteristic features of those stirring times. His career may be described as the "microcosm of Renaissance humanism." Like Bacon, he is one of those insatiable scholars who dare take all knowledge to be their province. It is his intellectual curiosity, which makes him take off the wings like an eagle, fly over the whole world, and the secrets of heaven and earth. His constant questioning of Mephistophilis is but an expression of his thirst for "knowledge infinite", an expression of the typical Renaissance spirit.

His Universal Significance: His Failure

Faustus symbolizes man forever dissatisfied, always ambitious, constantly in search of happiness that eludes him every time he seems about to lay hold of it. The Renaissance humanist is a more adequate embodiment of that elusive dream than the medieval conqueror. Few dramatic characters assume such a universal significance. He has made a losing bargain. Even at the price of his soul, he cannot acquire the infinite knowledge he covets. As for his dream of ruling over men and nature, it proves still more elusive than his other ambition.

Yet art, thou still Faustus, and a man

Conclusion

The entire conception of Dr. Faustus underwent drastic change in the hands of Marlowe. From the crude sorcerer of the medieval legend, Faustus has been transformed in Marlowe's play into the symbolized representation of great spiritual conflict. As **Una Ellis Fermor** remarks, here is a "faithful revelation of a mind in transition between two conceptions of the Universe. As Faustus wavers between his good and evil angels, between God and the Devil, so we may see Marlowe hesitating between the submissive acceptance of a dogmatic system and a pagan simplicity of outlook to which instinct and temperament prompted him." Faustus' tragedy is a soul's tragedy, and it is the tragedy of Marlowe as well.

1.2.4 THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ELEMENT IN THE PLAY

Doctor Faustus as a self-portrait

Or

The Autobiographical element in the Play

The Subjective Note

Drama is the most objective of all the arts, and to be a successful dramatist, he must obliterate his personality completely. However, Marlowe was more a poet than a dramatist. His dramas are the dramas of a poet of genius, and that's why they are suffused with the subjective elements. His heroes are self-

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portraits; their views and their aspirations are those of their creator himself. Hence a study of the plays throws valuable light on the man; and knowledge of the biography of the poet facilitates understanding of the play.

Dr. Faustus: Marlowe's Self portrait

Like his other plays, the play at hand is no exception to this rule. Dr Faustus too is a self-portrait, as we find striking parallelisms and similarities between Marlowe and the scholarly doctor. The careers of Marlowe and Doctor Faustus show close similarities. Marlowe was of humble birth, but was gifted with numerous eminent qualities. **Harold Osborne** writes, "Marlowe himself, like Faustus, came of parents 'base of stock' and was destined for the church but turned elsewhere; he was undoubtedly keenly interested in secular knowledge: was reputed as scoffer at religion; and incurred the charge of blasphemy."

Inordinate Ambition

The inordinate ambition of Marlowe and his revolt against religion, and against society both have been revealed in the work. Dr. Faustus also shares which is its natural corollary. Such revolt is sure to result in suffering, in despair and in defeat. One cannot defy the laws of man and god with impunity. Marlowe defied them. And Faustus defies them. And so like him suffers terribly. In other words, the spiritual history of Faustus is a rendering of the dramatist's own inner struggle, his own despair and frustration. As **Harold Osborne** writes,

> *The description of Faustus' repentance, despair, and mental anguish are among the most vivid and poignant parts of the play. It is, of course, possible to suppose that Marlowe had passed through a stage of youthful skepticism in religion and that with a sounder and deeper faith he had come to the knowledge of repentance. Nor indeed is he ever the pure scoffer. It is certain that the author of Faustus must himself have walked some way along the path of religious doubts and gropings and must have known the sufferings attendant upon the journey.*

Scepticism and Perplexity

Marlowe must have written Faustus in a psychological state of spiritual vacuity and loss of faith. Just as Faustus vacillates between his Good and Evil Angels, between God and the Devil, in a similar way we may presume Marlowe

also must have wavered between the submissive acceptance of a dogmatic system and a pagan simplicity of outlook to which his natural instinct and temperament prompted him. The following words of Faustus which convey his deep spiritual anguish may be taken as expressing the extreme agony of the dramatist himself:

> *But Faustus' offence can never be pardoned; the serpent that tempted Eve may be saved, but not Faustus…for which Faustus hath lost both Germany and the world, yea, heaven itself, heaven, the seat of God, the throne of the blessed, the kingdom of joy, and must remain in hell for ever.*

And when his friends ask him to call on God, he exclaims with deep anguish:

> *On God, whom Faustus hath abjured; oh God, whom Faustus hath blasphemed; Ah, my God, I would weep; but the devil draws in my tears. Gush forth blood, instead of tears; Yes, life and soul—O, he stays my tongue: I would lift up my hands but see, they hold them, they hold them.*

Craving for Knowledge, Power, Sensuality

Faustus' thirst for knowledge, for "knowledge infinite", for omnipotence, for power that knowledge gives, and for the craving for worldly pleasure, are closely expressive of the dramatist's owns sensuality, his own thirst for knowledge and hunger for power. Faustus loves knowledge for the sake of power which knowledge gives, and the opportunities for sensual gratification, which it places within one's reach. Faustus is thus a sensualist, and in this respect he reflects the dramatist's own sensuality. Faustus' kissing Helen and doting over her just before his death, is described by **Havelock Ellis** thus:

> *Marlowe was at the little village of Deptford, not many miles from London. There was turbulent blood there, and wine: there were courtesans and daggers. Here Marlowe was slain, killed by a serving man, a rival in a quarrel over bought kisses.*

Faustus, as is evident from his glowing tribute to the beauty of Helen, shares Marlowe's Love of Beauty, both of nature and of the body of woman.

Conclusion

The poetry of the passage shows that Faustus is a born poet, as Marlowe himself was. In this context, **Wynne** has to say the following:

This passage has probably never been surpassed in its magic idealization of that which is essentially base and carnal. Poetry such as this has power to blind us for a moment to the underlying meaning: Faustus enjoys a temporary transfiguration. His creator has inspired him with his own Bohemian joy in mere pleasure, his own thirst for fresh sensations, his own poetic spirit, his own vehement disregard of restraint, a disregard which brought Marlowe to a tragic and unworthy end.

1.2.5 THE RENAISSANCE NOTE IN *DOCTOR FAUSTUS*

The Renaissance Note in Doctor Faustus

Or

Dr. Faustus: The Blending of Renaissance and Reformation

The Renaissance: Its Significance

Doctor Faustus is a happy and judicious blend of Renaissance and Reformation influences. The word *Renaissance* means both revival and re-awakening. The Renaissance was distinguished by a revival of the ancient Greco-Roman culture, art and literature. The outcome was a change in outlook, the shackles of medieval scholasticism were broken, and men cared more for this world than for the other world. They had now begun to care more for Beauty, and for the enjoyment of the good things of life.

The Reformation

In addition the Renaissance was characterized by a re-awakening of the human mind both as a result of the revival of ancient literature and culture and the sensational geographical and scientific discoveries. An upsurge of the spirit of adventure could be witnessed. Men of the times were fired with curiosity to know the unknown. In short, men cared for knowledge, for power, which that knowledge brings, for beauty, and for worldly power and pelf. The Renaissance, on the other hand, was a movement for religious reform. It was aimed at the reform of the English Church and the elimination of corruption, which marred religious institution in England.

Faustus: Love of Knowledge and Power

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Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* is a happy blend of both Renaissance and Reformation influence. The Renaissance influence is seen in Faustus' insatiable curiosity, in his love of knowledge, in his desire for power and pelf and in his enjoyment of beauty. He craves for "Knowledge Infinite", and wishes to be a very god on earth. He is a typical Renaissance scholar, well versed in the classics as is seen in his frequent use of allusion and references to classical mythology and literature. He is well read in Aristotle and Justinian and other ancient philosophers, jurists, and scientists. He has studied metaphysic, physics, alchemy, logic, law and theology. Yet his thirst for knowledge does not slacken, and thus he takes to magic.

But magic promises him "a world of profit and delight", "all things that move between the quiet poles", a power that surpasses that of kings and emperors.

His Insatiable Curiosity

Faustus' curiosity is insatiable. No sooner does he obtain the services of Mephistophilis, than he scales ghastly heights of the sky to know the secrets of the starry heaven. He puts a hundred queries to Mephistophilis on cosmography. He desires to know the secret of the creation and the truth about heaven and hell. He demands from him books of astronomy and botany. Also he goes with him round the world, visiting important cities, and seeing all that is worth seeing.

His Love of Worldly Pleasures

Faustus not only craves for knowledge, but also for worldly pleasures, power and pelf, which characterized the Renaissance. He desires to lead a luxurious life. He imagines that after he has spirits at his command, he would:

...have them fly to India for gold

Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,

And search all corners of the new found world,

For pleasant fruits and princely delicacies.

His Love of Beauty

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Along with the love of earthly pleasure and power, he has also the Renaissance love of beauty. He is dissatisfied with ordinary woman; he would like to have Helen herself as his paramour. As the apparition of Helen rises before his eyes, he bursts out into eloquent, poetic tribute to her beauty. His love of Beauty knows no bounds, which is amply proved by the above dramatic scene.

The Reformation Element

Doctor Faustus is a typical creation of the Renaissance, and the Renaissance note in it blends with the influence of the Reformation. It is a moral sermon, a sermon against the abjuration of God and His mercy. The theme demonstrates that those, who reject God and renounce the Holy Trinity, suffer like Faustus the tortures of Hell and ultimately come to a terrible end.

The Death Scene: A Moral Sermon

The death-scene of Faustus should be a strict warning to all blasphemers, and heretics. It is an illustration of the Biblical truth that the wages of sin is death "than Marlowe's Faustus ever came from the pulpit. What more fearful exposure was ever offered of the punishment man brings upon himself by giving way to the temptations of his grosser appetites? The victim's frightful end forewarns us never to hazard our soul's bliss and purity by treading upon forbidden grounds.

1.2.6 SOME IMPORTANT EXPLANATIONS

***Lines** 21-26.*

His waxen wings did mount above his reach,

And, melting, heavens conspir'd his overthrow;

For, falling to a devilish exercise,

And glutted now with learning's golden gifts,

He surfeits upon cursed necromancy;

Nothing so sweet as magic is to him.

Explanation: These lines have been taken from *Doctor Faustus* by Marlowe. The Chorus in the prologue informs the audience about the early life of Faustus. He wants to resent the drama of the life and fortunes of Faustus. He was born in a low family at the town of Rhodes in Germany. He made amazing progress in the study of the theology. He grazed in the rich field of learning and the doctorate degree was conferred upon him. He becomes a well-known scholar.

Faustus surpassed other scholars of theology who took great delight in discussion and debates on the theological matters. He felt proud of his scholarly knowledge. He becomes self-centred. His fate is being compared with that of Icarus. He was very ambitious and went far in his studies to become self-centred. The result was disastrous morally and spiritually. He invited the wrath of God on him. He aspired for something which was beyond to conjure up the spirits of the dead. He misused the blessings of learning. He was punished by God and overthrown from his high position. He practiced black art and was ruined.

***Lines** 119-131.*

As Indian Moors obey their Spanish lords,
So shall the spirits of every element
Be always serviceable to us three;
Like lions shall they guard us when we please;
Like Almain rutters with their horsemen's staves,
Or Lapland giants, trotting by our sides;
Sometimes like women, or unwedded maids,
Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows
Than have the white breasts of the queen of love:
From Venice shall they drag huge argosies,
And from America the golden fleece
That yearly stuffs old Philip's treasury;
If learned Faustus will be resolute.

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Explanation: This passage occurs in Act I, Scene I in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. Faustus resolves to practice magic and necromancy. He tells his friends Valdes and Cornelius that magic has ensnared his heart. As a magician he shall be regarded as powerful and wise as Agrippa in Europe for his skill in conjuring up spirits. He had already baffled the clergy of German church and the great scholars of Wertensburg with his logical arguments.

Valdes and Cornelius were the magician friends of Faustus. They encouraged him to study and practice magic. They lured him to the wonderful prospects he could gain in power and authority. They told him that their experience in magic would aid his learning. They would become the most powerful men of Europe. The infernal spirit would serve and obey then like the Red Indians serving on their ruling Spanish Lords. They would guard them like German horseman. Like the witches and lords or giants of Lapland they would walk by their sides. They would assume the form of graceful ladies more beautiful than Venus.

***Lines** 92-98.*

Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships,

And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?--

Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.--

Her lips suck forth my soul: see, where it flies!--

Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.

Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips,

And all is dross that is not Helena.

Explanation: These lines have been taken from Act V, Scene I in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus.* Faustus dines with a few scholars. He wants to delight them with his magic. They express the desire to see the vision of Helen of Troy. Faustus summons the Helen of Troy. An old man enters and admonishes Faustus for his conduct. Mephistophilis brings in for a second time the apparition of Helen.

The beauty of Helen impresses Faustus and he wants her to be her paramour. The celestial face of Helen produced a magic effect upon the soldiers in the Trojan War. Thousands of Greek and Trojan ships were engaged in a fierce

battle resulting in the devastation of the beautiful castles and towers of Ilium. In the war to Troy, the Greeks came flocking in hundreds of ships and besieged Troy for ten years to recover Helen. Faustus kisses the lips of Helen and believes that it would make him immortal. Her sweet lips consumed his soul and he had no identity of his own apart from her. All the blessings of heaven were confined in those sweet lips of Helen. All other things were trivial to Faustus.

1.3 JOHN MILTON

Birth and Parentage

John Milton was born on December 9, 1608, in London. The poet's father followed the profession of a notary, and was established in London. He married around 1600, and had six children of whom some died young. The third child was Milton, the poet.

At St. Paul's School

John Milton was sent to St. Paul's School about the year 1620. The headmaster was a good English scholar, besides Milton had a tutor at home, Thomas Young, a Scotchman, afterward an eminent Puritan clergy. He was instrumental in inspiring much of Milton's Puritan sympathies. In 1625 he left St. Paul's.

At Cambridge

Early in 1626, Milton did have some serious difficulty with his tutor, which led to his removal from Cambridge for a few weeks and his transference to another tutor on his return. After that he voluntarily passed seven years at the University, and opposed strongly any imputations that he had been in ill-favour with the authorities of his College.

Horton—The Training Ground

Later when Milton's father settled at Horton in Buckinghamshire, the son too joined him in July 1632. He had gone to Cambridge with the intention of qualifying for the Church. However this purpose was soon given up. During his

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five years' stay at Horton (1632-38), Milton completed his self-education; ranging the whole world of classical antiquity and absorbing the classical genius so well that the ancients were to him, what they later became to Landor, what they have never become to any other English poet in the same degree, even as pursuing other interests such as music, astronomy and the study of Italian literature; and mingling these vast and varied influences into a splendid equipment of hard-won, well-ordered culture. The world has known many greater scholars in the technical, limited sense than Milton, but few men have mastered more things worth mastering in art, letters and scholarship.

The Early Masterpieces

In the early Horton period, Milton produced a number of great poems. The dates of the early pieces like *L' Allegro, Il Penseroso, Arcades, Comus and Lycidas* are not all certain. Probably each was composed at Horton before 1638. Four of them contain great crisis through which English life and thought were passing. In *L' Allegro*, the poet holds the balance almost equal between the two opposing tendencies in his times. In *Il Penseroso* it becomes manifest as to which side his sympathies are leaning. *Comus* is a kind of prophecy of the downfall of the Court-party, whereas *Lycidas* openly foretells the ruin of the Established Church. The latter poem is the ultimate utterance of Milton's lyrical genius.

The Italian Tour

The composition of *Lycidas* may be assigned to the year 1637. In the spring of next year, Milton started for Italy. He stayed abroad some fifteen months. Initially he had intended to include Sicily and Greece in his travels, but news of the outbreak of the Civil War in England hastened his return. The summer of July 1639 found Milton back in England. Immediately after his return he wrote the *Epitaphium Damonis,* the beautiful elegy in which he grieved over the death of his school friend, Diodati. *Lycidas* was the last of English lyrics the *Epitaphium*, which should be studied in close connection with *Lycidas*, the last of the long Latin poems. From then onwards there was silence for a long time, so far as poetry is concerned.

Prose Works

Milton's first treatise upon the government of the Church *(Of Reformation in England)* appeared in 1641. Many others followed in quick succession. He

wrote five pamphlets on the subject during 1641 and 1642. Meanwhile he was studying the principles of education. On his return from Italy he had taken the responsibility of training his nephews. This led to a consideration of the best educational methods, and in the *Tractate of Education,* 1644, Milton assumed the role of educational theorist. In the previous year, May 1643, he had married Mary Powel. The marriage proved unfortunate. Its immediate outcome were the pamphlets on divorce.

The finest of Milton's prose works, *Aeropagetica,* a plea for the free expression of opinion, was published in 1644. And in 1645 appeared the first collection of his poems. In 1649 his support of the anti-royalist cause was recognized by the offer of a post under the newly appointed Council of State. His daring vindication of the trial of Charles I, *The Tenure of Kings,* had appeared earlier in the same year. Milton accepted the offer, becoming *Latin Secretary to the committee of Foreign Affairs.* The Secretaryship entailed the need of defending at every turn the past course of the revolution and the current policy of the state. Hence he drifted into endless controversies, which wasted the most precious years of his life, and finally cost him his eyesight. Between 1649 and 1660, Milton produced no less than eleven pamphlets. Fortunately this period in Milton's life did not last much longer. The Restoration came, a blessing in disguise, and in 1660 the ruin of Milton's political party and of his personal hopes the absolute overthrow of the cause for which he had fought for twenty years, liberated him. Milton could once more turn to poetry.

The Period of the Great Epics

The last part of Milton's life 1660-74, passed peacefully. At the age of fifty-two he was thrown back upon poetry, and could at last write the epic of his dreams. The early poems he had never regarded as a fulfillment of the debt due to his Creator. Even when the fire of political strife raged at its fiercest, Milton did not forget the purpose, which he had conceived of in his boyhood. Of that purpose *Paradise Lost* was the attainment. Begun about 1658, it was finished in 1663, the year of Milton's third marriage; revised from 1663 to 1665; and finally published in 1667. Before its publication Milton had commenced work in the autumn of 1665 on *Paradise Regained,* which in turn was followed by *Samson Agonistes.* The completion of *Paradise Regained* may be assigned to 1666, and that of

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Samson Agonistes to 1667. He spent some time in their revision, and they were published together in a single volume in January 1671.

Milton's Last Years and Death

In 1673, Milton brought out a reprint of the 1645 edition of his poems, adding most of the sonnets written during the gap. The last four years of his year of his life were devoted to prose works of no exceptional significance. He continued to live in London. His third marriage had proved happy, and he enjoyed something of the renown. Many well-known men would visit him, Dryden being one of them. In one of his visits he asked and received permission to dramatize *Paradise Lost.* Milton died on 8th November 1674. He was buried in St. Giles Church, Cripplegate.

1.3.1 AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTE IN THE WORKS OF MILTON

Autobiographical Note in the Works Of Milton

Most Autobiographical of English Poets

Milton is justly regarded as the most autobiographical of English poets. Milton himself is to be found in every line of his poetry. His wide learning is reflected in the allusions and references, which abound in his works. His Puritanism, his religious zeal, his deep faith in God and religion, imparts loftiness and sublimity to his poetry. Even in the early *L' Allegro* he could allow himself only such pleasures as are 'unreproved' and free. In fact, the protagonist of the two companion poems of the early Horton period is Milton himself in two different moods. His *Lycidas, Comus, Paradise Lost, Samson Agonistes,* are all equally subjective and personal.

***Samson Agonistes*: The Subjective Note**

Milton himself, wholly or partly, speaks through his characters in his poems. The result is that each of Milton's poems contains his own views on a variety of topics. For instance, *Samson Agonistes* is full of historical and autobiographical references. There is a close resemblance between his own career

and that of Samson. Both were blind. And both had taken wives from the opposite party, and both had been unhappy in their marriages. Both had dedicated their lives to consecrated causes. There are also plentiful references to contemporary history.

Paradise Lost

Paradise Lost is equally autobiographical. Although it is an epic dealing with the fall of man and original sin, yet it is deeply influenced by the personality of Milton and by the currents of religious and political rivalry in contemporary England. John Milton himself is in every line of *Paradise Lost*. In the epic it is Milton himself whom you see his Satan, his Adam, his Raphael, almost his Eve. In many respects, Satan is an expression of Milton's spirit of defiance of the new order, which was established by the collapse of the Puritan commonwealth after Cromwell's death.

Comus

In Milton's works the man and the poet are one and inseparable. Milton's poem is full of Milton himself. **Macaulay** has rightly pointed out that his genius was not dramatic, but lyrical. Milton could never avoid the intrusion of his self into his works. Even when he writes a drama like *Samson Agonistes* or a masque like *Comus* in which his characters are supposed to reveal themselves and not their creator. He cannot help making his *dramatis personae* the mere mouthpieces of his opinions. *Comus* like *Samson Agonistes* is an expression of the poet's own cherished views. The central idea of the poem, that when there is a conflict between virtue and vice, virtue will eventually triumph, if need be with divine assistance, is Milton's own deep-seated faith.

Lycidas

Likewise, *Lycidas* does much more than merely express grief at the death of Edward King. It is the last great poem of Milton's first poetic period. Recent criticism has come to concentrate more on the disclosure of the poet's personality in it than on the poet's attitude towards Edward King, or his grief, which finds a very refined literary expression. It has been said that, "Fundamentally 'Lycidas' concerns Milton himself ". ***Legouis*** further writes, "It is not King but Milton who should be sought in them." Milton could never help himself forget his own self. Therefore, it is not strange that *Lycidas* became a priceless commentary on his

own mind. Lines 22-63 are the most subjective, as they describe the poet's life at Cambridge—the life had left numerous sweet memories for him. The two friends were associated very closely in a number of pursuits.

The 'Sonnets'

Milton's *Sonnets* are equally autobiographical. In this connection **Mark Pattison** writes:

> The effectiveness of Milton's sonnets is chiefly due to the real nature of the character, person, or incident of which each is the delineation. Each person, thing, or fact, is a moment in Milton's life, one by which he was stirred: sometimes in the soul's depths, sometimes on the surface of feeling, but always truly moved.

Although all the sonnets are autobiographical, none can match the poignancy of the poet's grief in the sonnet, 'On His Blindness.'

1.3.2 THE GREATNESS OF MILTON AS A POET

The Greatness of Milton as a Poet

Or

A General Estimate of Milton as a Poet

Or

Milton's Poetry: Chief Characteristics

Or

Milton's Sublimity

His Sublimity

Milton is the second great poet of England who stands next only to Shakespeare. The supreme quality of Milton's Poetry is its sublimity. His poetry

elevates and uplifts us. He lived a life of piety and austerity, and his poetry bears the unmistakable stamp of the nobility and greatness of his character. He had a very high conception of his calling and prepared himself painstakingly for it. All that comes out of his pen is characterized by dignity, and stateliness. His poetry exercises an elevating influence on the minds of the readers. It gives us an impression of moral exaltation. Sublimity in poetry arises when noble thoughts find a noble expression.

Milton's subject matter as well as his treatment of it is equally noble. **Voltaire** is of the view that Milton's poetry is the grandest thing in the English language.

Love of Beauty

Another important attribute of Milton's poetry, which contributes to its sublimity, is the profound love of beauty in diverse forms. He was extremely sensitive to the beauties of external nature. He depicts the beauties of the countryside in *L' Allegro*. The picture of nature that he depicts in this early poem is extremely beautiful and charming. In *Il Penseroso,* he paints many exquisite landscapes for our delight. In *Paradise Lost* his sense of beauty is just superb.

Stately and Majestic Themes

Along with this appreciation of beauty, one finds a stateliness and dignity of manner, which enhances and stresses the sublimity of Milton's poetry. Milton imparted to English poetry the majestic quality. Milton is always stately, majestic and grand. The problem of the fall of man and original sin, the redemption of humanity by Christ, and the justification of the ways of God to man—such are the themes which Milton deals with.

High Conception of the Poet's Calling

The "high seriousness," the moral fervour of Milton's poetry, goes well with high conception of the calling of a poet. Milton was convinced that the vocation of the poet is lofty and dignified and to keep up the dignity of his vocation, he writes poetry of great sublimity and beauty of the utmost perfection. He writes as a conscientious artist and whatever he has left behind bears the mark of artistic perfection. **John Bailey** writes**:** "Poetry has been by far our greatest artistic achievement, and he is by far our greatest poetic artist."

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All-Comprehensive Imagination

Milton's imagination is all-comprehensive in its sweep. Only a man of Milton's imagination could have given shape to *Paradise Lost.* The theme of the epic is cosmic and of a more universal human interest than those of any of his predecessors, both ancient and modern. The imagination of the poet moves from heaven to hell, through the enormous intervening chaos.

The Subjective Note: Autobiographical Element

Milton's poetry is intensely autobiographical. It is, in fact, the mirror to his own life. Milton can be seen and felt in almost all that he has created. His early poems, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* reflect the moods of young Milton. Satan is Milton, the arch-rebel and lover of liberty, and the hero of *Samson Agonistes* is also a reflection of the blind poet fallen on evil days. In the "Sonnets", his sentiments find a more direct expression.

Religious Fervour: Faith in Puritanism

Throughout his life Milton's religious fervour was unshaken. Even his enemies never denied his sincerity. It is seen even in his earliest sonnets. It persists till the end, growing deeper and more intense by the time of *Samson Agonistes*. In *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes,* his chief motives are to "Justify the ways of God to men."

Classicism

Albert writes: "Curiously inter-wrought with the severity of his religious nature is a strong bent for the classics, which is pagan and sensuous." His learning was wide and mature, as he wrote Latin prose and verse as freely as he wrote English. His classical bent is apparent in (1) his choice of classical and semi-classical forms—the epic, the classical tragedy, the pastoral, and the sonnet. (2)The elaborate description and Homeric similes in *Paradise Lost.* (3) The fondness for classical allusion with which his poetry is heavily burdened—he is the most learned of English poets (4) the dignity of style, in his exactitude and care in the selections and use of words, and his liking for Latin constructions and words.

As a Metrical Artist

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Milton employed rhymed verse for his early poems like *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity, L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso.* These poems reveal his excellent handling of rhymed verse. For the great epics he used blank verse. Thus he became the first poet to adapt blank verse to non-dramatic poetry and besides to use it with the touch of a master.

In Milton's blank verse there is the 'overflow' of sense from line to line. Milton has complete command over the language he uses. He selects words, sound expresses their sense and, by doing so, he ensures that the rhythmic movement of the lines will correspond to the sense.

This makes Milton's poetry very musical. **William Hazlitt** remarks, "Milton's blank verse is the only blank verse in the language (except Shakespeare's) that deserves the name of verse."

His Grand Style

Milton's style has been called 'grand style' for the reason that it has always an unmistakable stamp of sublimity and majesty. Milton's language and diction are not the language of ordinary life. Milton uses Latin words, and Latin constructions and inversions. Words are carefully selected with reference to their sense and their sound as well. He says what he has to say in the fewest and the best possible words. Similes and metaphors are plentiful. There is, in addition, a liberal use of Homeric or long-tailed similes, with the result that the impression that is left on our mind after reading his poetry is that of grandeur, majesty and sublimity.

1.3.3 PARADISE LOST, BOOK I

Paradise Lost, Book I

The Invocation

In line with the epic tradition, Milton begins Book I with an invocation to the Heavenly Muse (Urania) who inspired Moses on Mt Sinai. He invokes the

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Muse to inspire him also so that he may sing of Man's first disobedience in tasting the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. This act of disobedience resulted in the fall of Adam and the loss of Eden. It was for this sin that Adam and his progeny was punished with death and suffering. Mankind would continue to suffer in this way till Christ, the Son of Man, is born again and redeems mankind through His suffering and crucification. It is only with the help of the Heavenly Muse that the poet hopes to write an epic on such a grand theme as was never before tried by any other poet. Consequently, following the practice of Homer and Virgil, Milton states his theme in the very beginning.

Next, Milton invokes the Divine Spirit, a Spirit who was a witness to the creation of the universe, and who therefore, knows everything. This invocation is in reality a kind of Christian prayer. The poet invokes this eternal spirit to inspire him, to give him knowledge of what he does not know, so that he is able to "assert Eternal Providence" and, "Justify the ways of God to Men." Nothing in Heaven or Hell is hidden from its gaze, and so it can tell him who tempted Adam and Eve, the first parents of Man, so that they disobeyed the holy commands of God.

Satan's Revolt

Plunging into the middle of his story, in the manner of the epic poets in general, the poet tells us, it was Satan who, in the form of a serpent, entered Eden and persuaded Eve, the mother of man, to taste the fruit of the Forbidden Tree. Satan had revolted against God, had fought a war against Him in Heaven. He was defeated, and was hurled out of Heaven, and even condemned to eternal punishment in Hell. He wanted to have his revenge upon God, and to achieve his end he decided to use guile and deceit to tempt Eve to sin.

In Hell: His First Speech

After Satan and his followers had been thrown out of Heaven, they remained lying dazed and unconscious in Hell for nine days. When Satan regained his senses, he surveyed the dismal scene around him. All around him there were flames of fire, which could hardly dispel the gloom of the place of eternal retribution. He also saw his companions lying dazed and senseless in, "Whirl-winds of tempestuous fire." Next to him lay Beelzebub, "next only to himself in power." Addressing him Satan first expressed grief over their evil fortune and their loss of power and previous glory. There was a time when they lived in

Heaven and were, "clothed with transcendent brightness." They had been companions in war and now they were companions in misery. They had lost the war with God but their defeat was the result of the use of Thunder on the part of God. They had never suspected that he possessed their unconquerable will never to submit. The field might have been lost, but their will, their soul, was still unconquered. Inspired with Milton's own passion for freedom he says that they will never kneel before Him in prayer and sue to Him for mercy. They had grown in experience and foresight as a result of the war, and so they might hope to wage another war against Him with greater success. They will wage eternal war against him, 'by force or guile.' This is the first of the five speeches of Satan and it strikes the keynote of his character—fixed resolve, unconquerable will, courage and daring, and eternal hostility towards God.

Beelzebub's Answer

Beelzebub's reply is equally characteristic and shows that he has the wisdom, resourcefulness and foresight of a shrewd statesman. He would like to think before he leaps and weigh and balance the pros and cons of a course of action. He begins by admiring Satan for his leadership, daring and determination, and laments their fall. They have all lost Heaven and their countless followers are now lying low, dazed and helpless. No doubt they still have their determination and unconquered soul, and their vigour will also return soon. But it is possible that God Himself has allowed them to retain their life and vigour so He can have His revenge on them by making longer their suffering so that they may, "do him mightier service as His thralls." So Beelzebub suggests the possible flaw in their case. They would not be able to wage war against God, if they retain life and vitality by His permission.

Satan's Second Speech

Satan, promptly, replies to the doubts and troubles suggested by Beelzebub. His speech is a sign of weakness and, "to be weak is miserable." Satan is determined never to do any good. It will always be their delight to work contrary to the will of God, their eternal enemy. In this way they will thwart his plans. For the time being God has withdrawn his 'ministers of vengeance' and their torture has come to an end. They should use this opportunity to frame their future course of action, how best to offend their enemy and repair their own loss. In lines, which have become proverbial, he tells Beelzebub that they would seek,

What reinforcement we may gain from hope,

If not, what resolution from despair.

He then points to a vast, desolate and dreary plain where they should re-assemble their troops and hold consultation for further course of action.

Satan's Massive Size

We are then given an idea of the huge bulk and stature of Satan. He was lying flat on the surface of the lake of Fire with his head uplifted. His bulk was as large as that of the Titans who had dared war with Jove, or that of the sea-monster Leviathan (whale) who is often mistaken by sailors for an island. Thus in imitation of the epic poets Milton uses epic or Homeric similes to impart grandeur and variety to his narration. God had hurled him there, but had left him free to pursue his own wicked designs, so that he may heap terrible punishment on himself.

Then Satan raised his huge stature from the lake and with expanded wings moved on the dusky air of Hell, and alighted on the dreary and desolate field at a distance. Just as the Lake was a piece of liquid fire it was a piece of solid fire where he had alighted. It was like a hillside seared by a Volcano, and Beelzebub followed Satan there.

His Lamentation

Standing on this singed tract of land Satan grieved over for a moment the loss of Heaven and their confinement in such dark, desolate and dismal place. But he soon reconciles himself to his fate and consoles himself with the idea that (a) they were now very far-off from God, where it may be difficult for Him to torture them, and that (b)mind is its own place and can make Heaven of Hell or had the same courage and firmness of will and resolve. In one of the most famous lines in the epic he tells Beelzebub that it was, "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven." Possibly God will leave them undisturbed there. He cannot possibly envy them as in their present abode there was anything worthy of envy. He then proposes that they should call their troops, then lying dazed in the lake of fire, and ask them to join them in their war against Heaven to see what may be yet, "Regained in Heaven, or what more lost in Hell." Beelzebub concurs with Satan

and says that he should call them, for at his call they will definitely take courage and revive.

Satan's Address

Even before Beelzebub had ceased speaking, Satan started moving towards his followers. His shield, as broad as the Moon as seen through a telescope, hung on his back. In his hand, he had his spear taller than the tallest pines of Norway, which are used to make the masts of big war-ships. In no time he reached the shores of the Lake of Fire where his followers still lay dazed and confused. They were even more numerous than the leaves lying on brooks in the autumn season, or the seaweed floating on the surface of the Red Sea. In his fourth speech, he addressed them vociferously and sarcastically. Heaven was indeed lost to them since they—the Princes, Powers and Potentates—lay there helpless and prostate. Had they chosen that place because they found it comfortable, or were they, in that abject posture, adoring or worshipping their conqueror who was perhaps, at that moment, watching them and making plans to send his ministers to torture them, to crush them or to transfix them to the bottom of the lake with His thunderbolts? They should awake and arise, otherwise they would remain fallen crushed and defeated forever.

The Fallen Angels

On hearing the voice of their leader the troops of fallen angels sprang on their wings, awake and ashamed of themselves they were so numerous that the air of Hell was darkened, as the swarm of locusts darkened Egypt when God punished that country with the plague of locusts. At a signal from Satan's spear they all flew towards the vast open space and alighted there. They were large in numbers as the hordes of invaders from Northern Europe who invaded Southern Europe and Egypt from time to time in the 4^{th} and 5^{th} centuries A.D. Later on these fallen angels were worshipped as gods in different parts of the pagan world, and were called by different names.

Their Chiefs

The poet then proceeds to give an account of the names of the more important of the fallen angels. He gives a catalogue of the infernal hosts just as Homer does by giving a catalogue of ships and heroes in Book II of *Illiad*. First, there was Moloch whose temple was built in Jerusalem, Just in front of the temple

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of God, and human sacrifice was offered to him there. The Ammonites worshipped him. Later, even King Solomon the Wise, began to worship him and built a temple to him on Mt.Olives. Next in order was Chemos who was worshipped by the Moabites with foul and abhorrent rites. He is also known by the name-Baal, Peor- and Israelites fell to worshipping him when they came to Sittim in the course of their wandering. For this sin God punished them with a terrible plague. A temple to him was also erected on Mt. Olives near the temple of Moloch. They continued to be worshipped till Josiah, son of Ammon, king of Judah, completely abolished the worship of these gods.

Next, there came two large groups of fallen angles—one male and the other female—the former bearing the collective name of Baalim, and the latter were known as Astorath. They were worshipped in the land of Canaan, a country, which stretches from the river, Euphrates to the small brook called Besor, which serves as a demarcation between Egypt and Syris. They were capable of changing their sex and size according to their will. The Israelites worshipped these beastly devils as gods, forsaking for the time-being the real God, the source of their life and being. With them came Astorath whom the Phoenicians worshipped as the moon goddess, and the women of Sidon, the capital of Phoenicia, offered their prayers to her. King Solomon also built a temple to her on Mt.Olives. Next in order was Thammuz. He was worshipped as a god in Syria. The maidens mourned his death every year as a god in Syria. With the passage of time he came to be worshipped by the Israelites in Jerusalem. Next to him came Dagon, the sea-god, half-fish and half man. A temple was built to him in Azotus, and he continued to be worshipped throughout the coast of Palestine, the country of the Philistines. Rimmon, a god worshipped by the Syrians, followed him. A pleasant temple was built to him in Damascus on the banks of the rivers Abbana and Pharphar. His temple was also built in Jerusalem opposite the temple of God.

Next came a number of fallen angels who came to be worshipped in Egypt under the name of Osiris, Isis, Orus, etc. They had the appearance of animals. From there this contagion of animal-worship spread to Israel, God's chosen people. Their worship continued, till at one blow Jehovah destroyed them, the true God, and worship of these beast-gods was brought to an end.

Last of all came Belial, a lustful spirit who loved vice for its own sake. No temple was built to him, but no one is found so often in the temple of true God.

He too reigns in courts and palaces and sons of Belial indulge in wild orgies of lust and pleasure in big cities. He was also worshipped in Sodom and hence the shocking sins and crimes of the people of that city.

Satan's Exhortation

Numerous other devils also gathered there flocking, some of whom were later on worshipped in Greece. They were all depressed and miserable. Their leader, Satan, then addressed them and tried to encourage them. He commanded that his banner should be unfurled with loud sounding of trumpets. Immediately Azazel unfurled his banner, and it looked like a meteor waving high in the wind. The trumpets were sounded loudly, and the numerous troops shouted so loudly that the noise went out of Hell and frightened Chaos and dark Night. Ten thousand other flags were unfurled and there was a forest of shields and spears. They marched in battle order and stood in full view of their commander. Satan viewed his numerous troops and his heart was filled with courage and pride to see his mighty army. Such a dreadful assemblage of warriors had never been seen since the Creation of man. Satan stood high above them, bright and shining, for he had not lost his former glory, as it had been dimmed only a little.

Their Determination

Satan now readied himself to address them. His host formed a kind of semi-circle round him to listen to him more attentively. It was with difficulty that the Archangel could control his feeling and speak to them. He told them that their war with God was a splendid one, though its consequence has been so terrible for them. So mighty was his strength and so numerous were his followers that none could have doubted his victory. They were defeated not because God's power was superior, but because very cunningly he kept concealed from them the terrible weapon of thunder that he kept, hurled at them, and which alone resulted in their defeat. They were not prepared for it. Yet they would continue their struggle. But now they would work in close design and achieve victory by force or by fraud. They should know that he had conquered them only physically, as their soul still remained unconquered. While they were in Heaven it was rumoured that he intended to create a new, favoured race of Man. They would have their revenge against God through this newly created man. He would realize through them that Celestial Beings couldn't be kept in bondage. They will wage war against Him,

open or understood. However their future course of action must be decided upon after discussion in the full council.

The Pandemonium: The Conference Hall

The fallen angels listened to him and, as if to express their concurrence, a million flaming swords were taken out, so numerous that their blaze illumined even the darkness of Hall. They were firm on waging war and shouted with rage and hurled defiance at the Almighty.

Nearby a singed hill stood. They flew there led by Mammon. They dug out gold from the bowels of the earth and soon built a large hall, all of gold, called Pandemonium (the hall of all the Devils). The building was more majestic than any built by human beings. The fallen angels thronged into the Hall, which, although very huge, did not have space enough to accommodate them all. So, they reduced themselves to 'smallest form'. But their Chiefs and Lords still retained their original size, and were seated 'far within'. Like this the great conference in the Pandemonium in Hell began.

1.3.4 PARADISE LOST: AS AN EPIC

Paradise Lost: As an Epic

Or

Paradise Lost: Some Unique Features

A Classical Epic

Milton lets us know in *Paradise Lost,* Book I, that his aim was to attempt, "things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhyme." But this does not mean that he has discarded the epic tradition. He has strictly gone by the tradition of the classical epic, though by his creative genius, he has much modified and ennobled that tradition. Homer and Virgil were his models, and his epic has all the attributes and features of the epics of these ancient classical poets.

A Long Narrative Poem in Twelve Books

An epic is a long narrative poem divided into twelve books. *Paradise Lost* is also a long poem and it also has twelve books. In the beginning it was divided into ten books only. But for the second edition, Book VII and X were divided into two each and in this way Milton was able to conform to the centuries-old tradition of an epic having twelve books.

Its Cosmic and Universal Appeal

The subject of an epic is ancient and national taken from the legend and history and the country under consideration. Milton on the contrary has taken his subject from the scriptures. His theme belongs to a time before the nations were born. He deals not with the history of any one nation, but the history of whole mankind itself. He deals with the creation of the universe and the fall of Man, a subject of interest not to any one particular nation, but to all mankind. Thus Milton's epic is not just national, but universal in its appeal. The scene of the action is Universal Space, and the time represented is Eternity. The characters in it are God and all His creatures.

Heroic Action

The epic-poet narrates the adventures and war-like exploits of the hero of his epic, and his fate, victory, or defeat is of uppermost importance. Besides, in *Paradise Lost* there is enough of movement, action and war. For example, there is the war in heaven which results in the overthrow of Satan and his followers. There is always some action, some movement, something or the other going on. Thus in Book I, Satan flies from the lake of fire to solid land, then he calls his followers there, myriads of banners are unfurled and a forest of spears rises up, drums and trumpets are sounded and shouts of war are raised.

Religious and Scriptural Theme

However, the real action of the epic consists of the war between Good and Evil, with the eventual triumph of the Good and the defeat of Evil. The action continuously shifts from Good to Evil and Evil to Good, from Hell to Heaven and vice versa. Virtue, suffering, patience and martyrdom are shown to be more 'heroic' than physical valour—the so-called 'heroic virtue' celebrated by the ancient epic masters. For Milton the significant thing is not war but "the question of right and wrong." His form is classical, but his theme remains religious and

scriptural. Thus he has transformed the classical, secular epic into a theological one, therein lay Milton's originality and his universal appeal.

Supernatural Intervention

In the classical epics, there is supernatural intervention at crucial moments in the course of the action. Gods and goddesses watch over the fate of the human actors and come to the help of the hero when he is in difficulty. Milton's characters are both human and superhuman. There are Satan and his followers, and the Son of God, the angels, and the messengers of God. To tell the truth, there are only two human characters—Adam and Eve.

Organic Unity

The classical epic-poets introduced a number of episodes and digressions to impart variety to their epics and to increase its length. But these episodes are closely related to the central theme so that the epic forms an 'organic whole'. None of its parts is superfluous and all together contribute to the majesty and grandeur of the whole. Milton's epic has the wholeness and unity of the classical epic. No detail or any episode seems superfluous. Every detail and every scene in it is part of the central action.

The Epic Manner

Paradise Lost has the form of the classical epic and its manner also. In the tradition of the ancient epics, Milton plunges straight into the middle of the story, instead of beginning from the beginning. Milton's opening also is dramatic; he begins at the most critical point in his story, i.e. the moment when Satan is up from his stupor and holds a conference in Pandemonium. Thus, the opening at once grips our attention, and raises Satan to heroic dimensions.

Invocation to the Muse

In imitation of the epic-poets, Milton begins his epic with an invocation to the Muse and statement of his theme. Milton first invokes the Heavenly Muse (Urenia) and then the Holy Spirit of God. The theme is stated in the very beginning and the Muse is invoked to inspire him so that he may be equal to the task he has undertaken.

Councils and War-like Speeches

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An epic invariably has, a catalogue of heroes, a council of chiefs and their war-like speeches, and an account of games and sports. Similarly in *Paradise Lost, Book I,* we have a large catalogue of the chiefs of the fallen Satan in *Book II,* we have the Conference in Hell characterized by war-like speeches and also an account of the sports of the fallen angels which they have after their great conference has ended. Like all great epics, much of its action takes place in Hell, in Chaos, in Heaven, and on the Earth.

Grandeur and Sublimity

Grandeur and sublimity are the keynotes of an epic and *Paradise Lost* is more grand and sublime than any other epic. Grandeur arises from the essentially moral nature of his theme. It stems from the cosmic vastness of his stage, the remoteness and immensity of his characters, and the greatness and loftiness of his style. As **Dr B. Rajan** says this sublimity of Milton's style achieves 'a certain deliberate distancing' necessary for a subject.

Conclusion: Milton's Originality

As a result, in writing *Paradise Lost,* Milton has not only followed but also enriched and transformed the epic tradition. It is a curious example of the fusion of, 'tradition and individual talent'.

1.3.5 JUSTIFICATION OF "THE WAYS OF GOD TO MAN"

Justification of "The ways of God to Man"

Or

The Theme of Paradise Lost

Or

Milton's Theology or Religious Beliefs

The Original Sin and The Fall of Man

The form of *Paradise Lost* is classical, but its content is scriptural. Milton wrote nothing for itself. He tells us in the *Reason of Church Government,* his

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objective was to write an epic, which would be 'doctrinal and exemplary.' Therefore, he went to the *Bible* for his theme. He had full faith in the truth of the Biblical story of the creation and fall of man. As **Tillyard** writes that for him the Fall was the most significant event in the history of the world, and the myth of the Fall of Man and the Christians doctrine of the original sin has been used by Milton to justify the ways of God to man.

The Fall of Man: Its Diverse Interpretation

This main theme is stated in the very opening lines of the poem. The poet asks the Heavenly Muse to inspire him so that he may sing of:

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruits

Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste

Brought death into the world, and all our woe,

With loss of Eden, till one greater Man

Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,

Sing Heavenly Muse.

This incident of the Fall of man would be used by him to 'assert Eternal Providence' and 'Justify the ways of God to Man.' Earlier critics like Dr Johnson and Addison accepted this as the theme of the epic. However, such simple interpretations do not succeed to satisfy modern critics like **Greenlaw and Saurat.** According to **Greenlaw,** "The theme of *Paradise Lost* is less that of obedience to God than of obedience to temperance. To the rational against the irrational part of human nature."

Cause of Eve's Fall: Her Triviality of Mind

The question arises as to the root cause of the Fall. Why did Adam and Eve transgress and disobey His command? Although they had no strong reason to be discontented at all; and yet they disobey God whom, 'to love is to obey'. We are told in the very opening of *Book I* that but, 'for one restraint' they were 'lords of the world beside'. Milton makes it clear that Eve could be seduced so easily because of 'her triviality of mind'.

Her Passion—the Forbidden Fruit

To say that Eve's fall is an expression of the struggle between reason and sensuality is to go against the bulk of the text. Once Eve has eaten the forbidden fruit, her judgment is thoroughly upset: it is the fruit itself that is passion rather than the motives which lead to her eating it. Inflamed by passion she commits hubris of imagined godhead and gorges herself recklessly with the fruit.

Adam's Fall: Causes

Satan in the guise of a serpent seduces Eve, and in turn Eve seduces Adam. Adam falls because of his instinct for gregariousness, for companionship. He is horrified at Eve's transgression and is fully aware of the terrible consequence which would follow, yet he cannot leave Eve:

How can I live without thee, how fargoe

The sweet Converse and Love so dearly joyn'd

To live again in these wilde woods forlorn?

Adam's sin is certainly not sensuality. Adam's passions are in no way roused. He merely voices the natural human instinct of comradeship and companionship with his kind. Adam cannot face loneliness and solitariness. The fall of Adam results from the victory of Passion over reason and judgment.

Justification of God's Ways

But the question arises if God is omnipotent, omnipresent, just and merciful, why did he let them to be tempted and then to transgress. How can the story of the Fall justify the 'ways of God to Man'. Milton does so by bringing in the doctrine of Free Will. The last words of Raphael to Adam in *Book VIII* make it quite clear that Adam enjoys perfect freedom of choice. He has Free Will and so he must act according to his own 'judgment' and not be carried away by passion. His transgression is a great Sin because he was quite free to reject the temptation and act according to his better judgment. Thus the temptation is a test of Adam's Faith in God and his love of Him, and he fails in the test, and suffers the inevitable Fall.

Regeneration and Redemption

God's ways to Man are justified because man is not destined to eternal damnation. Milton adheres to the Christian myth of Sin, and redemption and

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regeneration through suffering. Regenerate man, man with his reason re-illumined by Christ, will rise to a better state than that from which he has fallen. Thus in the end Satan's schemes have turned to good, and Adam, though himself sinning, did an eventually beneficial act. We are carefully informed that Satan would never-have risen from the lake of fire, had not God intended him to be the instrument of ultimate good. The new earth revealed to Adam by Michael towards the end of the poem will be far happier than the original Eden, and Adam exclaims:

O goodness infinite, goodness immense!

That all this good of evil shall produce,

And evil turn to good.

The Fall of Satan: Its Significance

Intimately woven with the story of the Fall of Man is the story of the Fall of Satan and his followers. Their fall also bears out that the theme of the epic is the victory of passion over reason and its terrible consequence. Satan falls because he too allowed his reason to be dominated by passion. He is proud, and is carried away by inordinate ambition and lust for power. He claims absolute equality, foolishly imagines that he is self-created, regards God's rule as tyrannous, rebels against him and is consequently overthrown and hurled into Hell. He is the very embodiment of unrestrained passions, which ultimately bring him no satisfaction, while Christ symbolizes reason and good sense. Reason in him reigns over passion; hence he is qualified for the role of the divine redeemer of mankind.

Milton's Paradise: Its Significance

Milton's Paradise, the abode of perfect bliss, lying somewhere between Heaven and Hell, is a symbol of Milton's yearning for a better state of things than this world is ever capable of providing. Milton's Paradise is his representation of that aspiration after a Golden Age that has always existed among all peoples. The Paradise is symbolic of Milton's passion for perfection, and so it has a universal appeal because a desire for a better state of things is common to all humanity.

Frailty of Women

Yet another theme of the poem is the frailty of woman and the infinite harm she can cause to man. It is through her charms and evil fascination that the first Man loses Paradise, and suffering and death became his eventual destiny. The most

passionate outburst against woman takes place in *Book X,* during the quarrel between Adam and Eve:

Oh, why did God,

Creator wise, that peopled highest Heaven

With Spirits masculine, create at last

This Novelty on Earth, this fair defect

Of Nature, and not fill the World at once

With men of Angels, without feminine;

Or find some other way to generate

Mankind?

Theme of Freedom and Independence

Paradise Lost is a complex work of art and several themes woven together make up its texture. There is, for example, the theme of freedom and independence. Satan is the very embodiment of heroic energy, which is persistently expressed in action in his opposition to the will of God despite heavy odds. Milton again and again voices sentiments, his own pride and republicanism.

What though the field be lost?

All is not lost;

Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,

Doing or suffering

The mind is its own place, and in itself

Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven:

Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen;

Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.

1.3.6 MILTON'S GRAND STYLE: CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS

Milton's Grand Style: Chief Characteristics

Or

Milton as " the great master of the great style"

Or

Technical devices employed by Milton to achieve the Grand Style

"The Grand style" says **Matthew Arnold** in his essay on *Translating Homer*, "arises when a noble nature, poetically gifted, treats with simplicity or severity a noble subject." He writes that, predominantly, Homer, Dante, and Milton in *Paradise Lost* have this grand style. In his essay on Milton he writes not through translations of the ancients, but through the original poetry of Milton, who has the like power and charm, because he has the like great style.

High Conception of the Poet's Calling

Milton had a high conception of the calling of a poet, and so had prepared himself for it painstakingly. His purpose in writing was to make the teachings and lofty ideals of the great religious teachers prevail. All his poetry and much of his prose is one long sermon on honourable and honourable living. In his own words, the poet's function is, "to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility, to ally the perturbations of the mind, and set the affections in right tune."

Milton's Gigantic Loftiness

Thus, in Arnold's view, Milton is the greatest master of the grand style of Homer and Virgil in the English language. In his poetry we find, "big thoughts uttered in a big way". **Dr. Johnson** had this very realization when he said that a "gigantic loftiness" characterized the poetry of Milton. Milton's style was the grand style as he had employed it to dress a great and noble theme. The style suits the subject, and both are likewise elevated and sublime, and together contribute to the grandeur of the whole work.

Loftiness of Theme and Purpose

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His purpose in the *Paradise Lost* was "to assert eternal providence", "to justify the ways of God to man", and to show that disobedience is a great sin, and it resulted in the fall of man, which eventually led to suffering and death. To illustrate this truth he had chosen the Biblical story of the disobedience of Adam and Eve, our grandparents, in tasting the fruit of the forbidden Tree of Knowledge. Thus there is loftiness of purpose and grandeur of theme. The setting that Milton provides to his grand theme is equally cosmic in its range and sweep.

Noble and Elevated Style

Milton's theme is grand and lofty, his setting is cosmic and his style is equally noble and elevated. Various devices have been used to achieve this elevation. To begin with there is avoidance of the mean, the vulgar, and the commonplace, and preference for the uncommon and the unfamiliar. This accounts for his Latinism, his archaisms, and the wealth of Biblical and classical allusions spread all over his poetry, in particular *Paradise Lost.*

Extreme Austerity and Condensation

Secondly, Milton observes the extremes of severity of austerity, and thus imparts elevation and loftiness to his style. Not a single word is ever superfluous or extraneous. He has epigrammatic terseness, almost Dantesque. He usually discards all superfluous graces, and steers right onward and gives the reader no rest. The close-wrought style of Milton makes the reading of *Paradise Lost* a difficult task. Reading it is a serious intellectual exercise without any respite. Many of his Latinism, his inverted constructions, his mixed metaphors and the frequent omissions of connectives and prepositions are accounted for by his fondness for extremes of concentration and compression.

His Suggestiveness

An additional element of Milton's style, which contributes to its elevation and grandeur, is its suggestiveness. He suggests much more than he really describes. The reader has got to use his imagination to grasp his full meaning. The poet was dealing with events, situations and characters, which cannot be described with the use of ordinary language. Macaulay aptly points out, "He sketches and

leaves others to fill up the outline. His style opens out vast vistas before the readers. He throws out broad hints and leaves the reader to imagine the rest."

Use of Homeric Similies

A similar motive and tendency can be seen in the character of the similies that he most frequently employs. Almost all his figures and comparisons illustrate concrete objects by concrete objects, and occurrences in time by other occurrences later in time. His figures may be called historic parallels, whereby the name and incidents of human history are made to explicate and ennoble the less familiar names and incidents of his pre-historic theme. At times, in the manner of Homer, he borrows a figure from rustic life, as where, for instance, he compares the devils, crowding into Pandemonium, to a swarm of bees. However he prefers to maintain dignity and distance by choosing comparisons from ancient history and mythology, or from those great and weird things in Nature which repel intimacy.

Long Catalogue of Names

His long range of proper nouns, his catalogue of names of places and persons, taken from geography, mythology and literature, too serve to impart elevation and remoteness to his style. Often he transforms his proper names, both to make them more melodious and more unfamiliar to the ear. Both reasons account for the allusion to Pharaoh and his army as "Busiris and his Memphian Chivalry."

Superb Blank Verse

Milton's verse also contributes a great deal to create the impression of loftiness and sublimity. His handling of blank verse is superb. The sense does not end with each line but runs on from one line to another. In this way we get the verse-paragraph, which **Saintsbury** considers his supreme contribution to English versification. It is a forceful, resounding utterance, which entitles him to be called, "a mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies."

Conclusion

All these elements contribute to the loftiness, dignity and grandeur of Milton's style. Writes **Hanford**, "Rhythm, vocabulary, sentence structure, imagery, all unite in indistinguishable combinations to form the majestic garment

of Miltonic thought and feeling." All these collectively impart a more consistent and unfaltering elevation hard to find elsewhere in English literature.

1.3.7 SATAN AS A SELF-PORTRAIT

Satan as a Self-Portrait

Or

The Autobiographical Note in "Paradise Lost"

Mark Pattison points out that Milton is in every line of *Paradise Lost*: "He projects himself, his feeling, knowledge and aspiration into the characters of his epic, both the primitive and human creatures, and the superhuman beings, whether celestial or infernal." Milton's amazing learning is scattered over every line of epic. His Puritanism, his faith in God and religion, his hatred of womankind, his love and appreciation of Beauty, his condemnation of a life of sensual pleasure—all find expression reflect in *Paradise Lost.*

Above all, Satan is a portrait of Milton himself. There is an intimate emotional affinity between the two. After the Restoration, Milton was isolated and disgraced like Satan himself. But,

Though fallen on evil days,

On Evil days though fallen, and evil tongues

But like Satan, he too did not submit or yield. He continued to sing, 'with mortal voice unchanged.' Satan, too, is a rebel, like the poet himself. He too warns against Heaven and his angels, as Milton did against Charles and his supporters. Satan's pride, spirit of revolt and passion for freedom, are Satan's own. Satan again and again voices his own sentiments:

What though the field be lost:

All is not lost:

Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,

Doing or suffering;

The mind is its own place, and in itself

Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven:

Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen!

Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven.

The Satanists even invest him with all that Milton felt and valued most strongly. A renowned critic says, "The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels and God, and at liberty when of Devils and Hell, is because he was a true poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it." **Hazlitt** saw Milton's dilemma. His faith in religion which he had set out to champion, and his hatred of tyranny, of which, 'against his better knowledge', Satan became the embodiment, were both on trial in his poem. So he undertakes to do justice to both: "perhaps each of these motives had its full share in determining the choice of his subject." Even Tillyard writes: "Milton did partly ally himself with Satan, that unwittingly he was led away by the creature of his own imagination… The character of Satan expresses, as no other character or act or feature of the poem does, something in which Milton believed very strongly; heroic energy." In *Books I* and *II* he towers above all the rest by his unconquerable will and qualities of leadership. It is ultimately he and not God, who triumphs—by seducing Eve to eat the forbidden fruit.

He examines his troops with pride and satisfaction, and with a sense of power. The great debate in *Book II* is closely modelled on the debate in Long Parliament, which Milton had often heard. According to **Kenneth Muir,** "The debate in Hell would have been lacking in power and verisimilitude if the poet had not lived through the period of the long parliament."

Hence we find that there is a close emotional identity between Milton and Satan. However, this similarity must not be carried too far. Satan is an embodiment of evil and enemy of God, while Milton was a devout Christian having staunch faith in God and religion. His faith in God and religion is seen in his choice of a Biblical subject as his theme, and in his purpose. His theme is Biblical myth of the Fall of Man and the original sin, and his idea is to justify the ways of God to man, and to show that God is the incarnation of mercy, love and charity.

Milton's hatred for a life of sensual pleasure and self-indulgence is seen in his condemnation of the orgies of the 'sons of Belial'. Milton's ire against woman finds repeated expressions in the epic. Thus in Book I, we have

In Sion also not unsung, where stood

Her Temple on th' offensive Mountain, built

By that uxorious king, whose heart though large,

Beguiled by fair idolatress, fell…

The fiercest outburst against woman takes place in *Book X* during the quarrel between Adam and Eve. But Milton was not simply a Puritan; he was also a great Renaissance scholar, with the obsessive love of beauty of the classics. His love of beauty is expressed in his charming description of the natural beauty of the Garden of Eden, but above all in his beautiful eulogy of Eve, Book VIII of the epic.

Milton's very soul, his high seriousness, his amazing learning, his proud and strong will, his grave sorrow at the folly of mankind, are interwoven with the whole tone and temper of his masterly epic. Epic art is objective but Milton's genius was in essence lyrical rather than objective or dramatic. **John Bailey** writes, "And so none of his characters, divine, diabolic or human, will ever move us quite as he moves himself." Some of the most excellent passages in the book are those where Milton expresses himself directly or indirectly. Such passages have a rare lyrical intensity and beauty.

1.3.8 SOME IMPORTANT EXPLANATIONS

Lines 22-26.

What in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;
That, to the height of this great argument,
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to man.

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Explanation: These lines have been taken from *Paradise Lost* Book I written by Milton.

The poet prays to the Heavenly Muse, Urania to inspire him to write a great epic on the Fall of man and the loss of Eden. He also invokes the holy spirit of God to inspire him and to make possible for him to write the epic. The holy spirit of God was present even before the creation of the universe. She hovered over chaos as a dove sits on its eggs and hatches them.

Milton has selected a noble theme for the epic. The Holy Spirit can give him knowledge and spiritual illumination. Milton was blind at the time of composition of this poem. He was surrounded all around by hostile people to bring an end to his social existence. He asks spiritual illumination and guidance to come out of this darkness. The Holy Spirit can purify soul which is necessary to sing the lofty theme. He is conscious of his high theme and sublime style. Then the poet would be able to justify that God is just and kindhearted. His aim is to justify the punishment which God inflicted on Adam. The poem exhorts men to accept God's ways and not lament over their lot. It is by accepting God's actions that men can hope for His grace and mercy.

Lines 105-109.

All is not lost--the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:
And what is else not to be overcome?

Explanation: These lines have been taken from *Paradise Lost* Book I written by Milton.

Milton says that Satan never attributes God's victory to any superiority. He attributes it to some accidental advantage. He admits the physical superiority of God, but he does not accept it openly. He does not regret his revolt. He still defies the authority of God. As a leader of rebel angels, Satan shook the foundation of

his throne. He emulates himself having contented with the mightiest. He is still resolved to continue his fight and never to yield to God.

Satan is not worried at being defeated in the war against God. He maintains courage, strength of will to have his revenge upon god. Their heads may be bloody, but they will never bow their heads. God may be powerful, but he will never have the glory of winning their spirits. It is the process of continuous fight that deter mines the final result of a struggle. He is not defeated in his resolve. His anger and power cannot snatch from Satan the glory which he has. He still has the courage and spirit to take revenge; and God will never be able to force them to submit to his will.

Lines 157-162.

Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,
Doing or suffering: but of this be sure--
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight,
As being the contrary to his high will
Whom we resist.

Explanation: These lines have been taken from *Paradise Lost* Book I written by Milton. Beelzebub says that angels retain their power and strength only by the permission of God. He can take back their power and life as and when he likes. He has let their unconquerable strength to suffer the pain of Hell. There is no advantage of this strength and everlasting nature, if they have to undergo eternal punishment in Hell. He regrets that heir eternal life is destined to impose eternal punishment.

Satan replies to Beelzebub in a fairly sympathetic tone and encourages him. He tells that weakness in action as well as in sufferance makes a person miserable. Beelzebub expresses unwillingness to fight and feels uselessness of war against God. Satan does not agree to the idea of compromise or submission to God. He is not inclined to do well. But it would be his delight to do evil, their efforts would be to thwart his purpose and find out means of doing evil. They

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have to oppose God at all costs and act against His will. It is just possible that their evil actions defeat his well-planned schemes of goodness to mankind. Satan loves evil for the sake of evil.

1.4 COMPREHENSION EXERCISES

1. Discuss Chaucer's attitude towards Religion.
2. *Give a general estimate of Chaucer.*
3. Discuss Chaucer's "The Prologue" as a Picture Gallery.
4. Give a general estimate of Marlowe as a Dramatist.
5. Draw a character of Doctor Faustus.
6. Write a brief note on the Autobiographical element in Dr. Faustus.
7. Discuss the Greatness of Milton as a Poet.
8. Give an estimate of Milton's Sublimity.
9. Discuss *Paradise Lost* as an Epic.

1.5 LET US SUM UP

Having gone through Unit I, you are now in a position to discuss these three great poets—Chaucer, Christopher Marlowe and John Milton. You have become familiar with their life and works, and the age in which they wrote. You can easily evaluate Chaucer's Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*, Christopher Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

UNIT-II JOHN DONNE

Structure

2.0 Objectives

2.1 JOHN DONNE

- 2.1.1 A General Estimate of Donne as a poet
- 2.1.2 Donne as a Love Poet
- 2.1.3 Art and Technique of John Donne
- 2.1.4 A Lecture Upon the Shadow
- 2.1.5 Love's Deity
- 2.1.6 The Good Morrow
- 2.1.7 Death Be Not Proud
- 2.1.8 The Blossom
- 2.1.9 Some Important Explanations

2.2 Comprehension Exercises

2.3 Let Us Sum Up

2.0 OBJECTIVES

In Unit II our objective is to familiarize you with another great poet of his times— John Donne. We shall tell you about his life and also analyze some of his select poems—A Lecture upon the Shadow, Love's Deity, The Good Morrow, Death Be not Proud, and The Blossom. You will be able to:

- Discuss the life and select poems of the poet.
- Give an outline of the poems.
- Analyze in detail the select poems.

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2.1 JOHN DONNE

Birth and Parentage

John Donne was born in London. He was the son of a rich iron merchant, at a time when the merchants of England were creating a new and higher kind of princes. On his father's side he came from an old Welsh family, and on his mother's side from Heywoods and Sir Thomas More's family. Both families were Catholics. In those days Catholics were subject to severe persecution. His education could not be continued for long at Oxford and Cambridge because of his religion.

Early Life in London

Such sour experiences generally set a man's religious standards for life. But at the moment Donne, as he studied law at Lincoln's Inn, was exploring the philosophic ground of all faiths. Gradually, he repudiated the church in which he was born, renounced all denominations and called himself simply Christian. He studies hard in the morning and led a sort of Bohemian life in the evening. He visited women of ill fame and in this way acquired that experience which makes him such a great love-poet.

Takes to Poetry

During this time, he wrote poetry also and shared his wealth with needy Catholic relatives. He joined the expedition of Essex for Cadiz in 1596 and for the Azores in 1597. And on sea and in camp found time to write poetry. Two of his best poems *The Storm* and *The Calm*, belong to this period. Next he travelled in Europe for three years, but occupied himself with study and poetry. Returning home, he became secretary to Lord Egerton, fell in love with the latter's young niece, Anne More, eloped with her and married her. For this Donne was thrown into prison. Surprisingly, his poetical work at this time is not a song of youthful romance, but *The Progress of the Soul,* a study of transmigration.

Last Years and Death

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Year of wandering and poverty followed, until Sir George More forgave the young lovers and settled a handsome allowance on his daughter. Instead of enjoying his new comforts, Donne grew more ascetic and intellectual in his tastes. He refused also the pleasing offer of entering the Church of England and of receiving a comfortable 'living'. By his *Pseudo Martyr* he attracted the favour of James I, who persuaded him to be ordained, yet left him without any place or employment. When his wife died, her allowance ceased and Donne was left with seven children in extreme poverty. Afterward he became a preacher, rose swiftly to become the greatest of English preachers, and Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London. There he "carried some to heaven in holy raptures and led others to amend their lives," and as he leaned over the pulpit with extreme seriousness is likened by **Izaak Walton** to "an angel leaning from a cloud." He died on 31st March 1631.

The Works of John Donne

(1) John Donne's Secular Poetry

The secular poems of John Donne may be classified under the following headings:

(a) "Songs and Sonnets" (Love Poem)

His love poems, *Songs and Sonnets,* were written in the same period, and are intense and subtle analysis of all moods of a Lover, expressed in vivid and startling language, which is colloquial rather than conventional. A vein of satire runs through these poems also. The rhythm is dramatic and gives the illusion of excited talk. Among the best-known and most typical of the poems of this group are *Air and Angel*, *A Nocturnall Upon St. Lucies Day*, *Valediction: Forbidding Mourning,* and *The Extacy.*

(b) The Satires

"Donne puts much more into satire than any English writer did before him, and in any history of English verse his satires would have to be described as a landmark." These satires are five in number. They are modelled in style and technique on the Roman satirist Persius. Like Elizabethan satire, John Donne's satires are rugged and harsh. His satires have the usual energy of the rich contemporary observation.

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(c) The Elegies

These are twenty in number. They were first published in 1633. The titles of these elegies indicate their nature e.g. *Jealousy, The Anagram, Change, The Perfume, His Picture, On His Mistress Going to Bed, Love's Progress, Love and War*. The main trait of the elegies is forceful, concrete imagery, a set of psychological attitudes, which are found in some of the poems of *Songs and Sonnets.*

(d) Verse Letters

These verse letters were addressed to the Countess of Bedford. They reveal the author's unique personality.

(e) Epithalamions

Donne has attempted three Epithalamions on marriage. The first song was written for the marriage of Princess Elizabeth on St. Valentine's day, 1613. The second epithalamion was written to celebrate the marriage of the Earl of Somerset who was the King's favourite and Chief Minister in 1613. The third epithalamion may be described as more Spenserian than Princess Elizabeth's epithalamion.

(f) The Progress of the Soul

It is a bizarre and fantastic poem which was in 1601 by John Donne. The queen has been treated as the last of a line of arch-heretics. As Grandson asserts: "The poem is one of which Donne would have had title again, perhaps by way of expiation, for his *Second Anniversary* written eleven years later, in which he followed with Christian fervour the soul of a dead girl on its direct, innocent and orthodox flight to paradise.

(g) Epicedes and Obsequies

These poems were written to mourn the death of eminent contemporaries. They are, in fact, elegies, "These elegies are good working examples of how the resources of the metaphysical technique enable the poet, who probably feels no personal grief, to offer a variety of comfort. Appropriate yet original, upon formal occasion of death, the conceits and comparisons are as carefully chosen as acquaintances would now days choose flowers for a wreath.

(h) The Anniversaries

The two *Anniversaries* were published in 1611. They were written for Sir Robert Drury on the death of his daughter Elizabeth. These poems characterized the transition from the secular to the divine poems. They disclose the darker side of Donne's wit. The fundamental idea of these poems is that the death of one, who is so young and innocent, makes the world empty, virtueless and rotten.

Religious Poetry of John Donne

His religious poetry was written after 1610, and the greatest, the nineteen *Holly Sonnets,* and the lyrics such as *A Hymn to God the Father,* after his wife's death in 1617. They also are intense and personal and have a force unique in his mind before taking orders in the Anglican Church—his horror of death, the fascination which it had for him, his dread of the wrath of God, and his longing for God's love. They are the expression of deep and distressed soul. We find in them the intellectual subtlety, the scholastic learning, and the 'wit' and 'conceits' of the love poems.

Prose of John Donne

Donne's prose work is substantial both in bulk and achievement. *The Pseudo-Martyr (1610)* was a defense of the oath of allegiance, while *Ignatius His Conclave (1610)*, was a satire upon Ignatius Loyola and the Jesuits. The best introduction to Donne's prose is, however, through his *Devotions (1614),* which gives an account of his spiritual struggles and efforts during his serious illness. They have many of the qualities of his poetry. They are direct and personal and also reveal a keen psychological insight and the preoccupation with death and his own sinfulness, which is also to be seen in his *Holy Sonnets.* Strong power of his imagination and the mask of learning are the features of his long works, but these cannot hide the basic underlying simplicity of Donne's faith and his longing for repose in God. His best prose works are his *Sermons*, which number about 160. In seventeenth-century England the sermon was a very important influence, and the powerful preacher in London was a public figure capable of wielding great influence. We possess a great number of these sermons, which show the form to have a highly developed literary technique founded on well-established oratorical traditions. Donne's sermons, of which the finest is probably *Death's Duel (1630),* contains many of the features of his poetry. Intensely personal, their appeal is

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chiefly emotional, and Donne seems to have used a dramatic technique, which had a great hold on his audiences. They display the same sort of imagery, the same unusual wit, the keen analytical mind, and the preoccupation with dark and melancholic themes, which exist in his poetry, and they are full of the same unusual and deep learning.

2.1.1 A GENERAL ESTIMATE OF DONNE AS A POET

A General Estimate of Donne as a poet

Or

John Donne as a Metaphysical Poet

Or

Donne as a poet: His Merits and Demerits

The Elizabethan Tradition: Its Decadence

Towards the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century the great Elizabethan poetry had worn itself out. Signs of decadence were visible everywhere. There were three traditions that were generally followed—the Spenserian, the Arcadian, and the Petrarchan. Everything was conventional and artificial or fake. There was little that was original or remarkable. There was much syrupy melody and romantic extravagance, but intellectual blankness. In the first decade of the 17th century there was a revolt against old-fashioned and exhausted Elizabethan poetry. **C.S. Lewis** puts it thus, "Metaphysicism in poetry is the fruit of the Renaissance tree becoming over-ripe and approaching putrescence."

Revolt Against It

The leaders of this revolt were Ben Johnson and John Donne. Both of them were dynamic personalities who attracted staunch followers and founded schools. The first, Ben Johnson—the founder of the classical school, which reached its full flowering in the poetry of Dryden and Pope— was first and

foremost a dramatist. As a poet he deeply influenced the Caroline lyricists. The other is John Donne whose poetry is remarkable for its intense passion, intellectual agility and dramatic power. He is given to introspection and self-analysis. He writes of no imaginary shepherds and shepherdesses but of his own intellectual, metaphysical and amorous experiences. His early Satyres, his *Songs and Sonnets,* his *Holy Sonnets,* etc. are all different expressions of his diverse experience. His poetry is marked with a tone of realism, even cynicism, but it is always forceful and startling. He is the founder of the so-called, "Metaphysical school", of poetry, of which Richard Crashaw, George Herbert, Henry Vaughan and Abraham Cowley are the other leading poets.

The Metaphysical School

Literally 'Meta' means "beyond" and "Physics" means "physical nature". It was Dryden who first used the word, "Metaphysical" in connection with Donne's poetry and wrote, "Donne affects the metaphysics", and Dr. Johnson confirmed Dryden's opinion. Since then the word, Metaphysical has been used for Donne and his followers. However, the term is an unfortunate one, for it implies a process of dry reasoning, a speculation about the nature of the universe, the process of dry reasoning, a speculation about the nature of the universe, the problems of life and death etc. Donne's poetry is not metaphysical in the true sense of the word. A metaphysical poem is long, while Donne's poems are all short. His poetry does not develop any philosophical system of the universe. Rather it is equally concerned with his emotional personal experiences, as any other poetry. The poetry of the school of Donne cannot be termed metaphysical so far as its content is concerned. **Grierson** puts it thus: **"**Donne is metaphysical not only by virtue of his scholasticism, but by his deep reflective interests in the experience of which his poetry is the expression, the new psychological curiosity with which he writes of love and religion."

Metaphysical Imagery and Conceit

In other words, Donne's poetry may be called, 'metaphysical' only in so far as its technique or style is concerned. It is heavily over-loaded with conceits, which may be defined as the excessive use of over-elaborated similes and metaphors, which have been drawn from the most far-fetched, remote and unusual sources. **Dr. Johnson** defines a conceit as the perception of, "Occult resemblances in things apparently unlike." Poets have always perceived similarity between

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dissimilar objects and used similes and metaphors to suggest their perception of that similarity.

Difficulty and Obscurity

Likewise, Donne and other metaphysical poets use words call the mind into play, rather those which speak to the sense or, "evoke an emotional response through memory." They use words, which have no associative value. This intellectual bias affects the forms of their poems and their rhythm. In their 'conceits' they constantly bring together the abstract and the concrete, the remote and the near, the spiritual and the material, the finite and the infinite, the sublime and the commonplace. Thus Donne draws his imagery from such varied sources as medieval theology, Scholastic philosophy, the Polemic astronomy of the middle ages, and the concepts of contemporary sciences. The difficulty of the readers is further increased by the extreme condensation and concentration of Donne's poetry.

Language and Versification

He uses the 'natural language of men' not when they are 'emotionally excited', but when they are engaged in routine commerce or in scientific speculations. He employs a, 'new vocabulary.' He uses, a vocabulary with no 'associative value' and completely different from the poetic language of the Elizabethans. He wants to convey his meanings, exactly and precisely, and searches for verbal equivalents for the diverse emotional states, and this search often results in the use of the archaic and the bizarre. We do not find in him any of the 'sugared melody' of the Petrarchans. He breaches every known rule of rhyme, metre and versification. **Ben Jonson** even remarked that, "Donne for not keeping of accent deserved hanging." His rhythms give a jar and jolt to the reader, i.e. they administer a shock to him and make him think by their very violence.

Far-fetched Conceits and Hyperboles

The fantastic nature of the 'metaphysical conceits' and poetry becomes apparent, when we examine a few examples: In *Valediction: Forbidding Mourning,* the true lovers, now parted, are likened to the legs of a compass. Similarly, in *The Flea,* Donne deduce every kind of consequence from the fact that a flea hops after biting him to suck his mistress's blood. He will not let her kill the creature in which their blood has mingled, and which is, therefore, their

bridal bed, "the temple of their wedding." In such passages, even Donne, the greatest of the metaphysical poets, lapses into the ridiculous and the fantastic. At the time, he employs equally extravagant hyperboles. Fore example, he mistakes his beloved to be an angel, for to imagine her less than an angel would be profanity.

Unification of Sensibility

In Donne's Poetry, there is always an intellectual analysis of emotion. Every lyric arises out of some emotional situation, and the emotion in question is analyzed threadbare. Like a clever lawyer Donne offers argument after argument in support of his point of view. Thus in *Valediction: Forbidding Mourning* he proves that true lovers need not mourn at the time of parting. In *The Canonization* he establishes that lovers are saints of love. In *The Blossome* he argues against the Petrarchan love tradition. This imparts to his poetry a hard intellectual tone, but it also results in that, "unification of sensibility." A poet no less great than **T.S. Eliot** admired the Metaphysical poetry very highly.

Abrupt, Colloquial Openings

His poems have abrupt, colloquial beginnings as in *The Canonisations:*

For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love

At another place, he begins on a bitter note:

When by thy scorne, o' murderess, I am dead

Furthermore, he proceeds to tell her what terrors his ghost would cause to her after his death. Donne's witticism, too, has a similar purpose, i.e. to startle and surprise. His wit is not just, "what oft was thought but never so well expressed", but what was, "seldom so thought and never so well expressed."

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Donne as a Love Poet

Or

Love Lyric of Donne

John Donne's reputation as a love poet rests on his fifty-five lyrics, which were written at different period of his life, but were published for the first time in 1633 in one volume called *Songs and Sonnets*. A few of them can be linked to actual persons and events of his life, but most of them are expression of intense emotional activity in the poet's mind. They are literary experiments, explorations of love relationship from the man's point of view.

Emotional Range and Variety

Donne's love poems cover a wide range of feeling from extreme physical passion to spiritual love, and express varied moods ranging from a mood of cynicism and contempt to one of faith and acceptance. His love experiences were diverse and wide-ranging and so is the emotional range of his love poetry. He had love affairs with a number of women, some of them lasting and permanent, others only of a short period.

The Three Strains

Grierson distinguished three distinct strains in Donne's poems. First there is (1) the cynical strain and his attitude towards women and their love and constancy is one of contempt and rejection, (2) there is the strain of conjugal love to be noticed in poems like *Valediction: Forbidding Mourning,* addressed to his wife Anne Moore whom he loved passionately and in his relationship with her he attained spiritual peace and serenity, (3) there is the holy passion, not different from love of devotee for his Maker. Often a number of strains and moods are mixed up in the same poem. This makes Donne a love poet singularly original, exceptional, and realistic.

Intellectually Analyzed Love Situations

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His poem is invariably an expression of some personal experience and is, therefore, presented with remarkable force, sincerity and gravity. Each poem deals with a love situation, which is intellectually analyzed with the skill of a seasoned lawyer. In *The Blossome* this is accomplished through an imaginary debate between the poet and his heart, and in this way the futility of loving in "forbidden" or "forbidden" mistress is dramatically presented. In this way the Petrarchan convention of the faithful lover continuing to love a cold, indifferent and insensitive beloved, who is often a forbidden tree, as she is the wife of another, has been treated ironically.

Love: Sensuous and Realistic

Donne's treatment of love is sensuous and realistic as well. He does not entirely reject the pleasures of the body even in poems where love is treated as the highest spiritual passion. This stress on the claims of the body is another feature, which distinguishes Donne from the poets both of the Petrarchan and the Platonic school. It is the body, which joins the souls together, and so the claims of the body must not be overlooked. The beloved must not hesitate to give herself body and soul to her lover even if they are not married. In *The Canonization* the lovers unite body and soul to form a 'neutral sex.' In *The Relique* physical contact is spoken of as essential.

Lack of Description of Female Beauty

Donne acquaints us very little with the beauty of the woman he loves. For example, in *The Blossome* the grace and delicacy of his beloved may be guessed from that she has been equated with a tender flower. In some other poems, he devotes one or two lines to description, but even then he does not really describe. He simply gives an account of the delight of the eye at the charms of his mistress.

Love-relationship Outside Marriage

Donne does not accept the contemporary view that marriage alone sanctifies the sexual act. He also does not accept the medieval view that sex is equally sinful within or without the marriage bond. In his opinion, the purity or otherwise of the sexual act depends on the quality of the relation between the lovers. If delight in one another is mutual, physical union is its proper

consummation. He time and again makes the woman's readiness to give herself entirely, body and soul, to her lover, the test of her love or him. As **John Bennet** puts it, "Donne's love poetry is not about the difference between marriage and adultery, but about the difference between lust and love."

Attitude Towards Womanhood

Donne has been labelled a cynic in his attitude towards love and woman. Undoubtedly, his attitude towards woman in his early poems is one of contempt. In the poem, " *Goe and Catch a Falling Starre",* he emphasizes the impossibility of finding a faithful and chaste woman. In *Woman's Constancy* her inconstancy has been ironically brought out. He hates them alike for yielding to his lust and for denying themselves to him. When he finds a woman really worthy of his love, he calls her an angel and ascends the heights of true passion and almost Petrarchan adoration.

Conclusion

The last stanza of the '*Canonization*' sums up Donne's sexual metaphysics

commendably. The really valid and complete relationship between man and woman mingles their souls into a complete whole, and they become a microcosm of the living world. **Grierson** aptly observes: "Neither sensual passion, nor gay and cynical wit, nor scorn and anger, is the dominating note in Donne's love poetry."

Art and Technique of John Donne

Or

John Donne: Language, Diction, Versification etc.

A Great Reformer: Unique and Revolutionary

As a poetic artist, Donne is extremely original, unique and revolutionary. As far as his diction and versification are concerned, he takes his rank with such reformers of the English tongue as Wordsworth and T.S.Eliot. In the age of Donne, as in the age of Wordsworth and T.S.Eliot, the English language had grown too poetic. It had lost touch with the language of everyday life, and had therefore become weak and enervated. Donne seeks to re-vitalise it, to impart to it the liveliness and sinewy strength, which it had lost.

Use of Simple, Colloquial Language

It is with this end in view that he revolts against the popular tradition of Pastoral, Spenserian and Petrarchan poetry. The language, diction and imagery of poets had grown hackneyed and stereotyped. Poet after poet used the same images, the same similes, and the same metaphors. Donne discards all this traditional poetic vocabulary. **Legouis and Cazamian** point out, "The world of contemporary science, commerce, trade and business is freely laid under contribution. The use of medieval scholastic learning and science may seem to us today as recondite and far-fetched, but in his own day it was common knowledge." **Dryden** was right, when he eulogized Donne for combining complexity of substance with simplicity of expression.

Donne's Flexibility

The general tone of the language of the *Songs and Sonnets* is colloquial. The poems have the flexibility and dynamism of spoken language. The openings are often particularly colloquial in tone. This has the effects of making the poem seem to grow naturally out of definite situations in individual lives. In this way he succeeds immediately in startling the reader and capturing their attention, as in the opening of *The Canonization* and a number of other poems.

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Some Curious Features

The study of Donne's diction reveals a number of curious features. The diction is simple but simple words combined in unusual ways, forming strange compounds, or he uses odd phrases or sentences. Sometime he puns, though punning does not appear to be so frequent as critics make it out to be. At times he repeats words or phrases, throwing them up like a juggle. He is particular fond of playing with pronouns and demonstrative adjectives. From time to time, Donne deviates from normal simplicity of diction, by employing learned language; and on such occasions the work takes on certain sophistication. On the other hand, he frequently interpolates coarse diction, which imparts to the poetry a rasping force. On still other times unusual effects are obtained by the use of words with associations that are homely rather than crude. Donne occasionally achieves a peculiar effect of some subtlety by veiling the meaning of a word or phrase, which is really charged with intense implication. Donne's use of words is often subtle and suggestive. He suggests much more than he describes.

His Verbal Magic

Helen Gardner commenting on the verbal magic of Donne observes that in the best of poets the words carry an 'aura' of memories and associations, but in Donne's poetry this 'aura' is intellectual and not emotional in nature. Donne's words carry with them the memory of abstract ideas. The magical lines in his poetry are those which call to mind such conception as those of space, time, nothingness and eternity. The words, which strike the keynote of a poem, are circles, spheres, concentriques, etc. They are symbols of that infinity in love which underline the human ebb and flow.

A Great Metrical Artist

As in his diction, so in his versification, Donne is a great innovator. He was a great metrical artist who did experimentation with a number of metres and stanza-forms. The metres used and invented for the purpose of his poems are as many and as varied as his poems. He hardly ever repeats the same stanzaic or metrical forms.

Suitability of Stanza-forms

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In some cases the stanza-forms seem especially appropriate to their respective poems. The is so, for instance, with the song, Goe, and Catche a Falling Starre, where the piquant slightness of the short lines sharpens by contrast the elongated sting in the tail of each stanza. A similar effect is achieved in The Blossome, where the short sixth line of each stanza sets off the epigrammatic couplet, which follows. Again, the sharp changes of line length in A Valediction: of Weeping accord magnificently with the turbulent passion underlying the poem; while the steady fixity of the lines of A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning is at one with the firm and substantial love in which the poem shows such settled confidence.

Variety of Rhythm and Metre

Donne often makes use of the normal iambic metre, but his rhythms are very diverse. Donne is very fond of using reiterated rhythms. Triplets i.e. three lines rhyming together, and even quadruplets, i.e. four lines rhyming together, are very common in his poetry. The verse might so easily break into utter disorder. Rhymes repeated time and again help to prevent this. The triplets in each stanza of a *Nocturnall Upon St.Lucies Day* afford an example of this steadying effect.

Versification: Harsh and Rugged

Donne's versification has often been condemned as rugged and harsh. Thus, **Johnson** said that, "for not keeping of accent" Donne deserved hanging, and this criticism has been echoed by many a knowledgeable modern critic. Such criticism arises from a failure to realize that the great technical originality of Donne lies in his use of speech rhythms. "Donne rejected the simple tunes of the Elizabethans and made use of intricate and complex rhyme patterns which work through the mind and convey the very texture of the mind. Every twist and turn of the sound-pattern he uses corresponds with the twists and turns in his thought-process.

Against Conventional Rhythms

Along with his revolt against the subject matter of Elizabethan poetry, Donne also revolted against " the convention of poetic rhythm". Referring to this **Legouis** says: "John Donne is perhaps the most singular of English poets." His

verses put forward examples of everything criticized by classical writers as bad taste and eccentricity, all pushed to an extreme that the critic's head swims. He despised highly regular meters and monotonous and harmonious cadences. He violated the rhythm in his Satires, Songs and Sonnets and his elegies. His friends and admirer Ben Johnson said of him that he esteemed him "the first poet in the words for some things", but also that, "Donne, for not keeping of accent, deserved hanging." If examined closely, this crime, stems from his subordination of melody to meaning.

Dramatic Flexibility

He introduced into rhymed verse such bold innovations as were customary in the blank verse of the dramatist. Instead of smoothly flowing lines, he usually prefers those, freely divided, in which the accents have an effect of shock, which pull the reader up and awaken his attention. As **Helen Gardner** puts it, "Donne deliberately deprived himself of the hypnotic power with which a regularly recurring beat plays upon the nerves. He needed rhythm for another purpose; his rhythms arrest and goad the reader, never quite fulfilling his expectations but forcing him to pause here and to rush on there, governing pace and emphasis so as to bring out the full force of the meanings."

Use of Speech Cadence—His Chief Innovation

As a metrist, Donne's chief innovation was to make the cadences of speech the staple of his rhythm. Contemporary dramatists had done this in blank verse, but none had so far tried it in lyrical poetry. It is speech of a special kind, not the rhetorical speech of Dryden's verse, not the nimble give and take of dialogue. Donne's rhythm demands variety of pace. He has been called the most rapid of poets and also the slowest. Both the statements are true. A poem may begin slowly and subsequently hurry the reader into a rapidity that is almost breathless.

Conclusion

Donne is possibly our first great master of poetic rhetoric, of poetry used, as Dryden and Pope were to use it, for special effects of oratory rather than of song, and the advance which Dryden achieved was secured by subordinating to oratory the more passionate and imaginative qualities which disturbed the balance and movement of Donne's packed but imaginative rhetoric.

A Lecture Upon the Shadow

Stand still, and I will read to thee
A lecture, Love, in Love's philosophy.
These three hours that we have spent,
Walking here, two shadows went
Along with us, which we ourselves produced.
But, now the sun is just above our head,
We do those shadows tread,
And to brave clearness all things are reduced.
So whilst our infant loves did grow,
Disguises did, and shadows, flow
From us and our cares ; but now 'tis not so.

That love hath not attain'd the highest degree,
Which is still diligent lest others see.

Except our loves at this noon stay,
We shall new shadows make the other way.
As the first were made to blind
Others, these which come behind
Will work upon ourselves, and blind our eyes.
If our loves faint, and westerwardly decline,
To me thou, falsely, thine
And I to thee mine actions shall disguise.
The morning shadows wear away,
But these grow longer all the day ;
But O ! love's day is short, if love decay.

Love is a growing, or full constant light,
And his short minute, after noon, is night.

Summary

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This is one of the finest love lyrics by John Donne. The poet compares love with the Sun. The shadows are compared to doubts in the forenoon when we walk our shadows are in front of us. We seem to follow our own shadows this is like the beginning of love when it is growing within the lovers. In the afternoon when the Sun reaches its zenith there is no shadow. It seems to have merged with the bodies. This is like the second aspect of love, when it reaches its peak, there are no doubts, no efforts to conceal it from others and everything about love is clear. The poem continues to compare love with the Sun and rays that when Sun sets, our shadows are behind us and soon there is total darkness all around, and the day ends. Similarly as soon as any doubt enters a love relationship, love ends and all is dark. The poet sums up the poem by saying that love is when it is growing or when it is mature and constant. As soon as love weakness, doubts begin to appear, only at its zenith, love can keep away the doubts just as the Sun keeps away the shadows when it is at its peak.

2.1.5 LOVE'S DEITY

Love's Deity

I long to talk with some old lover's ghost,

Who die before the god of love was born;

I cannot think that he, who then loved most,

Sunk so low, as to love one which did scorn.

But since this god produced a destiny,

And that vice-nature, custom lets it be;

I must love her, that loves not me.

Sure they which made him god, meant not so much,

Nor he in his young godhead practiced it.

But when an even flame two hearts did touch,

His office was indulgently to fit

Actives to passives. Correspondency

Only his subject was; it cannot be

Love, till I love her, that loves me.

But every modern god will now extend

His vast prerogative, as far as Jove.

To rage, to lust, to write to, to commend.

All is the purlieu of the god of love.

Oh were we weakened by thi tyranny

To ungod this child again, it could not be

I should love her, who loves not me.

Rebel and atheist too, why murmur I.

As though I felt the worst that love could do?

Love might make me leave loving, or might try

A deeper plague, to make her love me too,

Which, since she loves before, I am loth to see;

Falsehood is worse than hate; and that must be,

If she whom I Love, should love me.

Paraphrase

Stanza 1. I wish to talk to the ghosts of some old lover who loved and died before the god of love was born (Lovers existed even before the god of Love who is believed to rule the destiny of lovers) The old lover could not have demeaned himself by loving a woman who hated him. But this god of Love and the custom of love have fixed the destiny of the lover and he must go on loving his lady despite her hatred. Therefore, the poet must love his beloved though she does not love him.

Stanza 2. Certainly, the old lovers who installed god of Love did not want to put so much hatred in a woman's heart. Even the god of Love could not have sanctioned it. The job of the god of Love is to match and unite two hearts burning with Love. He has to adjust the positive with the negative charge to produce the fire of love. The active force is that of the lover and the passive force is that of the beloved. This produces the true charges of love just as in sciences the positive charge when coupled with the negative charge produces heat. So it seems that true love is due partly to the contempt of the beloved (the negative charge).

Stanza 3. The modern god of Love, however, tries to extend his jurisdiction to the higher dealings of the great god Jove who assumed various shapes of birds and animals in order to enjoy the love of ladies. The god of Love is given to different moods of fury, lust, distant communication and approbation. If the poet were to revolt against the tyranny of the god of Love and overthrow him, he would be free from the necessity of loving a lady who does not love him at all.

Stanza 4. The poet has no intention of revolting against the god of Love or turning into an atheist, because the god of Love is capable of inflicting a heavier punishment on him. He may make him abandon his lady or rather make her display her love to him. This show of the lady's love would be something false. This falsehood is worse than hate, for the poet is sure that it is not possible for his lady to love him in return.

Critical Appreciation

This poem is addressed to the god of Love. Love is older than the creation of the god of Love. It is the lover who thought of installing a god of love. It is command and ordinance of the god of Love that man should love the woman who hates him. This is rather a strange position. Donne tries to justify the scorn of the beloved on the ground that opposite poles attract and it is only because of the scorn of the beloved that love flourishes between her and the lover. The poet has no intention of revolting against or cursing the god of Love because he may have his revenge on the poet by making the beloved hate him, which to all purpose, is pretense and a fraud.

Development of Thought

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The poet deals with the nature and function of love as intended by the god of Love. The poem sums up his ideas on the flexible nature of love.

Undoubtedly, lovers lived much before they made Love into a god. The poet would like to ask an old lover if he could love a woman who hated him. Unfortunately, this is the destiny fixed by the god of Love that a lover must go on loving his lady who disregards and scorn him. The lover can do nothing about what has been predestined by the god of Love.

It is not possible that old lovers could have created a god of love who filled the woman's heart with hatred for her lover. The function of the god of Love is to bring together the lover and the beloved fired by the passion of love. The poet calls man's heart active and woman's heart passive, because she is at the receiving end. Only opposite poles can attract and get into a love situation. Similar ones can only repel each other. The lover is the positive end and the beloved the negative end and when they are linked, the fire of love is produce. This makes the poet conclude that true love cannot exist if the beloved does not hate the lover. It is her hatred, which keeps the lover bound to her.

Modern God of Love

The modern god of Love is ambitious and powerful. He takes different shapes of birds and beasts in order to enjoy the love of woman. Even so it is not possible to depose this god because this would not relax the poet from the obligations of loving a lady who hates him. The poet does not wish to revolt again the god of Love or deny his existence. If he does so, the god of Love may inflict on him a serious punishment namely, of making his beloved love him. This can never be true in life because no woman truly loves him.

Critical Comment

The poem contains four stanzas of seven lines. Each stanza offers a thought linked with the central thought that woman's love is founded on hatred. Donne's irony is manifest in his theory that to be really loved by a woman is sheer falsehood and that the woman's scorn is her true love. There is an inherent paradox in the stand taken by Donne but he explains it scientifically that like poles repel and unlike poles attract. So, his reasoning convinces us that while man's

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love may be positive, woman's love is negative. The god of love is a strange being as he has destined that a man should love a woman who hates him. In totality, the poem is a defense of the decrease of the god of love.

2.1.6 THE GOOD MORROW

The Good Morrow

I wonder by my troth, what thou, and I

Did, till we loved? Were we not weaned till then,

But sucked on country pleasures, childishly?

Or snorted we in the seven sleepers' den?

'Twas so; but this, all pleasures fancies be.

If ever any beauty I did see,

Which I desired, and got, 'twas but a dream of thee.

And now good morrow to our waking souls,

Which was not one another out of fear;

For, love all love of other sights controls,

And makes one little room, an every where,

Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone,

Let maps to others, worlds on worlds have shown,

Let us possess one world, each hath one, and is one.

My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears,

And true plain hearts do in the faces rest,

Where can we find two better hemispheres

Without sharp north, without declining west?

What ever dies, was not mixed equally;

If our two loves be one, or, thou and I

Love so alike, that none do slacken, none can die.

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Paraphrase

Stanza 1. I am surprised—I swear by my faith—what we both did till we fell in love. Maybe, we were contented with our childish pleasures (like sucking mother's milk). May be we enjoyed the simple joys of nature in the country before the realization of true love. Perhaps, we slept for many years like those seven sleepers who slept in the cave. All the past pleasures compared to the present one are just fancies. If I found beautiful girl whom I liked and got, she was but a shadow or reflection of your beauty.

Stanza 2. As our souls have now awakened to a new-life, let us say 'good morning' to them. Our souls look at each other not out of suspicion or fear but out of love. Our love prevents us from running after any other sights or pleasures. Our small room of love is as good as the whole world. Let the navigators roam over the seas and discover new worlds for themselves. Let the maps show to the other people the different worlds that exist. We are happy and contented with the possession of one world – the worlds of love-where the lovers are fused into one.

Stanza 3. My face is reflected in your eye and similarly your face is seen in my eye. Our faces reveal to us that our hearts are chaste and innocent. We two, between the both of us, constitute two hemispheres which are better than the geographical hemispheres because our first hemisphere is without the slanting North Pole (with its severe cold), and our second hemisphere is without the declining west (where the sun sets). Therefore, our love is not subject to vagaries of weather or time (decline). We know that only those things die whose constituents are not mixed proportionately. Our two loves are one because they are just similar in all respects and as such none of them will die. Our mutual

love can neither decrease nor decline nor come to an end. Our love is immortal.

Critical Appreciation

This is one of the finest poems of Donne elucidating the complex nature of love. At first, love has an element of fun and sex. It is like the dark night—an experience, which is not quite clear. But with the dawn, the true nature of things is revealed. The title suggests the dawn of true love, its essential quality and the mutual understanding and pure love provides a complete world to the lovers—a world without chillness, fear and decay. It is much better than the physical world. This love is perfect and not subject to time or death.

Development of Thought

The poem begins with the poet examining the nature of the first experience of love. The first set of experience is the childish, physical joys of love. The second set of experience is richer – it is the experience of spiritual love in which the voices of one soul are reverberated by the other soul. The mature experiences of love make one disregard the first foolish acts of love, when so to say, the souls were asleep in the den of seven sleepers. In the first stage the poet can only dream of true love. The atmosphere of sleep, stupor and dream shows the momentary and unstable nature of this kind of immature love.

The Dawn of True Love

The past life spent in childish love was dreamy and empty. The night of oblivion and unreality is about to end. The dawn of true love is imminent and it awakens the souls of lovers to the meaning of true love. This true love makes them open out their hearts to each other, without any fear or inhibition. Their love for each other is all-absorbing and all-satisfying. They have lost delight in other scenes or places. Each is like a world to the other. The world of love is universal. The poet is happy with the world of love. Let sailors discover new worlds and make charts and maps of the lands they have discovered. On the other hand, the lovers are happy and contented in their own worlds. Each of them has a world, but the two worlds of the two lovers put together, make one world of love.

The Two Hemispheres

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As the lovers look at each other, each of them sees his own image in the other's eyes. Their looks reflect the plainness, purity and truthfulness of their hearts. Their two faces may be compared to two hemispheres, which together make up a whole world. The two hemispheres of the faces of lover are better than the geographical hemispheres, because they do not have the 'sharp North' and the 'declining West'. The 'sharp North' implies coldness and indifference – to which their love is not subject- and the 'declining West' symbolizes decay and death from which the lovers are free. In the opinion of certain philosophers, when different elements, which go into the making of a thing, are not harmoniously mixed, the thing is prone to decay and death. This is not true of their love because their love is harmonious, sweet, and chaste. Therefore their love is immortal and beyond the vagaries of time and clime.

Critical Comments

In his inimitable style, Donne begins the poem with a question—*What thou and I did till we loved?* This rhetoric easily captures the attention of the reader. The poet compares the first stage of love—sex and enjoyment—with the mature sort of love, the harmonious relationship of two souls. There is great difference between the two types of love. The poet's wit is seen in his contrast between the two worlds—the worlds of the lovers and the geographical world. There is no 'sharp North' or 'declining West' in the world of lovers. It is a mutual love equal in quality and spirit, which is balanced and blended in such a manner that it is not subject to time or decay. The poet proceeds from the night scene and the experience of sleepy love to the morning of pure love, which gives him a new life and makes him discover a world in their little room. No navigator has ever discovered a world as wonderful as the world of love. This discovery of true love is as welcome as the greeting of a new day.

Donne's mode is that of 'concentration' advancing the argument in stages, reasoning till he is able to prove his point and drive it home to the reader. Like a competent lawyer he presses his point in a manner that it becomes very hard to refute it. Moreover, he marshals his images from diverse sources in such a way that the cumulative effect is irresistible. Grierson rightly points out that the imagery has been drawn from a variety of sources, i.e. myths of everyday life, e.g. 'the seven sleepers' den, 'suck'd on country pleasures' and wishing in the morning ', 'one

little room; the geographical world, 'sea-discoveries', 'Maps', 'hemispheres'; and finally, the scholastic philosophy 'whatever dies, was not mixed equally'. The relation between one object and the other is made intellectually rather than verbally. Notwithstanding his scholarly references, Donne's method is not pedantic and appeals to the lay reader by its unaffected and intelligent reasoning.

2.1.7 DEATH BE NOT PROUD

Death Be Not Proud

Death be not proud, though some have called thee

Mighty and dreadful, for, thou art not so.

For, those, whom death, nor yet canst thou kill me;

From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,

Much pleasure, then from thee, much more must flow,

And soonest our best men with thee do go,

Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.

Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,

And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,

And poppy, or charms can make us sleep as well,

And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?

One short sleep past, we wake eternally,

And death shall be no more, Death thou shalt die.

Paraphrase

Ln. 1-8. Oh, death, do not be proud. You are not powerful or horrible as some think. Those whom you are supposed to destroy are not actually dead.

You cannot kill me either. Death is like a restful sleep. People derive relaxation and joy from sleep, which is but a picture of death. Similarly death gives greater comfort and rest. That is the reason why the best and good people die young. Death frees their souls from the prison of their bodies and offers rest to them. Thus, by itself, death cannot be called dreadful.

Ln. 9-14. Death is a slave or agent of fate, accident, power of kings and criminals. It accomplishes its tasks through poison, war and sickness. Opium and other drugs can induce better sleep and more easily and gently. They are more welcome than the blow of death. Why is death blown up with pride? Death can make us sleep for a short while in the grave. Subsequently, we shall live eternally in Heaven. Death then will have no power over us. In fact death does not kill us, and we become independent of death. It is death which itself dies.

Critical Appreciation

The poem is included as Sonnet X in the volume of *Holy Sonnets: Divine Meditations.* Donne blows up two popular concepts. Firstly death is dreadful and secondly death is powerful. He personifies Death and addresses him directly. Death has a certain power over man and it gives temporary sleep. If death and sleep are like brothers, greater rest and relaxation must come from death. Death releases the soul from the body's prison. Opium and narcotics can induce sleep like death. Why then should death boast of its great power? For that reason the poet calls it "Poor death". Moreover, man does not die; his soul lives forever; it is, therefore, death, which becomes superfluous and meaningless. The victory of Christian resurrection over death is the last nail in the coffin of death. The poem establishes the thesis that death is neither dreadful nor powerful.

Development of Thought

The poet puts forth the argument that death is not dreadful because those whom death claims to have killed have a long and peaceful sleep. Sleep resembles death, but just as sleep refreshes and rejuvenates, likewise death would provide more comfort and pleasure. This is the reason for the virtuous dying young. Death brings rest and peace and therefore it is not dreadful.

Death: A Miserable Slave

Death is not powerful, as men think. It is not a powerful king but a miserable and wretched slave. It is an agent of fate, chance, actions of wicked people, poison, wars and sickness. Death is a servant of sickness and old age. It brings sleep, but there are different other means like opium and drugs, which give a better and gentler sleep. Death has no reason to be proud. It can make people sleep for some time only. After sleep in the grave, people shall wake up on the day of resurrection and live eternally. Then death will have absolutely no power over human beings. Thus death's authority comes to an end. In fact, death does not kill human beings: it is death which itself dies. The immortality of the soul makes sure the survival of man. Thus, the poem ends on a paradox: Man is immortal death is mortal.

Critical Comments

Apart from the debating skill and the plausible argument of the poet, there is a

lurking fear of death. The allusion to resurrection and immortality does not in any way lessen the fear of death. One is reminded of Bacon's words: "Men fear death, as children fear to go in the dark". The analogies are common—death as sleep, death as opium, body as prison of the soul. This poem is similar to the sonnet entitled, *At the round earth's imagined corners,* where Donne speaks of death's woe, and the triumph of souls over death on Doomsday. Here Donne emphasizes the impotence of Death.

The structure of the poem makes easy the division of the theme into two parts. The octet proves that death is neither dreadful nor powerful. The sestet brings the argument to a personal level and regards death as a slave and a door through which the soul passes to immortality. The last line hits the nail on the head. It is not the poet who dies. He declares with joy: "Death, thou shall die."

The Blossom

Little think'st thou, poor flower,

Whom I have watched six or seven days,

And seven thy birth, and seen what every hour

Gave to thy gowth, thee to this height to raise,

And now dost laugh and triumph on his bough,

Little thin'st thou

That is will freeze anon, and that I shall

Tomorrow find the fall'n, or not at all.

Little think'st thou, poor heart

That labour'st yet to nestle thee,

And think'st by hovering here to get a part

In a forbidden or forbidding tree,

And hop'st her stiffness by long siege to bow:

Little think'st thou,

That thou tomorrow, ere that sun doth wake,

Must with this sun, and me a journey take.

Well then, stay here; but know,

When thou hast stayed and done thy most;

A naked thinking heart, that makes no show,

Is to a woman, but a kind of ghost;

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How shall she know my heart; or having none?

Know thee for one?

Practice may make her know some other part,

But take my word; she doth not know a heart.

Meet me at London, then,

Twenty days hence, and thou shall see

Me fresher, and more fat, by being with men,

Than if I had stayed still with here and thee.

For God's sake, if you can, be you so too'

I would give you

There, to another friend, whom we shall find

As glad to have my body, as my mind.

Paraphrase

The poem is addressed by the poet to his lady friend Mrs M. Herbert.

Stanza 1. O my poor flower, I have been watching your beauty for the last six or seven days. I have seen beauty at your birth and it has continued to grow with each passing day. Now you are cheerful like a beautiful flower in bloom on its stem. You do not realize that your beauty is short-lived. Your beauty will be ruined like a flower by frost. Your beauty will decay like petals of a full-grown flower.

Stanza 2. Oh my heart, it is futile to go near the heart of the beloved in order to find a place in it. Her heart is like the "forbidden tree" because she (Mrs. Herbert) is the wife of another man and she is like a "forbidden tree" as she has rejected my love. It is no use prolonging the siege by continuous persistence in love, because she is very stubborn. Tomorrow before my beloved is awakened, I shall start my journey and my heart will go with me (The poet is to leave London and stay abroad for twenty days).

Stanza 3. (The poet's heart now replies to him). The poet's heart tells him that if he (poet) goes away how does it make any difference to her. The heart will stay behind to continue its love-making. The poet may go and see his new friends who will provide him new joy. His physical senses would be completely satisfied in his new surroundings. His body will go with him, but not his heart, which stays behind.

Stanza 4. Let my heart, stay here with her and continue love making to my beloved. Even after it (heart) has put in its best efforts, it will not be successful in winning the love of my beloved. She will think of my "thinking heart" as a ghost, as an object of fear rather than love. As she has no heart she will not be able to appreciate the devotion of my heart. Through experiences, she may recognize other parts of the body, but she cannot recognize my heart. As such, it will be futile for my heart to stay here with my beloved.

Stanza 5. As my heart is not willing to go with me, let it meet me after twenty days when I return to London. My heart will on my return find that I have grown fresher and fatter by staying with my friends abroad. If my heart wants to be happy, I may be prepared to give it to another friend (some lady) who will be pleased to have both my body and mind (the poet is willing to give his body and mind to a woman who enjoys the physical side of love).

Critical Appreciation

This poem is most likely addressed by the poet to his patroness Mrs. M. Herbert. He had a great devotion to the lady because she had helped him in the hour of distress. The poet expresses the love in a Petrarchan manner and also

criticizes the insufficiency of such a love. The appeal of the poem is to be found in the dialogue between the poet and his heart, which wishes to stay behind with the beloved during the period of his visit abroad. There is a "certain tender playful tenderness" in the poem showing that love consists in the union of the body and the mind. The poet plays with the usual Petrarchan images, i.e. blossom, flower, heart, but the personal devotion needs to be compensated with some vital and physical experience with the lady. Although the lover is devoted and constant, the beloved is obviously cold and unresponsive. Donne would not be satisfied with a distant friendship, and would like to get closer to the lady. This Platonic love needs a physical base so as to be completely satisfying. The comparison of the beloved to the "poor flower" is fitting because it echoes the fleeting nature of beauty, youth and love. The blossom refers to the youth and the charm of the beloved. But this blossom will freeze up and die and as such his love will not find fulfillment. The temporary absence of the lover from the beloved to enjoy his twenty days outside London may have a reference to Anne More, the poet's wife who shall accompany him on his tour and have both the poet's body and mind.

Development of Thought

The poet addresses his beloved, whom he has been watching and he is pleased with her development and growth for the last few days. She is now full-grown and looks proud and beautiful like a flower standing on its stalk. The poet calls her a 'poor flower' because her beauty is transient like that of a flower blasted by snow**.** After a short while, he will find her beauty decaying and her youth will come to an end like a flower, which withers and falls to the ground.

The Poet's Devotion

The poet addresses his heart and declares that it is useless for the heart to pursue the beloved with affection. The lady will not make any favourable response to his heart because she is a "forbidden tree"- a lady married to another man (Herbert). She is also the "forbidden tree" because she has already discarded the advances of the poet. It is almost impossible to overcome her resistance by persistent persuasion. Tomorrow, the poet will start on his journey and his heart will accompany him. The heart replies that it will stay with the beloved, though the poet may go outside London. It will continue making love to the beloved. The poet will not miss his heart because his friend will provide him with physical satisfaction. His body will go with him and will have no need of the heart.

The Heart Stays Behind

The poet lets his heart stay with his beloved. He knows full well that the beloved will not be content with a simple heart. That is an object of fear like a ghost, but will surely need sexual satisfaction. A woman cannot value a lover's heart because she has no heart. It will, therefore, be a waste of time for his heart to stay behind. The poet asks the heart, therefore, to stay in London and meet him after twenty days. On his return, the heart would find that he has become fresher and fatter than before. He would prefer to leave his heart with friends who would want both his body and his mind. Possibly he would like to leave his heart with his wife Anne More. The poet feels that proper love-relationship is both of the body and the mind.

Critical Comments

The poem has a dramatic structure. It consists dialogue between the poet and his heart. The word "Thou" has two meanings. The first "Thou" refers to the beloved, the second "Thou" refers to the poet's heart. Donne observes a sort of detachment, keeping the heart at distance. The Petrarchan doting of the heart on the beloved is ridiculed by the poet. If at all the heart has to stay back let it stay with a woman (the poet's wife) who welcomes both his body and his mind.

In the poem, imagery has been employed in a very skillful manner. Obviously, there are the usual Petrarchan images—the poor flower, the bird in the nest, and the courtship like a siege of the "forbidden or forbidding tree." Another interesting analogy is that of the heart to a ghost, which will scare the body away. The pun on sun (beloved) and heart needs to be taken into account. On the whole, this poem has psychological interest and a dramatization of a piquant situation in the poet's life. In the end the conflict between the heart and the poet's self remains unsolved.

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Lines 9-16. *Little think'st thou……journey take*.

Explanation: These lines have been taken from the poem *The Blossome* by John Donne.

Donne addressees his beloved in the Petrarchan convention. She is portrayed as a proud and scornful mistress who has repulsed the advances of the poet and treated him roughly. The poet addresses her as flower and asserts that he has been watching the growth of her youth for some time past. But soon her beauty would fade like the petals of a full-grown flower.

The poet says that his heart uselessly hovers round his beloved. He resolves to leave his cruel mistress and seek some other friend. He advises the heart to come with him and grow fat with him by enjoying the pleasures of real love. But the heart stays behind and hopes to win the favour of the beloved by continuous devotion and love-making. It desires to make love to a woman who is already married. But she has rejected the advances of the poet and is a forbidden tree. It is a waste of time to remove the stiffness of his beloved. The poet will start on his journey the next morning and the heart must accompany him.

Lines 1-4. *Death, be not proud……canst thou kill mee.*

Explanation: These lines have been taken from the sonnet 'Death, Be not Proud' by John Donne. In these lines the poet directly addressed death and speaks to it as if it were a person.

The poet asks death not to be proud of itself. He says that death is not powerful and frightening, as some people have called it. Only some people regard death as mighty and dreadful while many others including the poet do not regard it to be so. After the basic statement that death is neither powerful not frightening the poet gives the ingenious argument why death is not so. His argument is that those whom death thinks it has killed do not really die, and death cannot kill the poet either. Thus the poet feels sorry for death in its helplessness to kill and calls it poor death ironically. The poet challenges the very basis of the strength of death, i.e. power to kill and in a way, laughs at his helplessness.

Lines 9-12. *Thou art slave to Fate,……..why swell'st thou then.*

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Explanation: These lines have been taken from the sonnet 'Death, Be not Proud' by John Donne. In these lines John Donne begins the direct attack on death to destroy its residual importance. By this time Donne has succeeded in proving that death is not frightening. Death does not really kill anyone. It is endless rest that gives much pleasure and joy to the people. These lines show that death is only a slave for it comes when men or fate or chance summons it. It cannot come on its own accord.

The poet says that Death is not a mighty despot but a petty servant to obnoxious persons. Death can be ceased by fate or accidents. Kings can condemn men to die. Desperate men like robbers and murderers can kill people. Furthermore, death keeps the bad company of poison, war and sickness which are instruments of death. Donne further lessens the importance of death. He says that what death can do is to make us sleep; and this job can be done better by opium and charms like lullabies etc. Therefore, there is no reason for death to be so proud of itself.

2.2 COMPREHENSION EXERCISES

1. Give a general estimate of Donne as a poet.
2. Write a brief essay on John Donne as a Metaphysical Poet.
3. Discuss merits and demerits of Donne as a poet.
4. Critically examine Donne as a Love Poet.
5. Write an essay on John Donne's Language, Diction, and Versification

2.3 LET US SUM UP

Having completed Unit II, you have become completely familiar with another great poet of his times— John Donne. You can easily speak on his life and also be able to do critical analysis of some of his select poems—A Lecture upon the Shadow, Love's Deity, The Good Morrow, Death Be not Proud, and The Blossom.

UNIT-III FRANCIS BACON, JOHN DRYDEN

Structure

3.0 Objectives

3.1 FRANCIS BACON

3.1.1 Of Truth

3.1.2 Of Great Place

3.1.3 Of Studies

3.1.4 Of Delays

3.1.5 Of Friendship

3.1.6 Essays group themselves round three great principles

3.1.7 Some Important Explanations

3.2 JOHN DRYDEN

3.2.1 Mac Flecknoe

3.2.2 The Outline

3.3 Comprehension Exercises

3.4 Let Us Sum Up

3.0 OBJECTIVES

In Unit III we have selected Francis Bacon and John Dryden. Our objective is to familiarize you with their life and some of their select works. We have selected some of Bacon's more popular essays — Of Truth, Of Great Place,

Of Studies, Of Delay, and Of Friendship — and also John Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe* for critical analysis. You will be able to:

- Talk about thee great men of letters and their work.
- Summarize their works.
- Critically appreciate these works.

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3.1 FRANCIS BACON

Birth and Parentage

Francis Bacon has been called as "The Father of English Essay" and in Pope's well-known words, "the wisest, brightest, and meanest of Mankind." He was born in London on the 22nd of January 1561. He was the son of Sir Nicolas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal and Chief Legal Minister to Elizabeth. His mother Anne, the second wife of Sir Nicolas Bacon, was the daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke, a tutor to King Edward VI. He was the youngest of eight children -- six by his father's first marriage, and one full brother with whom he was closely associated in his boyhood. His mother was a theological (religious) lady and all the knowledge and all the philosophy that Bacon possessed or produced was due to her influence.

His Education

At an early age of twelve years, Francis and his brother had entered as fellow-commoners at Trinity College, Cambridge, and at the end of two years Francis returned to London and started to study law. In 1576 he went to English Embassy in Paris. Bacon, who was then sixteen, remained in France for around two years. He was only nineteen when his father suddenly died. This necessitated Bacon to leave France who at once decided on his future profession. He went for Law, much against his inclination, and began his studies at once at Gray's inn although his whole nature was craving for the attraction of literature and philosophy.

His Career

In 1582 Bacon was called to Bar and elected a bencher of his inn. He looked in vain to his uncle Lord Burghley, to aid him to obtain one of the most well-paid posts. So when he was twenty-three he turned his thought to Parliament. Here Burghley helped to secure for Bacon a seat in the House of Commons as member for Melcombe Regis. Then he set for Tauton, and in 1592 he represented Middlesex. He soon became a prominent member of the House. On one occasion he managed to give offence to the Queen by opposing a great demand by the

Government. Disillusioned in his hopes of promotion, he detached himself from Lord Burghley and powerfully supported the policy of Earl of Essex, who presented him with large property, at Twickenham. On the downfall of Essex, it was, however, Bacon who pressed the evidence at his trial into a course which meant conviction of his friend. This deceit and meanness of Bacon's is hard to understand and harder to forgive. His whole mind was given up to self-advancement and anyone standing up in the way of this realisation must go.

His Prosperity

He was knighted in 1603, became Solicitor-General in 1607 and in 1613 Attorney General. At the age of forty-five he became Solicitor General. Bacon married Alica Barnham, the daughter of a rich London merchant. As a clerk of the Star Chamber, he brought in yearly a large amount of money. After his marriage he spent a huge amount on Verulum House, near St. Albans.

Bacon had no children. But he still flattered King James and his favourite Buckingham in hope of becoming prosperous. The moment the office of Lord Keeper became vacant in 1617, Buckingham helped him. So in the January of the next year he became Lord Chancellor. In six months he was made Bacon Verulum and Viscount St. Albans in 1621.

His Downfall

The year that placed him upon a pinnacle of his ambitions was the year in which his downfall began. His great position as Lord Chancellor was greatly misused. Buckingham constantly required him to favour his friend. Bacon accepted bribes and presents and was obviously dealing unfairly. He was accused and was found guilty of corruption. As a punishment he was ordered to give up all offices of the states, a life imprisonment in the Tower, and to pay a fine of forty thousand pounds. The King gave him his freedom the next day, and allowed the fine to go unpaid.

His Last Years

Now he retired in disgrace to his country residence near St. Albans. His small private fortune, together with a pension of one thousand two hundred a year still remained to him.

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From this time onwards till the end of his days, literature and science held him. Despite his busy life he never neglected the studies.

His Death

Five years later on April 9, Bacon died at the age of sixty-five. He caught cold while stuffing the body of a freshly killed bird with ice to see how long ice could preserve the flesh from decay. This experiment cost him his life, and he was buried at St. Michael's Church, St. Albans.

3.1.1 OF TRUTH

Of Truth

What is truth? said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer. Certainly there be, that delight in giddiness, and count it a bondage to fix a belief; affecting free-will in thinking, as well as in acting. And though the sects of philosophers of that kind be gone, yet there remain certain discoursing wits, which are of the same veins, though there be not so much blood in them, as was in those of the ancients. But it is not only the difficulty and labor, which men take in finding out of truth, nor again, that when it is found, it imposeth upon men's thoughts, that doth bring lies in favor; but a natural though corrupt love, of the lie itself. One of the later school of the Grecians, examineth the matter, and is at a stand, to think what should be in it, that men should love lies; where neither they make for pleasure, as with poets, nor for advantage, as with the merchant; but for the lie's sake. But I cannot tell; this same truth, is a naked, and open day-light, that doth not show the masks, and mummeries, and triumphs, of the world, half so stately and daintily as candle-lights. Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that showeth best by day; but it will not rise to the price of a diamond, or carbuncle, that showeth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt, that if there were taken out of men's minds, vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds, of a number of men, poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves? One of the

fathers, in great severity, called poesy *vinum doemonum,* because it filleth the imagination; and yet, it is but with the shadow of a lie. But it is not the lie that passeth through the mind, but the lie that sinketh in, and settleth in it, that doth the hurt; such as we spake of before. But, howsoever these things are thus in men's depraved judgments, and affections, yet truth, which only doth judge itself, teacheth that the inquiry of truth, which is the love-making, or wooing of it, the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature. The first creature of God, in the works of the days, was the light of the sense; the last, was the light of reason; and his sabbath work ever since, is the illumination of his Spirit. First he breathed light, upon the face of the matter or chaos; then he breathed light, into the face of man; and still he breatheth and inspireth light, into the face of his chosen. The poet, that beautified the sect, that was otherwise inferior to the rest, saith yet excellently well: *It is a pleasure, to stand upon the shore, and to see ships tossed upon the sea; a pleasure, to 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 air is always clear and serene), *and to see the errors, and wanderings, and mists, and tempests, in the vale below:* so always that this prospect be with pity, and not with swelling, or pride. Certainly, it is heaven upon earth, to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth. To pass from theological, and philosophical truth, to the truth of civil business; it will be acknowledged, even by those that practise it not, that clear, and round dealing, is the honor of man's nature; and that mixture of falsehoods, is like alloy in coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better, but it embaseth it. For these winding, and crooked courses, are the goings of the serpent; which goeth basely upon the belly, and not upon the feet. There is no vice, that doth so cover a man with shame, as to be found false and perfidious. And therefore Montaigny saith prettily, when he inquired the reason, why the word of the lie should be such a disgrace, and such an odious charge? Saith he, *If it be well weighed, to say that a man lieth, is as much to say, as that he is brave towards God, and a coward towards men.* For a lie faces God, and shrinks from man. Surely the wickedness of falsehood, and breach of faith, cannot possibly be so highly expressed, as in that it shall be the last peal, to call the judgments of God upon the generations of men; it being foretold, that when Christ cometh, *he shall not find faith upon the earth.*

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Summary

Pilate was the Governor of Judaea. He was not much interested in the expression of truth. He had a sceptical frame of mind. Some people frequently change their views. They consider fixed beliefs as a sign of mental weakness. They express free will in thoughts and actions. There was a school of philosophers in ancient Greece which was called the 'Sceptics'. They believed that whatever a man was inclined to accept was true. Sceptical persons keep changing their beliefs.

A lot of time and labour is vital to discover a truth. It acts as a kind of check upon the minds of the men. A person cannot change his belief according to his whim. People are attracted easily by lies. Poets tell a lie in their poetry and it is a source of great pleasure. Traders gain financial gain by telling lies.

Truth is like the clear day light which makes the things crystal clear. Lies are like candle-lights, in them the spectacle appears good-looking. Then a lie is added to truth, it gives greater pleasure. A man becomes unhappy if he is deprived of his false opinions, false hopes and judgements. But falsehood gives people a strange kind of pleasure.

A writer of the church considers poetry as the wine of devils. Poetry contains fair lies which are received in the mind and do not settle there. Those lies which sink into the mind and settle there, impart greater charm. Those who may understand the truth make the best use of it. Truth is a blessing to human beings. The inquiry of truth is the wooing of it, the knowledge of truth is the presence of it, and belief of truth is the enjoyment of it.

God first created light. After that he created natural faculty which was bestowed upon man. He has been illuminating the minds of men with His divine spirit. He created light upon matter and then breathed light into the faces of man. He has been breathing light into the face of his chosen people who desire his special favour. The poet Lucretius said that the greatest pleasure for a human being is the recognition of truth. A man standing upon the vantage ground of truth may survey the errors, follies and lies and this act would fill his mind with pity. Truth is important in theological, philosophical, and ordinary fields. Even liars realize that honest and fair dealings impart dignity and honour to man. Due to

necessities for practical life, men apply a mixture of truth and falsehood. But falsehood lowers and degrades a man.

Montaigne said, "In telling a lie, a man becomes brave towards God, but a coward to his fellow men." Falsehood makes a man, wicked and cheat. On the doomsday when a trumpet would blow to announce the judgment of God upon human beings, the wrong doers would be punished as a consequence of their deeds in life.

3.1.2 OF GREAT PLACE

Of Great Place

Men in great place are thrice servants: servants of the sovereign or state; servants of fame; and servants of business. So as they have no freedom; neither in their persons, nor in their actions, nor in their times. It is a strange desire, to seek power and to lose liberty: or to seek power over others, and to lose power over a man's self. The rising unto place is laborious; and by pains, men come to greater pains; and it is sometimes base; and by indignities, men come to dignities. The standing is slippery, and the regress is either a downfall, or at least an eclipse, which is a melancholy thing. *Cum non sis qui fueris, non esse cur velis vivere.* Nay, retire men cannot when they would, neither will they, when it were reason; but are impatient of privateness, even in age and sickness, which require the shadow; like old townsmen, that will be still sitting at their street door, though thereby they offer age to scorn. Certainly great persons had need to borrow other men's opinions, to think themselves happy; for if they judge by their own feeling, they cannot find it; but if they think with themselves, what other men think of them, and that other men would fain be, as they are, then they are happy, as it were, by report; when perhaps they find the contrary within. For they are the first, that find their own griefs, though they be the last, that find their own faults. Certainly men in great fortunes are strangers to themselves, and while they are in the puzzle of business, they have no time to tend their health, either of body or mind. *Illi mors gravis incubat, qui notus nimis omnibus, ignotus moritur sibi.* In place, there is license to do good, and evil; whereof the latter is a curse: for in evil the best condition is not to will; the second, not to can. But power to do good, is

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the true and lawful end of aspiring. For good thoughts (though God accept them) yet, towards men, are little better than good dreams, except they be put in act; and that cannot be, without power and place, as the vantage, and commanding ground. Merit and good works, is the end of man's motion; and conscience of the same is the accomplishment of man's rest. For if a man can be partaker of God's theatre, he shall likewise be partaker of God's rest. *Et conversus Deus, ut aspiceret opera quæ fecerunt manus suæ, vidit quod omnia essent bona nimis;* and then the sabbath. In the discharge of thy place, set before thee the best examples; for imitation is a globe of precepts. And after a time, set before thee thine own example; and examine thyself strictly, whether thou didst not best at first. Neglect not also the examples, of those that have carried themselves ill, in the same place; not to set off thyself, by taxing their memory, but to direct thyself, what to avoid. Reform therefore, without bravery, or scandal of former times and persons; but yet set it down to thyself, as well to create good precedents, as to follow them. Reduce things to the first institution, and observe wherein, and how, they have degenerate; but yet ask counsel of both times; of the ancient time, what is best; and of the latter time, what is fittest. Seek to make thy course regular, that men may know beforehand, what they may expect; but be not too positive and peremptory; and express thyself well, when thou digressest from thy rule. Preserve the right of thy place; but stir not questions of jurisdiction; and rather assume thy right, in silence and *de facto,* than voice it with claims, and challenges. Preserve likewise the rights of inferior places; and think it more honor, to direct in chief, than to be busy in all. Embrace and invite helps, and advices, touching the execution of thy place; and do not drive away such, as bring thee information, as meddlers; but accept of them in good part. The vices of authority are chiefly four: delays, corruption, roughness, and facility. For delays: give easy access; keep times appointed; go through with that which is in hand, and interlace not business, but of necessity. For corruption: do not only bind thine own hands, or, thy servants' hands, from taking, but bind the hands of suitors also, from offering. For integrity used doth the one; but integrity professed, and with a manifest detestation of bribery, doth the other. And avoid not only the fault, but the suspicion. Whosoever is found variable, and changeth manifestly without manifest cause, giveth suspicion of corruption. Therefore always, when thou changest thine opinion or course, profess it plainly, and declare it, together with the reasons that move thee to change; and do not think to steal it. A servant or a favorite, if he be inward, and no other apparent cause of esteem, is commonly

thought, but a by-way to close corruption. For roughness: it is a needless cause of discontent: severity breedeth fear, but roughness breedeth hate. Even reproofs from authority, ought to be grave, and not taunting. As for facility: it is worse than bribery. For bribes come but now and then; but if importunity, or idle respects, lead a man, he shall never be without. As Salomon saith, *To respect persons is not good; for such a man will transgress for a piece of bread.* It is most true, that was anciently spoken, *A place showeth the man:* and it showeth some to the better, and some to the worse. *Omnium consensu capax imperii, nisi imperasset,* saith Tacitus of Galba; but of Vespasian he saith, *Solus imperantium, Vespasianus mutatus in melius:* though the one was meant of sufficiency, the other of manners, and affection. It is an assured sign of a worthy and generous spirit, whom honor amends. For honor is, or should be, the place of virtue and as in nature, things move violently to their place, and calmly in their place, so virtue in ambition is violent, in authority settled and calm. All rising to great place is by a winding star; and if there be factions, it is good to side a man's self, whilst he is in the rising, and to balance himself when he is placed. Use the memory of thy predecessor, fairly and tenderly; for if thou dost not, it is a debt will sure be paid when thou art gone. If thou have colleagues, respect them, and rather call them, when they look not for it, than exclude them, when they have reason to look to be called. Be not too sensible, or too remembering, of thy place in conversation, and private answers to suitors; but let it rather be said, *When he sits in place, he is another man.*

Summary

In this essay Bacon says that men in higher positions are thrice servants, i.e. servants of the state, of fame, and of business. Thus they don't enjoy any freedom, i.e. neither in their persons, nor in their actions, nor in their times. Thus these people have a desire to seek power and to lose liberty. In this manner they gain control over the lives of other people but lose hold on their own selves. They take great pains to reach to higher positions, and further come to greater troubles or pains. They reach these positions of dignity and respect after suffering a lot of humiliations and indignities. These high positions are very slippery and they do on occasions suffer a downfall or at least temporary eclipse, which for them is a cause of great sorrow and suffering.

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For staying happy they have to be dependent on other people's opinions, as they don't have a positive opinion of their own lot. They are in such positions, which makes them habitual to other people's opinions through praise and flattery. Thus these men in great fortunes are strangers to themselves, and while they are busy in their business, they have no time to take care of their health, either of the body or mind. In place, there is freedom to do good, and evil, but the latter is a curse. But power to do good is the true and lawful end of aspiring for higher positions of dignity. For doing good is not an easy task, as the same is only a bit possible through positions of power and place, as they work as the vantage and commanding ground. Merit and good work should be the aim of a man's work; and conscience of the same is the achievement of man's rest. If a man is dutiful towards the task he has been assigned, he will certainly be at rest when he grows old or is retired.

While discharging one's duties one should always keep before him the best examples. When one becomes confident that he is discharging his duties in the best possible way, then he should set his own example in his mind, and see to his own conduct strictly. One should not forget those who did not or could not discharge their duties properly, but learn from those examples as to what one should avoid in that position. Keeping those former examples, he should not only reform himself and the system, but also set good precedents to be followed by the later officials. Bacon says in the essay that the official should reduce things to the first institution, and see where the degeneration has set in to rectify the same as per what is fittest in the times and circumstances. The system should be regularized so that people should be able to know beforehand as to what they can expect. If the official digresses he should have reasons enough for his conduct. One should protect one's right and position and not be too lax, but he should also not raise unnecessary questions regarding his jurisdiction. One should not create a situation wherein is raised hue and cry over claims and challenges.

Likewise the rights of inferior places also need to be preserved. He should behave like a chief and not involve in things small or trivial for his position. He can also seek counsel and consider it nothing derogatory to his position. He can welcome information and not discourage it, as it will help in better discharge of his duties. The vices of authority are chiefly four: delays, corruption, roughness, and facility. To avoid delays, people should have easy access. The officer must keep appointments, and be punctilious about time. He should not indulge in

procrastination. To check corruption he should not only avoid taking bribes and ask others in his office to do likewise, but also bind the hands of suitors also, from offering. Whatever decision the official takes he should have sufficient reasons for the same as he will have to defend himself before the people, or they will consider it as corruption. Roughness in behaviour or one's conduct should be avoided. Harshness or strictness gives rise to fear, but rough conduct in one nature or business gives rise to hatred. Even criticism and reprimand from authority, ought to be serious or severe, and not taunting. Bacon considers facility worse than bribery. Because bribes come but now and then, but if the official is given to importunity, or idle respects, he shall never be without these, and thus become degenerate. Bacons quotes Solomon as saying, "To respect persons is not good; for such a man will transgress for a piece of bread." Solomon made an apt remark. In Bacon's views, a position of authority shows the kind of man he is. Either the man proves himself worthy of it or better or not worthy at all. If a man is honoured with higher positions it is sure sign of being a good or virtuous official and proves him to be a worthy and generous spirit. Just as in nature, things move aggressively and fiercely to their place, and stay calmly in their place, similarly one is or can be aggressive or fierce while aspiring for a higher post, but should remain calm and settled when reaching that high place.

When one is aspiring for a higher position, one should never side with any group or faction, while one can balance oneself impartially after one has acquired that position. The official should not or must not criticize the functioning or conduct of the predecessor, rather he should speak of it fairly and tenderly, for if he does not do so, he will surely have to pay in the same coin when he is gone. The official should have respect for his colleagues, and should call them when they expect to be called or invited. In a nutshell they must not be ignored and made to feel that they are unimportant. Bacon gives the counsel that the official should not be conscious of his high position while conversing with people or others. His conduct in public and private sphere should be such that people say of him, "When he sits in place, he is another man."

Critical Appreciation

The essay *Of Great Place* reveals Bacon's practical ideas about high places in life. It is a useful and enlightening piece of composition for the aspirants to the position of honour, influence, authority and power.

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Bacon was a shrewd observer of life. His observant and analytical intellect assimilates the observations and lessons which find expression in his essays. His analysis of problems is systematic, accurate and persuasive, supported as it is, by precepts and examples gained from experience.

The essay is rich in Bacon's practical experience regarding public life. The very opening of the essay is the gist of his life's experience. Bacon is not against the use of crooked methods in gaining a high position. But he does not ignore the moral side when he says that the position should be used or the good of the people. He is a highly critical of certain faults of people occupying high positions, which in his opinion should be avoided.

Thus, the essay is full of practical wisdom. Bacon's method is systematic and convincing. He drives his point home with the help of apt similes and metaphors and maxims as well. He offers the readers everything he has on this matter. His essay is marked with simplicity and clarity of expression. Though, the sentences are customarily loaded with compressed meaning, there is no obscurity. Of course, there is also a frequent use of allusions and quotations.

3.1.3 OF STUDIES

Of Studies

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight, is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment, and disposition of business. For expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best, from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humor of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need proyning, by study; and studies themselves, do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation.

Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books, else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit: and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know, that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtile; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend. *Abeunt studia in mores.* Nay, there is no stond or impediment in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies; like as diseases of the body, may have appropriate exercises. Bowling is good for the stone and reins; shooting for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for the head; and the like. So if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again. If his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the schoolmen; for they are *cymini sectores:* if he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases. So every defect of the mind, may have a special receipt.

Summary

Studies have an ornamental value. They impart pleasure to a man and increase his ability. A man in solitude can enjoy the pleasures of studies. It helps a man to become a good talker. A well-learned man can handle his business matter efficiently. It makes a man lazy who spends too much time in studies. To make an ample use of reading for conversation is a vain display of learning.

The peculiarity of a scholar can be seen in his habit of abiding by rules read in books and making judgments according to it. A man's natural ability attains perfection by studies. Studies must follow practical experience to make them useful in life. Cunning men do no approve of studies, simple men admire them and wise men make the most of them. It is not good to indulge in studies to

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contradict others. He should judge the value of the books he reads. Some books should be read in parts, some quickly and hastily. It is difficult for a scholar to get satisfied by going through the synopsis of a great book.

3.1.4 OF DELAYS

Of Delays

Fortune is like the market; where many times if you can stay a little, the price will fall. Again, it is sometimes like Sibylla's offer; which at first, offereth the commodity at full, then consumeth part and part, and still holdeth up the price. For *Occasion* (as it is in the common verse) *turneth a bald noddle, after she hath presented her locks in front, and no hold taken;* or at least turneth the handle of the bottle, first to be received, and after the belly, which is hard to clasp. There is surely no greater wisdom, than well to time the beginnings, and onsets, of things. Dangers are no more light, if they once seem light; and more dangers have deceived men, than forced them. Nay, it were better, to meet some dangers half way, though they come nothing near, than to keep too long a watch upon their approaches; for if a man watch too long, it is odds he will fall asleep. On the other side, to be deceived with too long shadows (as some have been, when the moon was low, and shone on their enemies' back), and so to shoot off before the time; or to teach dangers to come on, by over early buckling towards them; is another extreme. The ripeness, or unripeness, of the occasion (as we said) must ever be well weighed; and generally it is good, to commit the beginnings of an great actions to Argus, with his hundred eyes, and the ends to Briareus, with his hundred hands; first to watch, and then to speed. For the helmet of Pluto, which maketh the politic man go invisible, is secrecy in the counsel, and celerity in the execution. For when things are once come to the execution, there is no secrecy, comparable to celerity; like the motion of a bullet in the air, which flieth so swift, as it outruns the eye.

Summary

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Delay is both advantageous and disadvantageous. It is necessary to know about the limits of delay. A wise person should know how long he can postpone the execution of a particular action. He should know that if he is not prepared to face the danger, it appears more frightening than it actually is. On the other hand, over-enthusiasm is also not advisable, as it may lead to greater dangers. Caution, discretion and equanimity are necessary to meet the dangers. Dangers should be nipped in he bud before they assume formidable proportions. It is wise to conserve energy to cope with the probable dangers without getting over-excited. Therefore, a person should remain calm and discreet in taking remedial measures. For politicians, he gives the advice that they should keep their plans secret. In the execution of their plans they should maintain speed because speed helps secrecy.

Critical Appreciation

The essay entitled *Of Delays* is representative of Bacon's genius. Bacon the great Elizabethan essayist was a great genius. He is called the Father of the English Essay because Bacon enriched its scope and form. His essays are full of his encyclopaedic knowledge. He was a great thinker, philosopher, a statesman, administrator, Parliamentarian, an experimental scientist and an effective orator. Hence his essays are a storehouse of practical wisdom.

The essay *Of Delays* tells about Bacon's great practical wisdom. It deals with such day-to-day aspects of human life making delay in taking prompt action. He speaks intelligently about delays in doing things. In the very opening of the essay he suggests: "Fortune is like the market; where many times, if you can stay a little, the price will fall." Again he offers a very practical advice: "There is surely no greater wisdom than well to time the beginnings and the onsets of things."

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Of Friendship

It had been hard for him that spake it to have put more truth and untruth together in few words, than in that speech, *Whosoever is delighted in solitude, is either a wild beast or a god.* For it is most true, that a natural and secret hatred, and aversation towards society, in any man, hath somewhat of the savage beast; but it is most untrue, that it should have any character at all, of the divine nature; except it proceed, not out of a pleasure in solitude, but out of a love and desire to sequester a man's self, for a higher conversation: such as is found to have been falsely and feignedly in some of the heathen; as Epimenides the Candian, Numa the Roman, Empedocles the Sicilian, and Apollonius of Tyana; and truly and really, in divers of the ancient hermits and holy fathers of the church. But little do men perceive what solitude is, and how far it extendeth. For a crowd is not company; and faces are but a gallery of pictures; and talk but a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love. The Latin adage meeteth with it a little: *Magna civitas, magna solitudo;* because in a great town friends are scattered; so that there is not that fellowship, for the most part, which is in less neighborhoods. But we may go further, and affirm most truly, that it is a mere and miserable solitude to want true friends; without which the world is but a wilderness; and even in this sense also of solitude, whosoever in the frame of his nature and affections, is unfit for friendship, he taketh it of the beast, and not from humanity.

A principal fruit of friendship, is the ease and discharge of the fulness and swellings of the heart, which passions of all kinds do cause and induce. We know diseases of stoppings, and suffocations, are the most dangerous in the body; and it is not much otherwise in the mind; you may take sarza to open the liver, steel to open the spleen, flowers of sulphur for the lungs, castoreum for the brain; but no receipt openeth the heart, but a true friend; to whom you may impart griefs, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, counsels, and whatsoever lieth upon the heart to oppress it, in a kind of civil shrift or confession.

It is a strange thing to observe, how high a rate great kings and monarchs do set upon this fruit of friendship, whereof we speak: so great, as they purchase it, many times, at the hazard of their own safety and greatness. For princes, in

regard of the distance of their fortune from that of their subjects and servants, cannot gather this fruit, except (to make themselves capable thereof) they raise some persons to be, as it were, companions and almost equals to themselves, which many times sorteth to inconvenience. The modern languages give unto such persons the name of *favorites,* or *privadoes;* as if it were matter of grace, or conversation. But the Roman name attaineth the true use and cause thereof, naming them *participes curarum;* for it is that which tieth the knot. And we see plainly that this hath been done, not by weak and passionate princes only, but by the wisest and most politic that ever reigned; who have oftentimes joined to themselves some of their servants; whom both themselves have called friends, and allowed other likewise to call them in the same manner; using the word which is received between private men.

L. Sylla, when he commanded Rome, raised Pompey (after surnamed the Great) to that height, that Pompey vaunted himself for Sylla's overmatch. For when he had carried the consulship for a friend of his, against the pursuit of Sylla, and that Sylla did a little resent thereat, and began to speak great, Pompey turned upon him again, and in effect bade him be quiet; *for that more men adored the sun rising than the sun setting.* With Julius Cæsar, Decimus Brutus had obtained that interest, as he set him down, in his testament, for heir in remainder, after his nephew. And this was the man that had power with him, to draw him forth to his death. For when Cæsar would have discharged the senate, in regard of some ill presages, and specially a dream of Calpurnia; this man lifted him gently by the arm out of his chair, telling him he hoped he would not dismiss the senate, till his wife had dreamt a better dream. And it seemeth his favor was so great, as Antonius, in a letter which is recited *verbatim* in one of Cicero's *Philippics,* calleth him venefica, witch; as if he had enchanted Cæsar. Augustus raised Agrippa (though of mean birth) to that height, as when he consulted with Mæcenas, about the marriage of his daughter Julia, Mæcenas took the liberty to tell him, *that he must either marry his daughter to Agrippa, or take away his life; there was no third way, he had made him so great.* With Tiberius Cæsar, Sejanus had ascended to that height, as they two were termed, and reckoned, as a pair of friends. Tiberius in a letter to him saith, *Hæc pro amicitia nostra non occultavi;* and the whole senate dedicated an altar to Friendship, as to a goddess, in respect of the great dearness of friendship, between them two. The like, or more, was between Septimius Severus and Plautianus. For he forced his eldest son to marry

the daughter of Plautianus; and would often maintain Plautianus, in doing affronts to his son; and did write also in a letter to the senate, by these words: *I love the man so well, as I wish he may over-live me.* Now if these princes had been as a Trajan, or a Marcus Aurelius, a man might have thought that this had proceeded of an abundant goodness of nature; but being men so wise, of such strength and severity of mind, and so extreme lovers of themselves, as all these were, it proveth most plainly that they found their own felicity (though as great as ever happened to mortal men) but as an half piece, except they mought have a friend, to make it entire; and yet, which is more, they were princes that had wives, sons, nephews; and yet all these could not supply the comfort of friendship.

It is not to be forgotten, what Comineus observeth of his first master, Duke Charles the Hardy, namely, that he would communicate his secrets with none; and least of all, those secrets which troubled him most. Whereupon he goeth on, and saith *that towards his latter time, that closeness did impair, and a little perish his understanding.* Surely Comineus mought have made the same judgment also, if it had pleased him, of his second master, Lewis the Eleventh, whose closeness was indeed his tormentor. The parable of Pythagoras is dark, but true; *Cor ne edito,* 'Eat not the heart.' Certainly if a man would give it a hard phrase, those that want friends, to open themselves unto are cannibals of their own hearts. But one thing is most admirable (wherewith I will conclude this first fruit of friendship), which is, that this communicating of a man's self to his friend, works two contrary effects; for it redoubleth joys, and cutteth griefs in halves. For there is no man, that imparteth his joys to his friend, but he joyeth the more; and no man that imparteth his griefs to his friend, but he grieveth the less. So that it is in truth, of operation upon a man's mind, of like virtue as the alchemists use to attribute to their stone, for man's body; that it worketh all contrary effects, but still to the good and benefit of nature. But yet without praying in aid of alchemists, there is a manifest image of this, in the ordinary course of nature. For in bodies, union strengtheneth and cherisheth any natural action; and on the other side, weakeneth and dulleth any violent impression: and even so it is of minds.

The second fruit of friendship, is healthful and sovereign for the understanding, as the first is for the affections. For friendship maketh indeed a fair day in the affections, from storm and tempests; but it maketh daylight in the understanding, out of darkness, and confusion of thoughts. Neither is this to be understood only of faithful counsel, which a man receiveth from his friend; but

before you come to that, certain it is, that whosoever hath his mind fraught with many thoughts, his wits and understanding do clarify and break up, in the communicating and discoursing with another; he tosseth his thoughts more easily; he marshalleth them more orderly, he seeth how they look when they are turned into words: finally, he waxeth wiser than himself; and that more by an hour's discourse, than by a day's meditation. It was well said by Themistocles, to the king of Persia, *that speech was like cloth of Arras, opened and put abroad; whereby the imagery doth appear in figure; whereas in thoughts they lie but as in packs.* Neither is this second fruit of friendship, in opening the understanding, restrained only to such friends as are able to give a man counsel; (they indeed are best;) but even without that, a man learneth of himself, and bringeth his own thoughts to light, and whetteth his wits as against a stone, which itself cuts not. In a word, a man were better relate himself to a statua, or picture, than to suffer his thoughts to pass in smother. Add now, to make this second fruit of friendship complete, that other point, which lieth more open, and falleth within vulgar observation; which is faithful counsel from a friend. Heraclitus saith well in one of his enigmas, *Dry light is ever the best.* And certain it is, that the light that a man receiveth by counsel from another, is drier and purer, than that which cometh from his own understanding and judgment; which is ever infused, and drenched, in his affections and customs. So as there is as much difference between the counsel, that a friend giveth, and that a man giveth himself, as there is between the counsel of a friend, and of a flatterer. For there is no such flatterer as is a man's self; and there is no such remedy against flattery of a man's self, as the liberty of a friend. Counsel is of two sorts: the one concerning manners, the other concerning business. For the first, the best preservative to keep the mind in health, is the faithful admonition of a friend. The calling of a man's self to a strict account, is a medicine, sometime too piercing and corrosive. Reading good books of morality, is a little flat and dead. Observing our faults in others, is sometimes improper for our case. But the best receipt (best, I say, to work, and best to take) is the admonition of a friend. It is a strange thing to behold, what gross errors and extreme absurdities many (especially of the greater sort) do commit, for want of a friend to tell them of them; to the great damage both of their fame and fortune: for, as St. James saith, they are as men, *that look sometimes into a glass, and presently forget their own shape and favour.* As for business, a man may think, if he will, that two eyes see no more than one; or that a gamester seeth always more than a looker-on; or that a man in anger, is as wise as he that hath said over the

four and twenty letters; or that a musket may be shot off as well upon the arm, as upon a rest; and such other fond and high imaginations, to think himself all in all. But when all is done, the help of good counsel is that which setteth business straight. And if any man think that he will take counsel, but it shall be by pieces; asking counsel in one business, of one man, and in another business, of another man; it is well (that is to say, better, perhaps, than if he asked none at all); but he runneth two dangers: one, that he shall not be faithfully counselled; for it is a rare thing, except it be from a perfect and entire friend, to have counsel given, but such as shall be bowed and crooked to some ends, which he hath, that giveth it. The other, that he shall have counsel given, hurtful and unsafe (though with good meaning), and mixed partly of mischief and partly of remedy; even as if you would call a physician, that is thought good for the cure of the disease you complain of, but is unacquainted with your body; and therefore may put you in way for a present cure, but overthroweth your health in some other kind; and so cure the disease, and kill the patient. But a friend that is wholly acquainted with a man's estate, will beware, by furthering any present business, how he dasheth upon other inconvenience. And therefore rest not upon scattered counsels; they will rather distract and mislead, than settle and direct.

After these two noble fruits of friendship (peace in the affections, and support of the judgment), followeth the last fruit; which is like the pomegranate, full of many kernels; I mean aid, and bearing a part, in all actions and occasions. Here the best way to represent to life the manifold use of friendship, is to cast and see how many things there are, which a man cannot do himself; and then it will appear, that it was a sparing speech of the ancients, to say, *that a friend is another himself;* for that a friend is far more than himself. Men have their time, and die many times, in desire of some things which they principally take to heart; the bestowing of a child, the finishing of a work, or the like. If a man have a true friend, he may rest almost secure that the care of those things will continue after him. So that a man hath, as it were, two lives in his desires. A man hath a body, and that body is confined to a place; but where friendship is, all offices of life are as it were granted to him, and his deputy. For he may exercise them by his friend. How many things are there which a man cannot, with any face or comeliness, say or do himself? A man can scarce allege his own merits with modesty, much less extol them; a man cannot sometimes brook to supplicate or beg; and a number of the like. But all these things are graceful, in a friend's mouth, which are blushing

in a man's own. So again, a man's person hath many proper relations, which he cannot put off. A man cannot speak to his son but as a father; to his wife but as a husband; to his enemy but upon terms: whereas a friend may speak as the case requires, and not as it sorteth with the person. But to enumerate these things were endless; I have given the rule, where a man cannot fitly play his own part; if he have not a friend, he may quit the stage.

Summary

Solitude is desirable for wild beast or God. A man living in wilderness needs no friends. Some people take to solitude for spiritual reasons; Epimenides, Numa and Apollonius took to solitude so as to lead a nobler or spiritually exalted life.

Friendship is essential for the progress of a man. It enables a man to dispel his feeling and emotions. A man takes relief if he expresses his sorrows, fears to his friends. King and Monarchs choose friends from amongst their subjects. Sylla made friends with Pompey. Julius Caesar made friends with Decimus. Augustus offered his daughter Julia to his friend Agrippa. All of them found their life incomplete without friends.

In order to gain relief from mental strain, a man needs friends to whom he should confide his secrets. Duke Charles and Louis kept their secrets to themselves and suffered great mental agony. Friends multiply the joys and diminish the griefs of a man. Friendship is useful for emotional health. The mind becomes purified and ideas take better shape in the conversation of a friend. His wit is sharpened and joy increased in the company of friends. Friendship enables a man to have a clear idea of the world. A man becomes surer of himself by speaking his thoughts to his friends. The joy is doubled and grief is halved in the company of a friend.

The counsel of a friend may prove more useful than the conclusions of a man based on his own judgements. The rebuke of a friend is useful to maintain the health of mind. Those who have no friends to consult make great mistakes. A reliable counsel of a friend is helpful in setting things right.

It is useless to take counsel by pieces. One should not consult different persons for advice in different matters. A sincere friend may be consulted in all matters. To consult all persons is unsafe since none of them fully understands the

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mind and circumstances of the man. It is useless to depend upon scattered counsels. Many things can only be done of behalf of his friends. His friends can complete the unaccomplished tasks of a dead man. A friend can speak on behalf of his friend. All things cannot be done alone. A man cannot praise his works himself and he needs a friend who may speak on his behalf. A man who has no friend has no right to live in the world.

3.1.6 ESSAYS GROUP THEMSELVES ROUND THREE GREAT PRINCIPLES

"It is said that Bacon's essays group themselves round three great principles -- (1) Man in relation to the world and society, (2) Man in relation to himself, and (3) Man in relation to his maker." How far do you agree?

Or

"Brief notes set down rather significantly than curiously." How far is it an apt comment on the essays of Bacon?

Introduction

The range and variety of Bacon's essays is wide. If we look at the topics chosen by him for his essays it shows that he was right in his claim of having taken all knowledge to be his province. He has written on a multitude of subjects.

Lord Macaulay writes, "The essays contain abundant proofs that no nice feature of the character or personality and peculiarity in the ordering of a house, or gardens, or a court Masque, could escape the notice of one whose mind was capable of taking in the whole world of knowledge."

Tone of Bacon's Essays

In his essays Bacon presents himself as the moralist, the statesman, and the man of the world. He calls them: "Certain brief notes set down rather significantly than curiously; not vulgar, but of a kind of men shall find much in experience and little in books."

These fragments are groupings of pithy sayings and maxims slightly expanded from a commonplace book. The third edition of his essays came out in 1625. They were enlarged both in number and weight. Douglas Bush opines, "Although in their final state his essays remained strongly aphoristic in texture, the discontinuity and abstract severity of the early sentences, had been increasingly unified and relieved by expiations and by interpolated examples and quotations and enriched by metaphor and cadence."

The final edition of his fifty-eight essays deals with numerous topics that include public affairs and moral virtues. Bacon reveals the interests, problems and modes of thought of the ruling class of his times. His essays reveal his wide knowledge of the world.

Grouping of Bacon's Essays

Bacon's essays group themselves round the three principles: Man in relation to the world, to himself and to his maker. This classification is useful for a methodical study of his essays.

The first group of the essays is about man in relation to the world and society. It includes the relations of mankind to the physical world. It also describes the mutual relations of the people. Some notable essays of this group are (i) Of Simulation and Dissimulation (ii) Of Parents and Children (iii) Of Marriage (iv) Of Marriage and Single Life (v) Of Love (vi) Of Great Place (vii) Of Friendship (viii) Of Suitors (ix) Of Studies (x) Of Garden. Some essays in this group are political in nature.

All the essays of Bacon are born of his experiences. They serve as a guide in practical wisdom. They serve as an active stimulant to the mind and to the understanding. Bacon’s essays have been called a compendium of precepts of reflection. They are suggestions and means for the progress of the individual. Bacon's shrewdness, sagacity, tact, foresight and experience are reflected in his essays. Bacon does not preach in ideal morality. He considers morality and philosophy as guidelines to worldly success.

His Suggestiveness

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Bacon's suggestions in his essays run counter to the accepted norms of ethics and morality. He gives references from history and ancient authority. They contain illustrations, allusions and quotations.

Bacon takes up similar emotional attitude towards marriage in the essays 'Of Marriage and Single Life'. The essays 'Of Love' and 'Of Great Place' are packed with worldly wisdom. The essay 'Of Suitors' has the combination of the morality and worldly wisdom. The essay 'Of Gardens' shows Bacon's love of nature. It has a sensuous appeal. Bacon was very sensitive to the beauties of nature, and speaks of natural objects.

Bacon's political essays include (i) Of Seditions and Troubles, (ii) Of Empire (iii) Of the True Greatness of Kingdom and States. In these essays he gives penetrating judgment on political affairs.

Hugh Walker says: "Bacon is the first English Essayist, as he remains for sheer mass and weight of genius, the greatest."

His Wit and Knowledge

Bacon's essays reveal his profound wit and knowledge. His classical allusions and his metaphors and analogies used in the essays display his aspirations. In the essay 'Of Faction', Bacon says, "The motions of factions under king ought to be like the motions of the inferior orbs which may have their motions, but yet still are quietly carried by the higher motion of premium mobile".

Bacon's practice in his essays is to treat most aspects of his subject briefly. There is lack of exhaustiveness and elaboration in them. He penetrates the minds of the readers by a series of aphoristic attacks. The range of Bacon's essays is responsible for keeping up their freshness. He was a man with such a variety of interest.

Bacon's essays contain both reflections and precepts. Most of them are the verbal embodiments of Bacon's crystallised wisdom, experience, observation lying between general reflections and explicit counsels. Thomas Fuller says; "He and his servants had all in common, the men never wanting what their master had".

Bacon's Philosophy

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Bacon was a great philosophical prose writer. He realises the human ignorance and helplessness and advocates the struggle of research in the field of knowledge. He believes that nature cannot be commanded except by being obeyed. A man attains command over nature by learning the laws of nature.

Bacon gave importance to physiology and medicine. He limited psychology to objective observations ignoring introspection and consciousness. He tried to study the cause and effect in human action. He did not believe in chance at all. He gave a new concept of science which is called 'social psychology'. He held the view that nothing is beneath science or above science. He projected this view in 'The Advancement of Learning'. He paid much attention to acquiring knowledge. He even suggested various means to acquire knowledge. He based his observations on experiments and their results.

His Scientific Outlook

Bacon regards pride as being a great help to progress in life. He does not consider science by itself enough. He believes that there must be a force and discipline outside the sciences to co-ordinate them.

His Philosophical Views

Bacon believed that science needs a philosophy to analyse the scientific purpose and results. He says that, "philosophy directs us first to seek the goods of the mind, and the rest will either be supplied, or not much wanted." The scientists require a great change in their methodology of research and thought. But thought must serve as an aid to observation.

His Medieval Outlook

Bacon says that all the medieval theories should be substituted by the new observations. There is a need for an expurgation of the intellect. He knows well the cause of human errors. He maintains that "For man's sense falsely asserted to be the standard of things; the human mind resembles those uneven mirrors which impart their own properties to different object and distort and disfigure them."

His Humanism

Bacon recalls the fallacies natural to all human beings and calls them 'idols of the tribe'. Human thoughts are pictures rather of themselves than of their objects. The human understanding easily supposes a greater degree of order and regularity in things than it really finds.

Human Failing

(a) Idols of cave: Bacon calls the errors of the individual as 'idols of the cave'. These are peculiar to everyone and reflect upon his nature and mood and governed by the conditions of body and mind. The analytic and synthetic minds produce scientists, painters, poets and philosophers. Some of them have the fascination for antiquity, while others appreciate novelty.

(b) Idols of market place: Next come the 'Idols of the market-place', which indicate the errors born of the commerce and business associations. The 'Idols of the theatre' comprise the errors arising from the dogmas of philosophers and from wrong laws of demonstration. Bacon describes the scientific method of inquiry. He speaks of natural history of the world, built on the united research of scientists. He seeks correlations between heat and motion. His theory of form is akin to Plato's theory.

He writes: "When we speak of forms we mean nothing else than those laws and regulations of simple action which arrange and constitute any simple heat or light. In each branch learning those very laws are the foundations both of theory and of practice."

His Utopia

Bacon gives an account of the utopia of his choice in The New Atlantic. His main object was to acquire knowledge. He expresses his views in Novum Organum: "We are concerned not with purer skill in speculation, but with real utility and the fortunes of the human race. For man is no more than the servant and interpreter of nature; what he does and he knows is but that which he has observed of the order of nature in act or in thought beyond this he knows nothing and can do nothing. For the chain of causes cannot be relaxed or broken by any force, and nature cannot be commanded except by being obeyed."

His Induction

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Macaulay believed that Bacon's induction was old fashioned. There was no need to make much fuss. He gave an immeasurable stimulus to the process of thought and experiment. His book 'The Advancement of Learning' is a record of Bacon's philosophical works. He was the eloquent voice of the optimism and resolution of the Renaissance. D' Alembert called Bacon, "the greatest, the most eloquent of philosophers". He observed the defect of the scholastic method. He was the father of psychological speculation.

3.1.7 SOME IMPORTANT EXPLANATIONS

Lines: *Doth any man……unpleasing to themselves.*

Explanation: These lines occur in the essay 'Of Truth' written by Francis Bacon. Bacon compares truth to a pearl and lie to a precious stone. A pearl looks most brilliant in the light of sun, and a valuable stone looks sparking in all sorts of light. According to him truth is inflexible and lie is more serviceable and flexible.

Bacon says that truth gives more pleasure when a lie is added to it. Falsehood and fiction are conducive to happiness and remove the gloom caused by the observation of bitter realities of life. A man's mind id filled up with all kinds of false ideas, vain hopes and wrong calculations. The things are contrary to truth and reality that are highly gratifying. If human mind is free from these false notions it will be purified. The mind will be deflated and appear miserable in the absence of them. Man will come in contact with cruel reality.

Lines*: For there is ……of nature.*

Explanation: These lines have been taken from the essay 'Of Friendship' by Bacon. The chief merit of friendship provides a channel for discourse. A man in possession of good friends may relieve his mind of tension by sharing his secrets with them. A man without a friend eats his own heart. When a man discloses his secrets to another, he lightens his worries.

Bacon says that friendship is that which aids man to communicate their feelings to their friends. Surely his joy increases and becomes double of its

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former intensity. But it decreases the intensity of a man's grief. He divides his grief among his friends and relatives. His own share is reduced to the original grief. Conveying it to friends increases the joy, and sharing it with friends decreases sorrow. The sympathy and love they receive from their friends reduce their sorrow and make them gay. Friendship has opposite effects like philosopher's stone decreasing the effect of bad things and increasing the effect of good things.

Lines: *For friendship market……..of thoughts.*

Explanation: These lines have been taken from the essay 'Of Friendship' by Bacon. Bacon days that thought communicating of a man's self of his friends produces opposite effects, yet it was beneficial to mind. The union of two minds in friendship increases joy.

Friendship is useful and health giving to both a man's heart and his mind, when a man communicates his troubles to others, it helps in bringing his heart to a state of morality. Friendship is like a fine weather. Just as a good weather stops fierce storms and replaces a gloomy climate by a fair day, in a similar way a friend calms down the agitating passions in the heart. A mind, a friend helps in removing all obscurities. Like a rising sun a friend removes the clouds gathering our understanding and makes things look lucid.

Lines: *Crafty men condemn……observation.*

Explanation: These lines have been taken from the essay 'Of Studies' by Bacon. Bacon says that studies give us pleasure in the leisure hours. If too much time is spent on studies, it would impart laziness and make a man incapable of doing any work. They provide us material to make the conversation impressive and agreeable. Natural abilities should be subjected to studies to keep them in good shape.

Studies develop a man's natural ability. They do not benefit the cunning people. Cunning men look down upon books. They think that their cleverness is superior to the knowledge contained in the books, unsophisticated man gaze at studies in surprise. Wise people make the best use of studies. A man may get knowledge from books, but they do not teach how to use that knowledge. The use of knowledge can be learnt from practical experience.

3.2 JOHN DRYDEN

John Dryden, the nephew of local baronet, was born in 1631 near Oundle, in Northamptonshire, and educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. His early life is exceedingly obscure, in 1659, at the age of twenty-eighth, he took part in the publication of a thin volume of three elegies on Oliver Cromwell. It showed himself to be, as well as a good Cromwellian, a good disciple in style of the metaphysical poets, seeking out farfetched images and conceits, and no wise restrained by the fear of extravagance or bad taste, the accession of Charles II produced a sudden transformation in his political opinions without as yet changing his manner as is evident from the 'Astroeu Redux' with which he saluted the return of the king. He stood well at court, had cemented friendships among the nobility, and practiced not ingloriously in the theatre, but had still not greatly reformed his manner when he wrote, in 1666, his 'Annus Mirabilis' in which he commemorated the great fire of London and the war with Holland. Nevertheless, among strained conceits, there are to be found vigorous touches and forceful and dignified stanzas or even sequences of stanzas.

The character of Dryden's work now changed completely. Dryden turned his attention exclusively to the drama, which was then the only profitable field for any one who had to depend for his livelihood upon his pen. He wrote about twenty plays, all the more or less coarse. 'The Rival Ladies' and 'The Indian Emperor' were the best known of them. His genius was not towards the drama, and he essayed it because it was the most lucrative branch of the literary profession at that time. He was made poet laureate in 1670.

After an internal of fifteen years, devoted to the theatre, he reappeared as a poet, but this time as a satiric and didactic poet. The couplet succeeded the stanza. The lyrical effort gave place to a ceaseless rain of biting observations and weighty maxims. Dryden had found the tool best suited to his genius. He availed himself of it to defend the causes, which he successively favoured, or to attack the enemy of the moment. His veerings were so strictly subordinated to his interests as a courtier that some have seen in him a sort of a mercenary who fights for any power that hires him. This was the moment when England was divided into

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Tories, or the champions of the royal prerogative, and Whigs who desired to limit that prerogative. Dryden was a staunch Tory, or rather became one once he had breathed the atmosphere of the court. In the rising, led by Monmouth against Charles II, Dryden took the side of the king, who becomes David in his poem Absalom and Achitophel' while Monmouth is Absalom, incited to rebel by the evil counsellor, Achitophel (the Earl of Shaftesbury). In this Biblical disguise, Dryden stages contemporary happenings and characters very felicitously. He excelled in the part of portrait-painting; his 'characters' of Achitophel and Zimri (the Duke of Buckingham) are masterpieces of satire, unfair certainly, but terse and incisive.

He continued his campaign after Sailsbury's acquittal by a jury, in 'The Medall', in which he ridicules the popular delight and the medal struck by the triumphant Whigs. He had also turned upon his rival Shadwell, the Whig poet, and pilloried him with pitiless humour in 'Mac Flecknoe' (1682).

Meanwhile, what had been a political quarrel tended more and more to become a religious one. Now followed a series of poems in which the sceptical poet undertook the defence first of all of the Anglican religion. In *Religio Laici* (1682) praising a faith equally removed from the fanaticism of Catholics and that of the dissenters. He believed that he was thus upholding enthusiasm. But, on the accession of James II in 1685 when the sovereign was an avowed catholic Dryden not only made his own conversion public but expounded and defended the religious policy of the new king in his great allegorical poem 'The Hind and the Panther'. After this decisive allegory Dryden never retracted again. He contented himself with abandoning literary ends. He returned to the theatre which he had neglected; translated the classics, chiefly Persius and Juvenal, or Virgil whose 'Aeneid' he turned into brilliant couplets; or, again, produced several fine lyrical pieces like the remodelled Boccaccio or Chaucer's tales. The hostility he had brought upon himself by his polemics died down little by little; his great talent was recognized; he became a sort of literary oracle. And when he dies in 1700, he was universally acknowledged the prince of the poets of his generation.

He deserved this pre-eminence by the unceasing zeal with which through all his political and religious wavering he had served poetry and literature. Meanwhile, through his admirable prefaces and essays, he had taken his place at the head of the prose writers, he had proved himself the first English critic. Above

all, he had succeeded in giving to poetry the new qualities to which it aspired and which it had not yet attained except in brief moments. He had gradually freed his verse of the last traces of metaphysical eccentricity. In his satires and didactic poems he had fashioned it massive, clear and virile. He had given the maximum of strength and effectiveness to heroic verse in couplets. He had made the couplet as Legouis says "the weapon of logic and judgement."

3.2.1 MAC FLECKNOE

Mac Flecknoe

The Occasion

This is a poem directed against Shadwell, the leading Whig poet of the day. It was published in October 1782, a year of great political animosity between the Tories and the Whigs. Dryden had published a satirical poem ' The Medal' in which he had attacked Shaftesbury. A reply to 'The Medal' was published under the title of 'The Medal of John Bayes'. It was a very scurrilous libel, and its writer was Thomas Shadwell. In 'Mac Flecknoe' Dryden took his revenge.

Thomas Shadwell

He was a Norfolk man and about ten years Dryden's junior. He wrote several plays, and he and Dryden had been in a manner friends. There is no evidence that Dryden had ever given Shadwell any direct cause of offence. Shadwell, however, was extremely arrogant, and apparently jealous of Dryden's acknowledged position as leader of the English drama, took more than one occasion of sneering at Dryden and especially at his critical prefaces. 'Not long before the actual declaration Shadwell had received a prologue from Dryden, and the outbreak itself was due to purely political causes, his attack on Dryden, however, was very unwise; for the house in which he lived was of glass almost all over. His manners are admitted to have been coarse and brutal, his conversation unclean, his appearance uninviting; nor was his literary personality safer from attack. He had taken Ben Jonson as his model, and no one can deny his knack of detecting or imagining the oddities that, after Ben's examples, he called, humours. But whether it was owing to haste, or as Dryden would have it, to certain

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intellectual incapacity, there can be no doubt that nobody ever made less use of his faculties than Shadwell. His work is always disgraceful as writing; he seems to be totally destitute of any critical faculty, and he mixes up what is really funny with the dullest and most wearisome folly and ribaldry. He was thus given over entirely into Dryden's hands, and the unmatched satire of 'Mac Flecknoe' was the result.

Flecknoe

Mac Flecknoe literally 'the son of Flecknoe'. This Flecknoe was an Irishman and a catholic priest. He was one of the meanest versifiers of the century, and had been the butt of Marvel's satire. He had paid compliments to Dryden and there is no reason to suppose that Dryden had any enmity towards him. His part indeed is simply representative and satire is reserved for Shadwell. Dryden chose him to fill the place in that satire which he does not because he had any quarrel with Dryden but simply because his name had become a synonym for poetaster and dullard. The Earl of Dorset in his satire on Edward Howard writes:

These… antipodes to commonsense,

These fools to Fleknoe, prythee tell me whence

Does all this mighty mass of dullness spring.

Substance

Flecknoe, the king of the realm of Nonsense, had become old and is on the lookout for a suitable successor to reign over 'all the realms of Nonsense absolute', and to wage 'immortal war with wit'. His choice falls on Shadwell, he cried:

Shadwell alone my perfect image bears,

Mature in dullness from his tender years; Shadwell alone all my sons is he

Who stands confirmed in full stupidity,

The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,

But Shadwell never deviates into sense.

Shadwell is even a greater dunce than Flecknoe himself. In this manner Dryden overwhelms his enemies with ridicule. He criticizes the dramatic works of Shadwell and represents them as devoid of any wit or good sense. Shadwell is charged with plagiarism and his satires are ridiculous and dull and pointless, his personal appearance and habits are also ridicules with merciless severity.

"Flecknoe, the aged prince", is represented abdicating his rule over the realms of Nonsense' in favour of Shadwell. This humorous fancy forms the slight action of the piece, which terminates with a mock catastrophe suggested by one of Shadwell's own comedies. Thus, with his usual insight, Dryden does not make any attempt to lengthen out what is in itself one of the most successful examples of the species—the mock-heroic—which it introduced into English literature. Pope, as is well-known derived the idea of his Dunciad from Mac Flecknoe, but while the former poem assumed the proportions of an elaborate satire against a whole tribe of dunces as well as against one egregious dunce, Dryden's is jeund' esprit, though one brilliant enough to constitute an unanswerable report upon unwarrantable provocation. Sight as it is, Mac Flecknoe holds a place of its own among Dryden's masterpiece English satirical poetry.

Satire: A Brief Note

Satire comes from the Latin 'Satira' which means medley. It was at fist written partly in verse and partly in prose, and was full of scurrility and abuse. It was only gradually that it gained indignity, and abuse gave way to correction of vices. A satire now means a poem or a prose composition, to the reader objects calculated to inspire hatred or contempt. His chief weapon is ridicule, but his primary intention is not to amuse but to find suitable expression for his indignation.

The objects of satire are infinitely various, since a poet's indignation may be excited by a single person, a class of people, a political measure, a mode of writing, even a personal slight. But satires, which are most likely to endure, are those that are directed against the objects of general dislike, such as social or political tyranny.

The manner of the satirist is very different from that of the lyrical poet. Since hatred and contempt are unlovely feelings, the satirical poet usually avoids giving them direct expression. He makes frequent use of irony, which may be

described as a discrepancy between the meaning and the underlying intention of a writer. He relies largely on intellectual dexterity and brilliant verification to fascinate his reader and win admiration where he cannot hope for sympathy.

Satire has nothing of the redeeming tenderness which humour possesses, and is the outcome of a feeling of personal superiority and of contempt and indignation. Its object is to sting. Some English essayists, however, have used it as an instrument of social reform. Among these the most famous is Addison who always chides with a smile. Dryden, Pope, Swift, Butler, Byron, Hillaire Belloc, Chesterton and Roy Campbell have written some of the finest satires in English literature.

Dryden as a Satirist

Dryden was the greatest satirist in an age of satire and reason. He perfected the epigrammatic and antithetical use of the heroic couplet for this purpose. The cool, good-humoured, scorn of his satires is perhaps more effective than the brilliance of Pope, his greatest couplet lent themselves easily to personal description and attack with consummate ease. There are passages of Dryden's satires in which every couplet; has not only the force but the actual sound of a slap in the face. The rapidity of movement from one couplet to the other is another remarkable characteristic.

The other distinguishing feature of Dryden as a satirist is that unlike his predecessors he never affects immense moral indignation at the evils they attacked. Dryden alone has observed this rule that it never does for the political satirist to lose his temper and to rave and rant and to denounce with the air of an inspired prophet. His manner towards his subject is that of cold and not ill-humoured scorn. They are great scoundrels certainly, but they are even more contemptible than they are vicious.

Dryden makes his charges in a casual and allusive way, as if there were no general dissent as to the truth of his allegations, while he takes care to be especially happy in his language. Moreover, Dryden's facts are rarely disputable. The famous passage in which Shadwell and settle are yoked in a sentence of discriminating damnation is an admirable example of this. It is absolutely true that Shadwell wrote worse, and was in some respects duller than any person of equal talent placed among English men of letters.

There could not possibly be a more complete justification of 'Mac Flecknoe' than the victim's complaint that 'he had been represented as an Irish man, though Dryden knew perfectly well that he had only once been in Ireland, and that was but for a few hours".

3.2.2 THE OUTLINE

The Outline

Everything is mortal in this world, even kings must yield to fate. Realizing this Flecknoe, who had no equal in the realm of nonsense, decided to choose his heir. Everything mortal on this earth is subject to death and even the kings are not immune to it. This was Mac Flecknoe, who, like Augustus, came to throne early and continued to rule long supreme in all the realms of pure nonsense. Be it prose or poetry, this old prince, who enjoyed great prosperity in peace and was blessed with a large number of followers who wrote nonsensical prose and poetry like him. Being tired of the labours of the poet-laureateship, thought seriously of selecting a successor to himself. Thinking who of his sons was most fit to carry on eternal warfare against sense he cried out: "It is all settled! Nature demands that he alone who resembles me most in qualities of head and heart should succeed me to the throne; Shadwell alone is my true replica in this matter. He possesses in their totality all those qualities that go to the formation of my being. He has been ripe in dullness from his early childhood. Shadwell alone of all my sons is firmly rooted in nonsense; others may make a pretence to some feeble meaning in their writings, but he can never stray into sense even by mistake.

There are other followers who may say a sensible thing now and then, but not a ray of sense ever penetrates through the dull, dense ignorance of Shadwell's soul. The rising waves of his stupidity obscure the radiance of reason. Moreover, his gross and corpulent figure fills the eye, and seems to be specially fashioned for a thoughtless ruler. In his thoughtlessness he resembles the oak tree, which casts its shadow over the plain, and standing solemnly seems to rule in an indolent and negligent manner. He is compared with other poets and dramatists of the time, who appear like shadows before him. The king owns that he himself was also there only to prepare his way, so great was Shadwell in his stupidity and dullness.

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"Shadwell", said Flecknoe, "you are the last great mater of the redundant land verbose style; Shirley and Heywood were only symbols or prefigurations of you. I who am a much bigger dunce than either Shirley or came only as your harbinger, clad in rough woollen dress, to proclaim to the world that a greater dunce like you was soon to make his appearance.

The musical performance, which I once gave before King John of Portugal, was only a preface to that glorious day when you sailed on the silvery bosom of the river Thames, the oars striking in harmony with the music, before the royal pleasure boat puffed up with the proud sense of your great mission to entertain the king, full of sacred music, and at the head of a band of singers, presenting a ludicrous sight, the like of which was never depicted even in your own nonsensical plays. I think I can imagine a modern Arion (the great Greek musician) sailing on waters, and the lute still trembling under your nail, and under the cuss of your cruel thumb trebles and basses squeaking and roaring from one end to the other end of the country. I can also imagine little fishes thronging round your boat, intoxicated with the execrable notes of your music, as they used to throng round the floating 'morning toast'. Sometimes you would move your hands while giving directions to the musical band, as if you were thrashing corn, using your roll of paper as the wand, even St. Andre's feet (dancing to the accompaniment) could not keep equal time with your quick and confused directions, not even verses of your own play 'Psyche' which are both stupid and unmetrical. Your song was sung with such easy stupidity that consumed with envy Singleton, the king's dancer, gave up the lute and the sword, which he had handled so skilfully, and took a vow never to act again the part of Villerius."

With these words, Flecknoe stopped and wept out of intense joy at the prospects of his son. All arguments, but above all, Mac Flecknoe's (Shadwell's) dramatic works pointed to one conclusion that he was created to be the supreme ruler in the kingdom of dullness.

Near the wall, surrounding the city of London, there was a place where prostitutes and harlots lived, and where worthless plays were appreciated. Here Flecknoe erected throne for his son and successor, Shadwell. Decker also had made a prophecy that there would rule a foolish and idiotic prince whose dull mind would produce such plays as 'Psyche' and 'Humourists'.

Very near the wall that surrounds the city of London an ancient building stood, which had been erected to serve the purpose of a watch-tower, and called Barbican. It was once a watch-tower but now, as that would have it nothing but a bare name is left of it. From its ruins have sprung up numerous brothels, which are the scene of immoral love and unchaste joy, and where prostitutes hold their vast courts, and sleep safe from the eyes of the watchmen. Near it a theatre (nursery rears its head, where actors are trained to play the parts of Queens and heroes, where immature actors learn to play their humorous or tragic parts, infant prostitutes try their voices, and little boys are taught to shriek in defiance of gods. Here neither the tragedies of great Fletcher nor the comedies of greater Johnson find any place, but only such a trite character as Simkin gets a warm reception from these highly idiotic minds. There we can have also mere punning and poetry, and find Panton, the punster, fighting his harmless wordy war. It was here as this celebrated place that Flecknoe ambitiously erected a throne or his son and successor, Shadwell. The ancient poet Decker had made a prophecy that here would rule in that place a mighty prince, a sworn enemy of wit and good sense, and his dull mind would produce some psyches, but numerous misers, humourists and hypocrites and such characters as Raymond and Bruces in plenty.

The coronation of Shadwell takes place there. The roads scattered over with the limbs of mangled poets. At the right hand of Flecknoe sat our poet, a picture of dullness and stupidity. The empress spread the news of the coronation of Shadwell throughout the town. On hearing this famous news people thronged to distant Waltaing Street. No Persian carpets were spread on the way leading to the site of the coronation but it was scattered over with leaves torn from the words of Shadwell which almost choked the way with their burden. The booksellers who had been cheated by such authors stood there as guards, Herringman was their leader, the old emperor Flecknoe made appearance in all his majesty, and sat high on the throne which he himself had designed. At his right hand was sitting young Ascanius(Shadwell), the second hope of London and its dull poets and the mainstay of the state of dullness and stupidity. Instead of a halo of light, thick fog and twinkling dullness surrounded and adorned his face.

Just as Hannibal had been sworn by his father in the temple to wage a mortal war against Rome, similarly Shadwell was sworn and it was not an idle oath, to wage a ceaseless and lifelong war in the name of his father and for the defense of his kingdom, against wit and good sense, and never to have any peace

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or truce with these two, and to do his best to foster and preserve true dullness. By virtue of his office of the King and the profession of a priest the king himself anointed the Prince Shadwell. In his left hand, instead of a ball, he placed a huge mug of strong wine, and his right Love's Kingdom, which was to be his sceptre as well as the principle of his sovereignty. The prince had learnt early in childhood the tradition and facts set forth in this great book. This book also gave birth to the opera of psyche.

His forehead was bound with poppy flowers, which nodding, seemed to sanctify his head, just at that time of the rumour be true twelve solemn-looking owls did fly on his left hand. It is sung in ancient poetry that it was in a similar manner that Romulus by the river Tiber took the prediction of an empire for him from the flying of twelve vultures. The admiring crowds burst into loud cheers, and from the flying owls took omens of his future empire. His father then shook his gray locks and from his forehead dropped the sweat drops of forgetfulness on his dull son. And long he stood there striving to drive away the spirit of poetic inspiration from him.

At last in a mood of prophecy he proclaimed; 'heavens bless my son! May his empire extend from Ireland to far off Barbados on the western sea; may his domains be boundless, and more absurd than love's kingdom. He paused and all the people cried 'Amen' to what he had said. Then he continued thus: 'My son, you should study new follies and greater ignorance. Let others learn from success, (i.e. let others try to be successful but you have this from me that you should forever toil without producing any tangible or useful results. Let you spend five years in writing your play Virtuoso and yet let there be not one thought in this stupid play of yours which may render you liable to the charge of possessing some degree of intelligence. Let your various characters triumphantly appear on the stage and by their follies demonstrate the wit of their author. And still your fools will come to your rescue and justify their author's utter lack of any sense. Let you model them after your own image of dullness, for this you need not call in any help from the outside, so that the coming generations may recognise them as your genuine creatures and not mere copies from the works of other poets. Let you model them after your own image of dullness, for this you need not call in any help from the outside, so that the coming generations my recognise them as your genuine creatures and not mere copies from the works of other poets. Let all your witty persons be also the same, all full of your own dullness, only differing in

name. So do not allow any outsider lie Sedley to garnish with his wit dull Epsom wells. When you want to collect specimens of false rhetoric in your plays do not take any pains to do so. You should rely on your own natural want of wit in this respect. You write your best as the oratory of Sir Formal. Whether you will it or not whatever you write smacks of Sir Formal and the style of your dedications to the Duke of Newcastle resembles the oratory of Sir Formal. Nor let your false friends make you aspire for fame by dangling before you the name of Johnson. Let your heart swell with admiration for your father Flecknoe's verses, and you should try to rival your Uncle Ogleby in excellence.

"You are my own true blood, and Johnson had no share in your creation. We know little of nature or art. The wit of Johnson never branded learning nor did he ever abuse the fine arts which he failed to understand. None of his characters ever made live in the manner of Prince Nicander, nor did he sink so low as you have done in your poor verses of psyche. His poetry did never steal whole scenes from Fletcher, nor ever gave to the works the whole of Etheridge as his own. But your thefts are not well-assimilated; their separate identity intrudes upon your own views everywhere, like oil floating on the surface of water. Your special province or methods of work is to invent new humours for each one of your new plays. This is that peculiarity of your mind on which you pride so much and which has learnings in the single directions of dullness and gives the twist to your writings whether you will it or not."

Again, your bulging belly is no healthy normal growth, but a dropsical expansion or tumidity of sense. (It means the death of all sense under abnormal grossness of the flesh). So it can have no pretence of likeness with Jonson. You are no doubt a barrel of wine walking on human legs, but only one-fifteenth part of a barrel of sense. Like my verses your poetry is but feeble, your tragic plays excite laughter, and your comic scenes send people to sleep. With whatever asperity you may write your satire remains inoffensive and fails to bite. Your wicked heart is full of poison, it only touches your Irish pen and dies out there, your genius does not fit you for winning fame as a satirist, but only as poor writer of anagrams. You should better give up writing of poetry and confine yourself to the peaceful pursuit of writing acrostics. There, while writing acrostics, you may display wings or altars and twist one poor word in a thousand ways, or poems to music and sing them to your lute. He had hardly finished his last words when the haranguing poet fell down into the trap prepared by Bruce and Long Ville. While

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sinking below he left his coarse woollen cloak behind, which was uplifted by the underground winds, this mantle fell to the share of Shadwell and thus he inherited double the stupidity and dullness of his father (Flecknoe).

3.3 COMPREHENSION EXERCISES

1. "Brief notes set down rather significantly than curiously." How far is it an apt comment on the essays of Bacon?
2. Give an estimate of Bacon's service to English poetry.
3. Discuss John Dryden as a satirist.
4. Give a brief summary of Mac Flecknoe.

3.4 LET US SUM UP

Unit III has acquainted you with Francis Bacon and John Dryden. Now you can discuss their life and their select works. You have gained sufficient knowledge to appreciate critically Bacon's more popular essays — Of Truth, Of Great Place, Of Studies, Of Delay, and Of Friendship — and also John Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe.*

UNIT-IV SPENSER, MILTON

Structure

4.0 Objectives

4.1 EDMUND SPENSER

4.1.1 Spenser as The Poet's Poet

4.1.2 The Character of Lady Una

4.1.3 "The Fairy Queen" As An Allegory

4.2 MILTON

4.2.1 Samson Agonistes

4.2.2 Classical in form put Hebraic in spirit

4.2.3 "Samson Agonistes":'Katharsis' in the play

4.2.4 "Samson Agonistes": The Subjective Element

4.3 Comprehension Exercises

4.4 Let Us Sum Up

4.0 OBJECTIVES

In Unit IV our objective is to acquaint you with the life and works of two other great men of letters — Edmund Spenser and John Milton. Here we will discuss Spenser's *The Fairy Queene* and Milton's *Samson Agonistes*. We shall further go into the salient features of these works and answer some of the important questions. You will be able to:

- Describe their life and works.
- Give an outline of their works.

- Evaluate critically their true worth.

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4.1 EDMUND SPENSER

His Birth and Upbringing

Edmund Spenser was born in the year 1553 in London. Not much is known of his parents except that his mother's name was Elizabeth and that she was of gentle birth. He was educated for some time at the Merchant Taylor's School, and then in 1569, at the age of sixteen, was sent to Pembroke Hall, Cambridge. He earned his Bachelor's degree in 1557 and Master's degree in 1576.

Spenser in London

He is noticed in London during the year 1576 as a member of the famous literary circle surrounding Sir Phillip Sidney and his uncle, the Earl of Leicester. He had a deep respect for both Sidney and his uncle. The former patronized him, introduces him to the queen, and exhorts him in his imitation of classical meters. In 1580, Sidney's patronage bore fruit, for through his efforts, Spenser was appointed Secretary to *Lord Grey De Wilton,* who had just been appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland.

In Ireland

He went with Lord Grey to Ireland, when he took up his responsibility there. He lived in that country for his remaining life, except occasional flying visits to England to publish poems or in search of preferment. The Irish people with whom he was surrounded were in revolt. They were savage and cruel, and hostile to the English. Spenser himself looked upon his life in Ireland as a kind of banishment. In his, "*Colin Clout's Come Home Again*", he gives full vent to his mood of dissatisfaction and frustration, and of his yearning to return to Cynthia (Elizabeth) and her glorious land.

Prosperity: The Fairy Queen

In Ireland he served the government in different capacities, and saw his full share of the rebellion, outrage and misery that prevailed the forlorn land. His services were soon appreciated, and he was granted the *Kilcolman Castle* with

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302 acres of land around it. He was in comfortable circumstances, and was within reach of a cultivated society, "which gave him the stimulus of hearty admiration both as poet and scholar." The scenery around was peaceful and splendid. He felt its charm and devoted many passages in *The Fairy Queen*.

His Frustration with London

Despite these great surroundings he longed for the capital, his hometown. He gladly accompanied Sir Walter Raleigh thither in 1589, with the aim of getting published the first three books of his masterpiece, which had begun ten years before. But the poet did not stay long in London to enjoy his fame. His thoughtful and noble nature was deeply shocked by the jealousies, intrigues and selfishness of the royal court, and the capital lost all its fascination for him.

His Marriage and Later His Death

He returned to Ireland after only two years' stay in London. In 1594, he married '*Amoretti*'. By her he had four children. He visited London in 1595, for a short time, where he published three more books of the *Fairy Queen.* He had now reached the height of his felicity. Now he was the first poet of the age by universal acclaim, and had a comfortable income and property, and was also surrounded by a loving family. But his prosperity was short lived. The Irish rose in revolt and in 1598 burned down his residence. One of the children also perished in the fire, and it was with great difficulty that the poet could escape with his wife and other children. He returned to London a ruined and disappointed man, where he died the next year in January 1599, at the age of 45. He was buried in the *Westminster Abbey* next to Chaucer.

His Character

He died a poor man, but not *"for lack of bread",* as **Ben Jonson** would like us to believe. He died young, but he was able to achieve much. Overall, his life may be reckoned a happy one. He was fortunate in the friendship of the best men and women of his times, in the seclusion which left him free to enjoy the still better society of the past, and in the loving recognition of his country men. "All that we know of him is amiable and of good report. He was faithful to the friendship of his youth, pure in his loves, unblemished in his life. Above all, the ideal with him was not a thing apart and unachievable, but the sweetener and ennobler of the street and the fireside."

His Works

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The Works on which rests Spenser's fame as a poet are as follows in chronological order:

(1) *The Shepherd's Calendar* (1579). It is pastoral in the manner of the artificial pastorals that were very popular during the Renaissance. It is a series of twelve eclogues, one for each month of the year.

(2) *The Complaints* (1591). The work contains several small poems including (a) *The Ruins of Times,* (b) *The Tears of the Muses* and (c) *Mulopotmos,* or *The Fate of the Butterflies.* It is a condemnation of the age.

(3) *Mother Hubbard's Tale* (1591). The fable is the only poem written by Spenser with a definite satiric purpose. He is sharp, rude, and censorious. It is aimed at Lord Burleigh.

(4) *Colin Clout Comes Home Again* (1595). It is graceful, personal pastoral. Colin Clout is Spenser himself. The poet voices his dissatisfaction with the life of the court of Queen Elizabeth which he visited with Raleigh.

(5) *The Amoretti and The Epithalamion* (1596). *The Amoretti* is a collection of 88 sonnets in which the poet voices his sincere feeling for Elizabeth Boyle, the Irish women he married.

Spenser's sonnet consists of three quatrains followed by a couplet, linked together by an artistic arrangement of rhymes.

(6) *Prothalamion* (1596) It's an ode celebrating the marriage of another, just as the Epithalamion had celebrated his own marriage. It is full of smooth images and harmonious lines.

(7) *The Four Hymns* (1596) including the *Hymn to Beauty* and *Hymn to Love.* The essence of his philosophy is expressed in these hymns. In the manner of Plato, he identifies supreme Beauty with supreme God.

(8) His Prose Works: Besides his letters, he penned a long pamphlet "*A View of the Present State of Ireland",* in which he expressed his views

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on the Irish question. His views are exceedingly hostile to the Irish and the methods he suggests verge on pure terrorism.

(9) *The Fairie Queen.* He worked over this long epic for twenty years, which remained incomplete at his death. It is one of the most famous Epics of ancient and modern times, and Spenser's *Tour De Force.* As such it deserves a separate treatment.

4.1.1 SPENSER AS THE POET'S POET

Spenser as The Poet's Poet

Or

His Service to English poetry

Or

Spenser as the second father of English poetry

Or

Spenser's Greatness as a Poet

The Prince of Poets of His Time

Charles Lamb made the most appropriate criticism of Spenser when he called him the "Poets' Poet". His greatness was immediately recognized with his first publication of his *Shepherd's Calendar* in 1579. His is considered as one of the epochs in English literature

His Wide lnfluence

Spenser's influence has continued to grow ever since, and he has trained and instructed more poets and more eminent ones than any other writer of English verse.

Throughout the 17^{th}, 18^{th} and 19^{th} centuries a host of poets followed him, called him their master and exalted him as their guide and mentor. Milton, Browne, and the two Fletchers were his professed disciples. Cowley tells us that

he became, "irrevocably" a poet by reading his *Fairie Queene* as a boy. Dryden unreservedly acknowledged that Spenser had been his master in English, and further adds that, *"no man was ever born with a greater genius or more knowledge to support it"*. Pope is all praises for him. Thomson referred to him as, "*my master Spenser"*. Collins, Gray and Akenside all show his powerful influence, and even Wordsworth praises him. Scott also acknowledges him as his master and praised him for his nobleness, purity, and charm. Keats and the Pre-Raphaelite were inspired by Spenser's word-painting and picturesque descriptions. Shelley, Byron and Keats wrote their best poems in the Spenserian style.

His Learning

He was very scholarly, well-versed in the literature and Mythology of ancient Greece and Rome, as well as in the literature of his own age. In the Age of the renaissance there was a great revival of ancient learning, and scholars, like Spenser, dived deep into the treasures of classical learning. Spenser had read widely of ancient literature and in his works references to Ovid, Homer, Arisoto, Ronsard, Petrarch, Tasso etc. are common. The pastoral poetry of Virgil and Theocritus provided the main inspiration for his *Shepherds' Calendar*. His ideas of human perfection are drawn from Aristotle and the aim of the *Fairie Queene* is to fashion a young man in noble and virtuous discipline. From Plato he learned to spiritualise Beauty and to identify it with Good.

His Noble Conception of His Vocation

Spenser is the poet's poet and the second Father of English poetry for the reason that it was he, and not Chaucer, who gave to the poets, not only of his own age, but of all ages a high and noble conception of their calling. Together with Plato, Ovid and Harace he believed that the poet was a creator like a God, and so shared some of His immortality. The poet works with immortal fame and devotion because he was sure to be rewarded with immortal fame. Powerful empires, great and noble civilizations and deed of men, may be destroyed and forgotten, but art and poetry remain in all their strength and brightness. His faith in the permanence of poetry and the immortality of poets was so absolute that we can say with conviction that he believed poetry to be divine—a gift bestowed upon a few favoured mortals. It could not be had by labour and learning but was the result of

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divine inspiration. It is this high sense of his vocation that differentiates Spenser from other poets and makes him the leader, and the prince of poets as well.

His Contribution to English Poetry

The age of Spenser was an age of intense patriotism. Under the inspiring leadership of her great and glorious Queen, England had already crushed the Spanish Armada, and her sailors Duke, Hawkins and Forbisher had already equalled the exploits of the best sailors of Spain, France and Italy. England could already hold her own with the nations of the world in war, traffic and exploration. But she lagged far behind in the realm of poetry. Undoubtedly, Chaucer had written great continental poems, both ancient and modern. This was Spenser's mission and he performed it very well. He set out to bestow England with poetry great in kind, in style, and also in thought. He showed the world, in Renwick's words, that "*modern England was capable of poetry as great as that of any other age and country, that he had her share of poetic power, of art and learning*"**.** It was a great achievement for any man, and the one who performs this feat well qualifies for the title "Poets' poet".

The Moral Spirit of His Works

Chaucer is surely a great poet, and is fittingly acknowledged as the father of English poetry. Spenser's poetry especially the *Fairy Queene,* contain a moral doctrine, which has ever since worked on the minds of men and inspired them to right thinking and right doing. Emotion, intuition, tradition, learning, the sense of beauty, and the sense of right thinking, and also the sense of divinity—all combined in that ideal. The philosophy of the ancients, the teaching of the Church, the custom of English nobility, were all fused together. Hence it has been a source of inspiration to countless generation of poets.

His Contribution to English Language

Spenser's contribution to English style, diction and versification are innumerable. He was a craftsman by birth and training. He knew that a poet could be truly great if he had not acquired knowledge and skill in his own craft. In his age the English language and grammar was still in a flux and as Renwick points out, "He treated the English language as if it belonged to him and not he to it." He coined new words, imported many from France and Italy, and saved many an obsolete word from oblivion. He interchanged parts of speech, made one word do

the work of another, freely dropped preposition, and thus imparted to the English language a rare flexibility and beauty.

His Contribution to English Versification

Equally important and diverse are the poet's contribution to English versification. His greatest contribution in the field is the Spenserian stanza. E. Albert praises the stanza and writes, "The complicated rhymes of the stanza suit the inter-woven harmonies of the style; and the long line at the end acts either as a dignified conclusion, or as a longer and stronger link with the succeeding stanza. The alliteration, vowel-music, and cadence are cunningly fashioned, adroitly developed, and sumptuously appropriate, in these last respects Spenser is peerless". "The service," says J.R. Lowell**, "**which Spenser did to our literature by his exquisite sense of harmony is incalculable."

Spenser—The Poets' Poet

It is for these reasons that Spenser has exercised so much fascination on all succeeding poets. His incalculable services to English language, poetry and versification merit him to be universally acknowledged as the leader of English poets. Lamb was right in calling him the "Poets' poet". He is undoubtedly one of the greatest of English poets.

4.1.2 THE CHARACTER OF LADY UNA

The Character of Lady Una

Or

Spenser's Conception of Womanhood

Spenser's Ideal of Womanhood

In his attitude towards woman, as in so many other respects Spenser shows himself to be a true child of his age. In the middle Ages, women were treated as beautiful toys, mere playthings to delight and comfort men in their leisure hours.

They were shown an empty adoration and worship, which was rather a mockery than a reality, as they were not allowed any part in the serious business of life. But with the Renaissance a perceivable change was brought about in their status. They acquired education, even learning, and became the companions, friends and guides of men. The general Elizabethan attitude towards the fair sex was one of adoration. Platonism was the fashion of the day. In the *Fairie Queen* he vexes eloquent over the good in them but tradition of courtly love, chivalry and knight errantry condition his outlook, and in Book I, Canto III of his epic, he reveals himself to be a champion of the sex.

His Delight in Female Beauty

Spenser was a class by himself in his adoration of Beauty. He took almost a pagan delight in sensuous beauty, especially in that of a woman. A woman's physique fills him with thrill. None of its details escapes his observation. The *Fairie Queen* is a long picture gallery, packed with countless sensuous and colourful pen picture of beautiful womanhood. For example, Lady Una, the heroine of the first book, is exceedingly beautiful. Spenser looks upon this sensuous beauty to be but a reflection of the spiritual.

His Heroines as Types

H.M. Percival in his worthy edition of the *Fairie Queen* points out that all the female characters of Spenser are types of pure abstract virtues, and, therefore they cannot be what Shakespeare's heroines are complex, i.e. of many virtues and emotions. His *Britomart* symbolizes chastity a quality. Spenser values chastity more than any other thing in his female characters. They are all embodiments of goodness and have been idealized. They appear to be mere abstractions rather than creatures of flesh and blood. That is why, it has been said, we can distinguish one character of Spenser from another only by his or her name, for every lady is "the fairest ever seen" and every knight the exact mirror of chivalry.

Lady Una—A Type as Well as an Individual

If not all, some of his heroines have been fully individualized. At least this is applicable to Lady Una, the heroine of the First Book of the Fairie Queen.

A Loving and Caring Daughter

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Lady Una is the daughter of a king. She has passed her girlhood, in all comforts and luxury, under the protected care of her parents. She is weak and pure, and without any experience of the world. Although she is inexperienced, weak and innocent, she does not hesitate to start out in search of her parents when the foul dragon imprisons them. She undergoes great trouble and suffering, and also dangers and difficulties, she persists in her search. Her persistence, her love, and his patience are eventually rewarded, and she succeeds in securing the freedom of her parents.

Her Love for her Knight

She is equally devoted to the Red-Cross Knight. She lives for him, and is miserable when he is separated from her by the foul scheming of the magician *Archimago*. Heart broken she wanders in search of him and suffers all sorts of privations and dangers in the way. When finally she succeeds in rescuing him from the dungeon of Orgoglio, not a word of complaint does she utter for his cruel desertion. On the contrary, she extends to the false one a warm welcome.

Her Forgiving Nature

Lady Una's life shows that she has an infinite capacity to put up with sorrow and suffering and an equally infinite capacity of forgiveness. She forgives even her worst enemy

Duessa, who had done her utmost to harm her and injure her.

Her Wisdom

It is the suffering of Lady Una that is the main source of pathos in the book. It is her wisdom that is the main source of action in it. She is quite innocent and inexperienced as regards herself. That is why she is so easily deceived not once but twice by Archimago. Her wisdom is seen in the manner she guides her champion, the Red-Cross Knight. It is again she who guides Prince Arthur to Orgoglio's castle. Following his victory over the giant, she warns him against feeling complacent as Duessa still lives.

Lady Una—Spenser's Ideal

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Lady Una, in short, is the apotheosis of womankind. She is Spenser's ideal of a perfect woman. Duty, love, forgiveness, patience, innocence and wisdom are the qualities of her character. She is a type as well as an individual and has been entirely humanized.

4.1.3 "THE FAIRY QUEEN" AS AN ALLEGORY

"The Fairy Queen" As An Allegory

Or

"The Fairy Queen": Moral and Religious Allegory

Personal and Political Allegory in "The Fairy Queen"

Allegory was the favourite device in the Middle Ages to make abstract thought concrete and clear. It was still in fashion in the age of Elizabeth. A work without allegory was considered unworthy of serious attention. Spenser was led to select allegory for his purposes because of the force of medieval tradition. He could best express his abstract ideas through the medium of concrete symbols – hence the great utility of allegory for him.

"Fairy Queen": The Three Allegories

In the *Fairy Queen* there is a fusion of three kinds of allegories (1) a moral and spiritual allegory dealing with the action and interaction of virtues and vices (2) a religious allegory dealing with the important religious events of the age (3) a personal and historical allegory.

The Moral and Spiritual Allegory

The good characters of the book stand for a variety of virtues, while the bad characters stand for the corresponding vices. The Red Cross Knight represents Holiness and Lady Una, Truth, Goodness and Wisdom. Her parents symbolize the Human race and the Dragon who has imprisoned them stands for Evil. The

mission of Holiness is to help Truth to fight Evil and thus regain its rightful place in the human heart.

In the course of mission, Holiness has to meet many adventures and fight many evils. First of all, it has to encounter a terrible monster which is Error. As long as Holiness is helped by truth, it is able to defeat the forces of Evil. Thus the Red Cross Knight encouraged by Lady Una kills the monster and marches ahead on his way. This is the first moral truth taught by the book.

Holiness and truth may defeat Errors when it faces them openly without any disguise, but it proves too much for them. Archimago, the symbol of hypocrisy succeeds in separating Holiness from Truth. The Red Cross Knight takes Duessa, representing Falsehood, to be his lady-love; and Lady Una wanders forlorn in search of her champion.

His Religious Allegory

This moral and spiritual allegory mingles with the religious allegory of the book. The different characters also stand for the various religious events and dignitaries of the age. The Reformation was the most important religious movement of the time and in his epic Spenser has presented it in an allegorical manner. He is all for the Reformed Church of England, which is the only true church for him, and against Papacy and the Catholic Church. The religious allegory is not so obvious as the moral one; only the bare outlines and broad facts are intelligible. The Red Cross Knight, for example, represents the Manhood of England, or the Reformed church, fighting against corruption, Pride and manifold evils of Papacy, Paganism and Catholicism. The parents of Una symbolize Humanity, and the foul Dragon who has captured them stands for the Pope of Rome. Archimago represents the cunning and hypocrisy of Papacy i.e. the Roman Catholics. The papers and books which monster Error has swallowed signify the false teaching of the Catholic church, and Duessa is essentially Falsehood, Orgoglio represents Philip II of Spain, who befriended the Pope and did his best to weaken and harm England. In other words, the people of England have to face the combined might of the pope and Philip of Spain, and to struggle against the evils and corruptions of Catholic church, as well as the cunning and deceit of its followers. It was only after that the true Church of England could be restored to its rightful place and power.

The Personal and Political Allegory

With these allegories there mingles a third one–a political and personal allegory. Spenser wrote his epic especially for the glory of Queen Elizabeth and her courtiers, many of whom were his very personal or intimate friends. She represented the pride and glory of England and to glorify her was to glorify the nation. In Spenser's epic, she is *Gloriah,* the *Fairy Queen*, who sets various adventures to her knights symbolizing the courtiers of the queen of England. Lord Leicester is Arthur, Mary Stuart, Duessa; Lord Grey of Wilton, Governor of Ireland, who frees Ireland from the rebels. There are countless other personal and historical references.

Justification of Spenser

It is not for the allegory that we go to him, but for the wonderful, sensuous pictures of Beauty that abound in his epic. Even highly abstract thoughts find in his art concrete representations. As a word painter, and not as an allegorist, Spenser stands matchless and supreme in literature. The desire to rival painting in verse was born in English poetry through him, and in this respect he has inspired, and has been imitated, by the best of English poets. Thomson, Keats, Shelley, Byron and the Pre-Raphaelites are all indebted to him for their word painting.

4.2 MILTON

4.2.1 SAMSON AGONISTES

Samson Agonistes

Samson: The Chosen of God

"Samson Agonistes is classical in form Hebraic". In fact, in it we find a happy and judicious blend of the Hellenic and Hebraic impulses. *The Bible* is the source of Samson's story which Milton has dramatised. Samson was an Israelite who were then being persecuted by the Philistines, a godless people who lived in the land of Gaza in great luxury. Samson was chosen by God to be the champion of his people, to protect them and avenge the wrongs done to them. One night an angel of God visited him and blessed him with the strength of Hercules. This strength was to reside in his hair and he was warned that he would lose that power if his hair were shorn.

His Deeds of Valour

Blessed in this manner Samson could perform great deeds of valour. He could defeat single-handedly whole armies of the Philistines. Once he defeated and routed one thousand of them with the jawbone of an ass. The Philistines were greatly terrified. When they could not face him in open fight, they sought to overcome him through fraud and deceit. They sent one of their women, Delila, to tempt him and entice him into marriage with her. Delila was young and beautiful and Samson fell an easy prey to her seduction. Regardless of the opposition of the people he married her. Soon Delila succeeded in knowing the secret of his strength and then betrayed him to his enemies. One day when he was asleep, she cut off his hair, so that he became an ordinary man and helpless before the strength of his enemies. For her treachery and double-dealing, Delila has become proverbial for female insconstancy and weakness. Like Eve and Delila, all women are frail and responsible for the sin and suffering of man. In Delila's portrait, Milton has poured all his own contempt for womankind—as he himself had been

seduced into marriage with a woman of the royalists and, like Samson, had been betrayed and deserted by her.

Delila's Betrayal

Shorn of his superhuman strength, Samson was easily captured and imprisoned by his enemies. He was blinded, forced to do tough menial work, and tortured, humiliated and insulted in different ways. Milton's play opens at this late stage in Samson's career. In the very beginning, we are shown Samson blind and helpless in the captivity of the philistines. He suffers from great spiritual torture, for he feels that owing to his great sin in yielding to the sensual charms of Delila, in marrying her and betraying his secret to her, God has forsaken him and he must suffer under divine judgment. Samson's soul is now the battlefield of warring and conflicting passions.

The Chorus

His friends, relatives, and well-wishers visit Samson in prison and try to console him and cheer him up. They form the Chorus of the play. The Chorus speaks at regular intervals all through the play, to comment on character and action and also to tell the audience of the events which have happened off the stage. Thus it performs the function, which the chorus performs in a Greek tragedy. It stands between the action and the audience and through its comments stresses the significance of the action. It also highlights the contrast between Samson's past glory and might, and his present helplessness.

The Visitors: His Father and Others

Samson's father, Manoa, visits him and makes an effort to console him with hopes of securing his release from captivity by paying due ransom to the Philistines. After that comes Delila to seek his forgiveness and also to tempt him with the offer of a comfortable home and wifely service. However Samson disdainfully spurns her offer and refuses even to touch her hand which she holds out to him. He is also visited by the giant Harapha who insults and mocks at him. Then comes an officer of the Philistines to tell him that on that day the festival of Dagon, the god of the Philistines, was to be celebrated and he must show his feats of strength in the temple of Dagon where all were to gather. First, he refuses to obey, but later, inspired by God, he agrees to do so. During his captivity, his hair has grown, and miraculously his strength has returned. After all God has not

deserted him and he can still have his revenge upon his enemies. At his appeal he is taken to the pillar, which is the pivot of the whole temple. Since he is again blessed with superhuman strength, he pulls down the pillar and brings down the entire colossal structure over his own head and over the head of his enemies. He destroys himself and his enemies also.

The Tragedy

The death of Samson and the annihilation of the Philistines is told to Manoa by a messenger. The Chorus mourns his death. But Manoa consoles them. By his heroic exploit and death, he has brought eternal fame to his house and to himself, and eternal mourning and grief to Gaza. By his heroic self-sacrifice, he has shown that God had not deserted him, as they had feared. God was with him up to the end and enabled him to win immortal glory for Israel. Therefore, there was no reason for them to weep. His death was noble and they must derive hope and comfort from it. They would go and find out his blood-stained body, wash it with pure water and fragrant herbs and take it with all due funeral honours to their home. The enemies had suffered a ruthless blow and were in no position to prevent them from doing so. At home, they would bury him in a fitting tomb and plant evergreen laurels and shady palms round it. On its walls they would etch stories and songs about his grand deeds. The youths of Israel shall eternally draw inspiration from his heroic example. Virgins of the land shall honour his tomb by their visits. They would regret only his wrong choice of a wife, for which he paid so dearly.

The Ways of God to Man Justified

The tragedy closes with the final chant of the Chorus wherein the ways of God to Man are justified. Though we often doubt the wisdom of God, but whatever He does is always found to be the best in human interest finally. The life and death of Samson demonstrates the truth that though often He seems to forsake His chosen ones, He returns to them eventually and inspires them to noble use. It is for this reason that the whole of Gaza to-day is plunged in grief, and all those who are faithful to him are enriched and made wise by every new experience. Thus the death of Samson is the source of great strength, peace and consolation for them and they can now go home with, “Calm of mind, all passion spent.” Their feelings of fear and pity have been purged off, and calm and peace have been restored to them.

4.2.2 CLASSICAL IN FORM PUT HEBRAIC IN SPIRIT

"Samson Agonistes is the finest imitation of ancient Greek drama"

Or

"Samson Agonistes is classical in form put Hebraic in spirit"

Or

"Samson Agonistes is as Greek a thing as ever was written in English"

In *Samson Agonistes* Milton has dramatised for a Christian audience a Biblical Myth in the form of Greek tragedy. This has given rise to a hot debate if this play is Hellenic or Hebraic in spirit. Although all agree with the view that in language and structure it is Hellenic, most contradictory views have been expressed with regard to its substance or meaning. In the view of Prof. Richard Jebb, "*Samson Agonistes* is classical both in language and structure", but as to its spirit, which the learned critic defines as the "dominant idea, play is not Greek at all". In his view its spirit—its dominant idea—is Hebraic.

Prof. Jebb writes that the play in not Hellenic in spirit as in it the contrast in not between man and fate but between the Israel's God, the true God, and the false god, Dagon, and the omnipotence of the former is vindicated. Samson is the champion of Israelites against the Philistines. Jehovah is the God of the Israelites; Dagon is the god of the Philistines. Samson, through unfaithfulness to himself, has been made to fall into the hands of the idolaters; and Israel shares in his humiliation and disgrace. Nevertheless, even in this abasement, Samson is confident that the true God of Israel will lastly assert—His own majesty against the idol one. This confidence is justified: the honour of the true God and of His chosen people is vindicated by the final catastrophe. This is the issue of the drama—Jehovah has prevailed over Dagon; Israel is avenged on Philistines. Prof. Jebb concludes, "*Samson Agonistes* is a great poem: it is also a noble but neither as poem nor as drama is it Hellenic."

However, John Bailey, Verity and W.R. Parker and a host of other critics agree that Samson Agonistes is Hellenic, and not Hebraic, both in its method and its spirit. Actually Prof. Jebb has interpreted the word 'spirit' rather narrowly.

With regard to the tone or spirit arising from the observance of artistic principles, the play has this tone, temper or spirit. Milton has observed strictly the two dominant artistic principles of the Greeks—symmetry and restrain. The unities have been closely observed, i.e. by beginning the play at a late stage in the life of the hero, the essential concentration and condensation have been achieved. Throughout, the attention has been focused on the agony of the chief protagonist. The Chorus has been used in the Greek manner, and style and diction have the austerity, simplicity, and economy of the Greek. The other formal devices of Greek tragedy such as the use of irony, the use of messenger, etc., have also been pressed into service.

This use of classical technique results, as Verity points out, "in an indefinable something," in a tone or a temper, which is truly classical. The tone of the Greek tragedy is serious all through. It is solemn to the point of gravity with hardly a trace of humour. It is didactic, and there is no doubting the religious spirit of the play. The general tone of piety, of reverence for the gods, never goes out of our sight. Greek tragedy is fundamentally sublime—it forever has elevation.

Such are the more important characteristics of the spirit or tone of the Greek tragedy, and quite apparently that spirit or tone marks Samson Agonistes as well. As Parker points out, there is no intermixing of the comic stuff with the tragic gloom and gravity. Milton has made his play serious enough to meet the most rigorous of standards. All the way through it runs, as in the dramas of the Greek, a sense of the gravity of human life. The issues are profound, the manner is severe, and the whole piece has a gravity and grandeur, which makes it truly Hellenic.

The "vein of profound and earnest thoughtfulness" is so great that one critic has described the play as Milton's "philosophical testament". There lies in it what Haigh calls a "pervading sense of the dark mystery of existence". There is a wistful "craving for knowledge concerning the ways of Providence".

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Attic drama is didactic in tone and purpose equally. The preface to *Samson Agonistes* draws attention to the position of tragedy as the "moralist, and most profitable" of poems. His acceptance of the doctrine of katharsis is another evidence of his didactic rationale. And 'Philosophers', we are told, 'frequently cite out of Tragic poets' in order to "illustrate their discourse'. Indeed, Samson Agonistes in itself proof enough of Milton's wish to instruct.

The Greek tragedy is characterized by sublimity. One finds it as spiritually elevating. Many reasons may be given for this. Probably it is so because we witness, to borrow Jebb's phrase, "an ideal grandeur of agony".

We not only are confronted with the problem of human misery; there is always 'something that makes it endurable'. It may be, as Lucas hints, merely 'the thought that the hero, like Samson, has at least got cleanly off the stage'. But whatever its cause, Milton has caught this spirit in Samson Agonistes.

Prof. Jebb is perfectly right in saying that the grandeur and sublimity of classical tragedy arise from 'contrast', but he makes a mistake in thinking that this contrast must be between 'man and fate'. In Milton's tragedy the contrast between true God and his champion and god Dagon and his Champions achieve this. To conclude with the words of W.R. Parker, "The Greek spirit is a combination, a blend, of all the aspects we have been considering, and doubtless of many more."

Milton has accomplished a rare synthesis of the qualities, which together contribute to the grandeur, elevation, and sublimity of Attic tragedy. It is Hellenic both in its form and spirit. As Coleridge puts it, "Samson Agonistes is the finest imitation of the ancient Greek drama that has ever been or ever would be written."

"Samson Agonistes":'Katharsis' in the play

Or

"Samson Agonistes" as a tragedy

Or

The plot of the play: Simple or Complex?

Samson has the necessary characteristics laid down by Aristotle for a tragic hero. The hero is not perfectly virtuous, for the tragic end of such a man would raise neither pity nor terror, but indignation. Neither is he deliberately vicious, for the punishment of such a man would call forth approbation; but while possessing heroic virtues, he is, at the same time, subject to human frailty, and, yielding to it in a moment of weakness, he commits a blunder and becomes a tragic figure.

Samson may not have a high rank and position but his spiritual loftiness makes him exalted and exceptional. He has been a Nazarite from birth, the consecrated saviour of his people, a judge in Israel for twenty years, and single-handed, the curse and terror of the Philistines.

As said by Aristotle, the action of a tragedy should be of a certain magnitude and it must be serious all through. The action of Samson Agonistes has, both these qualities. Its action is great in a twofold sense, both, of which are not always present together, even in Greek tragedy. What may be called the 'physical greatness' of the action, meaning the performance of deeds such as the Gods, heroes of antiquity delighted in, is quite apparent in the catastrophe. But there is, a moral greatness, namely, the sacrifice of one's own self for the sake of others – that class it with the greatest and noblest action in the whole range of Greek drama.

Aristotle also put down that the action should be probable. The bare fact that the deeds of Samson were recorded in Scripture would give them in Milton's eyes a degree of truth higher than probability.

NOTES

The development of the plot shows how well this requirement has been met. Schlegel lays down 'Freedom within and Necessity without' as the two governing principles in the action of a Greek drama. They operate in Samson Agonistes as well. In the unconquerable spirit of Samson, rising under divine inspiration, and asserting itself when the enemies believed it to have been crushed.

According to Aristotle tragedy imitates a serious action, and effects through pity and fear, a Purgation or Purification of such emotion. As Percival points out, 'The action of a tragedy is meant to excite pity and terror, and these feeling are most powerfully excited by events that happen unexpectedly. The successive scenes in this drama are so arranged that they bring expectation nearer and nearer to some catastrophe – but not the one that actually happens. Manoa tells Samson of his purpose to ransom him, but though Samson, weary of life and longing for death, cares little for his father's proposal, still Manoa's parting words inspire us with some hope of Samson's release. Dalila offers to intervene for his release, but he drives her away with savage scorn, and the indifference of her parting words chills that hope, and makes us fear that Samson is indeed left to his lot. Harapha's rudeness, overmatched by Samson's defiant aggressiveness, turns to malice, which threatens to make his lot worse than it is, by basely informing against him: and, lastly the lords of the Philistines at whose mercy Samson completely lies, affronted by him through their officer.

Next comes the final catastrophe, when that doubt is solved, and the answer given in Samson's triumph over his enemies. The sudden and unexpected nature of the final catastrophe contributes to the katharsis, which, according to Aristotle, is the end of tragedy.

Observing on the Katharsis brought about by the play Parker writes, "the play seems to me an obvious attempt to bring about Katharsis." The many references to Samson's glorious past are means to provoke our pity, and most of the last portion of the play is a conscious attempt to stir up fear. The chorus, even more obviously, goes through these two emotions; and since the Chorus approximates to our view as readers, we are further prompted to pity and fear. That Milton is later striving for a purgation of these emotions, which he tried to stimulate, is apparent from the two closing speeches. Manoa speaks of 'what may quiet us in a death so noble'. Then the concluding chorus rounds off with 'calm of mind all passion spent'.

In most of the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripedes, there is a similar relaxing and soothing of the tension. Whatever be the cause, the ending of Samson Agonistes is more than Miltonic; it is Aristotelian; it is "Greek".

We leave the play with our minds in peace. The passions that had been aroused by the action of the play are toned down and a mood of quiet acceptance and resignation is induced. All is for the best, and thus the ways of God to man are justified.

4.2.4 "SAMSON AGONISTES": THE SUBJECTIVE ELEMENT

"Samson Agonistes": The Subjective Element

Or

"Samson Agonistes": The Autobiographical Note

Or

The Parallel between Milton and Samson

John Milton put more of himself into his representation of Samson than into any other character created by him. Though the parallel does not extend to all the details, the resemblance is amazingly close. Milton's blindness, his unhappy marriage with "the daughter of an infidel", his championship of the Puritan cause, the old age of a defeated champion fallen on evil days, the sense of physical helplessness, England in the possession of the philistines, and he stranger in it surrounded by enemies, his hopes crushed, but his faith remaining unconquerable—all these find their parallel mention in the career and character of Samson. This imparts to the work a unique autobiographical significance.

The personal note is noticeable in many passages. In the Second Choral Song, the Chorus laments,

Their Carcasses

To dogs and fowls a prey, or else captived

Or to the unjust trial under change of times.

These lines basically refer to the desecration of the bodies of Cromwell and other puritan leaders, and to the unjust trials of men like Sir Henry Vane. In the agonized cry of Samson at being exposed,

To daily fraud contempt, abuse and wrong

We here express grief for Milton at his daughters' stealing and selling their blind father's books. The words "painful diseases and deformed" refer to the physical pain from which Milton suffered. Though he was temperate in his life, it is said that he suffered from gout in his old age, and would sit in the sun for relief as Samson does in the play.

There is yet another close resemblance between Milton and Samson. Each of them was aware of his dedication to the service of God, his own failure in the task, and the consequent desertion of God. The pathos in the various scenes is heightened by Milton's close identification of himself with Samson, Dalila's victim suffering from the oppression of the Philistines. Milton survived the triumph of his enemies whom he despised for their meanness and wild drunken pleasures. Samson too does likewise. Yet again in the heart of Milton, as in Samson's rankled the memory of the Samson's sense of power and dignity, his heroic enormity of mind, his will towards championship of God are Milton's own. So too, is his extreme suffering at the loss of sight, "the sun to me is dark, and silent is the moon". This may be the lament of Milton himself on his loss of sight.

Besides it should be kept in mind that in Samson Agonistes Milton is not merely complaining of his own lot. He rather identifies himself with the Puritan cause, which has been finally defeated. As Milton does not seem to have had anything to repent of so passionately, it shows to be just a vicarious repentance of the English people of whom Samson is the mouthpiece. It is the laments of the English people whom God had chosen to do great deeds, and who failed to perform the task entrusted to them. Unlike Samson, Milton was aware of no fall and had no guilty conscience. Samson is oppressed by feelings of despair, misery and tragic gloom, but Milton had no cause for his faith in God. Still he retained it

somehow which soothed and encouraged him, and enabled him to bear his lot—poverty, obscurity and unmerited neglect and blindness. Samson also has this religious faith. He has despair and occasional questionings about the mysterious ways of God, but his invincible faith in God leads him to attain tranquility of soul, as is expressed in the last Choral song.

His defeat due to his own weakness and defiance, and the present revelry and feasting of the philistines in the temple of their God—all these constitute a clear parallel to the circumstances of Milton's own life and to the life of the English nation. Besides the parallelism becomes complete when the two great personal misfortunes of Milton's life, his first marriage with a woman having no sympathy for him or his cause, and his blindness. The play is a piece of pathos as it is the expression of real suffering.

In the play we also find a very harsh and bitter indictment of womanhood, which stems from Milton's own experiences. Dramatically, epithets like 'specious monster', 'accomplished snare', 'Hyena', and 'viper' as applied to Dalila, are reasonable and justified. Samson feels strongly about the treachery done to him. It would have surprised had he used a milder language, which is Milton's own.

So we discover that there is the most striking resemblance between Samson and Milton himself. Milton's blindness, his life of temperance and abstemiousness like that of the Nazarites, his unhappy and unfortunate marriage with Marry Powell, the daughter of the royalists, his championship of the Puritan cause to which he had given twenty years of his life, the indifference with which his single-handed effort in this cause were received by England, the unmerited neglect bringing with it poverty and disease, into which he fell when that cause was defeated with the Restoration. England to him was no longer the adorable land of patriotism. His being in the possession of Philistines like a stranger surrounded by enemy forces, his hopes crushed and his faculties losing former strength, his career coming to an end, his presentiment of approaching death, have all been referred to through the character and life of Samson. All this imparts to Samson Agonistes, a most solemn and moving biographical interest and tone.

4.3 COMPREHENSION EXERCISES

NOTES

1. Examine Spenser as the Poet's Poet.
2. Discuss "The Fairie Queene" as An Allergy
3. Examine "The Fairie Queene" Religious Allegory
4. "Samson Agonistes' is classical in form but Hebraic in spirit"
5. Give an estimate of "Samson Agonistes" as a tragedy.
6. Discuss the Autobiographical Note in "Samson Agonistes".

4.4 LET US SUM UP

Unit IV has made you familiar with the life and works of two other great men of letters — Edmund Spenser and John Milton. Now you are in a position to discuss Spenser's *The Fairy Queene* and Milton's *Samson Agonistes*.

UNIT-V WEBSTER, BROWNE, CONGREVE

Structure

5.0 Objectives

5.1 JOHN WEBSTER

5.1.1 Webster as a Dramatist

5.1.2 A General Estimate Of Webster

5.1.3 The Duchess of Malfi

5.1.4 Character of *The Duchess of Malfi*

5.1.5 The finest tragedy in the English language outside Shakespeare

5.2 THOMAS BROWNE

5.2.1 Browne's Personality and the Personal Essay

5.2.2 Occasion of *The Urn-burial*

5.2.3 Browne's Approach to the Themes

5.2.4 Metaphysical Wit

5.2.5 The Art of Prose

5.2.6 Development of English Prose

5.2.7 The Nature of Beauty

5.2.8 Browne's Prose Style

5.2.9 The Christian custom of burial

5.2.10 Browne's views on immortality

5.3 WILLIAM CONGREVE

5.3.1 The Way of the World

5.3.2 *The Way of the World* mirrors society in a realistic manner

5.3.3 Characteristics of restoration comedy

5.3.4 Congreve's art as a dramatist

5.4. Comprehension Exercises

5.5 Let Us Sum Up

NOTES

5.0 OBJECTIVES

In Unit V we have selected John Webster, Thomas Browne and Congreve for our study. Our objective shall be to enlighten you regarding their lives and also bring into discussion some of their most important works. Here we shall study Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, Thomas Browne's *The Urn Burial* and Congreve's *The Way of the World*. You will be able to:

- Speak on their life and works
- Offer commentary on their select works.
- Critically analyze their works.

5.1 JOHN WEBSTER

Not much is known about the life of John Webster. He might have been born about the year 1580, free of the Merchant Taylor's Company. Nothing is known about his parents. He was admitted to the Middle Temple in 1598, and from at least as early as 1602, he was active in the theater. We do not know the year of his birth and death. He must have survived at least until 1624, the year of production of the *Monuments of Honor*. We do not know more than that. It would be unsafe to accept the statement- not made until 1698, and not confirmed by the parish registers-- that he was a clerk – a fact recorded on the little page of the *Monuments of Honour*-- is that he was a member of the Merchant Taylor's Company. Not much is known about him beyond that.

Literary Career: Its Three Phases

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Prof. Vaughan writes**,** "His literary activity falls, naturally, into three periods: *the first*, that of collaboration and apprenticeship (1602 to 1607); *the second,* that of the two great tragedies (1610 to 1614): *the third,* that of the tragic-comedies, and, probably, of *Appius and Virginia,* beginning about 1620, the probable date of *The Devil's Law Case,* and ending at a time unknown to us." It would be better to take each of these periods singly and then to consider the characteristics of his genius as a whole.

The First Period: Apprenticeship and Collaboration

During the first period, Webster produced no independent work. He was engaged in collaboration with other dramatists, particularly Dekker. After joining Middleton and others in two plays, *Caesar's Fall a*nd *The Two Harpies,* which have somehow perished, he is found collaborating with Dekker, Heywood and Wentworth Smith in the writing of a play entitled *Lady Jane*, and immediately followed by a second part (27 October), apparently from the hand of Dekker only. It has been universally been believed that these two plays are either wholly or in part identical with that which has come down to us under the title *Famous History of Sir Thomas Wyatt* (published 1607).

His next recorded work is his contribution to the second edition of Marston's *The Malcontent* (published 1604). It is probable that Webster is responsible for nothing more than the introduction to that strange and bitter drama. Such is a natural interpretation of the words on the title page, and in the heading to the introduction itself. After that came what have been called the citizen comedies, *West –Ward Hoe and North Ward Hoe,* both written in partnership with Dekker. Both were printed in 1607: but the former was entered at Stationer's hall as early as March 1605, the latter not until August 1607. The two are very akin to each other in many respects.

Second Period: The Two Masterpieces

This is the period of *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi.* Some three or four year separate this period from the preceding one. For the White Devil was printed in 1612; and the repeated borrowing from Rich's *New Description of Ireland* published in 1610, show that it must have been composed later than that year. It may well have been written in 1611. The exact source of

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this great tragedy is a problem which still remains unresolved. That it is based on events connected with the life of Paolo Giordano, Duke of Bracciano, and that these events took place in 1581-85, i.e. within the lifetime of Webster himself, is definite. Beyond that, nothing is clear.

The Last Period

From the tragedies we pass to the last period of Webster's career. The plays which would seem to belong to this period are five: *The Guise* and *A Late Murther of the Sonne Upon the Mother* (in partnership with Ford, 1624) both, regrettably, lost. *The Devils Law Case,* was published in 1623*; Appius and Virginia,* in 1654*;* and *A Cure for a Cuckold,* in 1661. None of the three that survived reaches the level of the two tragedies.

5.1.1 WEBSTER AS A DRAMATIST

A General Estimate of Webster as a Dramatist

Or

Webster: His Merits and Demerits as a Dramatist

Or

The greatness of Webster as a Dramatist

Or

Webster: Art of Characteristics

A Great Tragic Genius

Webster stands as the greatest figure among Jacobean dramatists. His greatness is fully brought out by the fact that he is generally bracketed with Shakespeare. To have invited comparison with the Bard of Avon is in itself a sign of great merit. He has left behind him a number of plays and he collaborated with contemporary dramatists in many other, but his other works are already dead and

forgotten. He tried his hand at comedy but could not succeed, as his genius was essentially tragic. Saintsbury says, "Of cheerfulness Webster himself knows nothing, his comedy whenever he attempts it, is forced guffaw, his passion of love, though powerful, has nothing bright or ethereal about it, but shares the luridness of his other motives, and he is most at home in the horror almost unmitigated." He lives today by virtue of his *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi,* which are the greatest among the post Shakespearean tragedies. They are immortal works and they will be read and enjoyed as long as English language lasts.

Pessimism and Morbidity

Literature mirrors the age and this is more so the case with drama which has to take into account the tastes and attitudes of the audiences. The age of Webster was an age in which the old values, ideals and beliefs were breaking down and had not yet been replaced by new ones. Thus there was a conflict between the old and the new, and melancholy and pessimism are the natural consequences of such a conflict and utter loss of faith. Webster was literally a man caught between "two worlds" and he shares the pessimism and gloom and melancholy of his age. Though the "stars may shine" now and then, there might be occasional flashes of light, but on the whole the atmosphere of his tragedies is gloomy, it is one of unrelieved darkness and sadness.

Pre-occupation with Death and Violence

The dramatist's pre-occupation with the morbid and macabre is clear from his fondness for scenes of bloodshed and violence. It is to a world of corruption, dishonesty, greed, cruelty and bloodshed that we are introduced. Tortures of the most horrifying kind are practiced, murders are frequent and the stage is literally littered with dead bodies. The good and the evil alike perish in the general conflagration. The presentation of a dead man's hand, the showing of wax figures of people, as if they were dead, the letting loose of madmen, the introduction of the executioner with all the apparatus of death, the strangling of innocent and helpless victims on the stage, all reflect the pre-occupation of the dramatist with the macabre and the morbid.

Concentration on the Mystery of Life and Death

There was great confusion and conflict in the thought of his generation. The old values and beliefs had lost their validity, and bewildered and at bay men searched new answer and solutions to the problems of life and death, Man's profoundest beliefs, his knowledge of god and the life of the soul in the other world, were being questioned. Webster brings passionate curiosity to a consideration of these questions, and it is for this reason that he, as **Una-Ellis Fermor** says, "concentrates upon the moments of high crisis and suffering, most of all upon the moments of death. He brings his characters to the verge of death and holds them there, suspended, subject to his questioning."

His Morality: Vision of life

Search for a new moral system, for a new set of values and ideals to replace the old and crumbling ones is as much a characteristic of Webster as of the writers in the modern age, in spite of the fact that he was deeply influenced by the teachings of Machiaville (*The Prince*), his plays make it fairly clear that he does not regard the governance of the world as Satanic. In his plays, as in *The Duchess of Malfi*, the virtuous might suffer and be ruined, but the wicked are never prosperous for long, and they meet their doom in the long run. He may not be certain about the future of the human soul and the life after death, he may not be able to provide any clear solution to the baffling problems of life and death, but one thing is certain, he considers the Supreme Power as essentially moral, a Power which cannot endure evil for any length of time, which ultimately expels evil, though at the cost of much that is good and virtuous.

But, as **David Cecil** writes, "Far from being a mere flamboyant sensation-monger, an unthinking composer of eloquent melodramas, he is a stern moral teacher whose plays are carefully designed to enforce the philosophy of human conduct in which he believes".

A General Estimate Of Webster

There are the politicians or Machiavellians, as Flamineo in *The White Devil* and Bosola and the Cardinal in *The Duchess*. There are strong, clear-minded masculine-feminine figures like Vittoria and Julia, and the more passive feminine figures as Isabella and the Duchess. Then there are chorus characters like Delio and Pescara, just and honest, their rectitude running like a tonic-infusion through the nightmare world created by Ferdinand and the Cardinal. Of these the politicians or Machiavellians are the most interesting and great attention is devoted to their growth. Their Machiavellism is sharply distinguished. For example, Bosola stands for a reflective and clear-headed politician, worthy to stand by Machiavelli's Politician, Cesare Borgia (in *The Prince*). Though Webster's characters are types, they are individuals as well. They are not monsters of wickedness or goodness, but complex living, breathing, human beings. Even the best have some weakness of character and the worst are humanised by some trace of good. Thus the Duchess is a Machiavellian as she marries secretly, Ferdinand is full of remorse and goes mad, and even the Cardinal, at least once, feels a pang of remorse. Bosola is the only one of the characters of Webster who change and grow under the stress of circumstance, and he grows into an avenger from a villain.

Webster's Satire

Throughout Webster's plays there are scattered comments on life, expressed in true epigrammatic style. Such maxims and epigrams are an expression of his reflections on life, and of his efforts to build up a moral system of his own, at least to bridge the gulf between "the two worlds", the old that was dying out and the new that was struggling to be born. Such are his comments, often satirical, on kingliness and the fate of princess upon women, upon policy, and upon a hundred other aspects of men and their life. Webster's satire is very wide-ranging. His comments make it quite clear that it is the virtue of resolution which he admires most of all. It does not matter whether a character is good or evil, what matters to him is that he must ever remain true to himself. For him, as Delio tells us at the end of *The Duchess*, "Integrity of life is fame's best friend".

A World of Unrelieved Gloom

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The world of Webster's tragedies is one of unrelieved gloom. We do not find in him that dramatic relief in the form of the jests and quibbles of the Fool which is such a marked feature of Shakespearean tragedy. However, there are variations of mood and emotion which constitute a sort of dramatic relief. Una-Fermor remarks, "In Webster's plays, the elasticity of the emotions is preserved by variations of mood, tempo and force. Again and again, after a tempest of rage, the rushing together of two whirlwinds, there is a sudden pause; the speech that follows seems barely audible by contrast with the thundering passions that have passed, but it falls into the silence with incalculable pathos and solemnity."

Poetic Imagery

Besides this varying of emotional mood and tempo, intimately akin to it, is the imaginative relief of the poetic imagery, the momentary escape into the world called up by the images, a world like that in which the events and characters move, but, by its very wealth of imaginative concentration, less actual -- a hidden country which, though full of macabre and hideous, sometimes obscene, forms, its yet a land of escape, into which we wander, are absorbed for a moment, immersed in its fantasy, and from which we return, as though from a dream, to the hurry and clash of events. This world of imagery, which is as different from the world of event and action, holds the third place in Webster's dreams –a reality hidden behind the other realities.

His Style

His is a style that, when the emotion grows intense and the tragic issues approach their climax, passes into that simplicity and clarity, that distinguish the great poetry of the Greek drama. So intensely is Webster's style and imagery woven with the concept of the play, so essentially is its function part of the function of the whole drama, that in great closing scenes of *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, it is impossible to isolate passages without losing that essential part of their effect which they draw from their dependence upon the whole foregoing drama. Una-Fermor rightly observes, "It is thus the range and interplay of mood, thought and imagery which gives them their richness and their variety, arriving at last at that impression and universality of implication which is an essential of great tragedy".

The Duchess of Malfi

The Warning

The Duchess of Malfi presents the story of a young woman who is cruelly persecuted and done to death, her only fault being that she marries beneath her rank. The Duchess of Malfi, the central figure in the tragedy is a young and beautiful widow. Her brothers, the Cardinal and Duke Ferdinand, warn her against a second marriage, especially one with a person of low birth. When they leave the court of Malfi to go to Rome, they leave the villain Bosola behind to work as their spy.

The Threat

However, the Duchess has already resolved to marry her steward Antonio. She knows that her marriage will anger her brothers. But she is in love with Antonio, and marries him secretly. Bosola learns the secret of the birth of a son to the Duchess, from a horoscope dropped carelessly by Antonio. He gives the information to the brothers. Ferdinand becomes furious and swears vengeance. But the identity of the father is not known to Bosola or to the brothers. Two or three years pass, and the Duchess has two more children. Ferdinand goes to Malfi. He enters the chamber of the Duchess by a false key and threatens to kill the Duchess and her secret husband. He leaves her after giving her a dagger meaning thereby that she should kill herself.

Bosola's Treachery

The Duchess sees danger and so secretly she arranges for the departure of Antonio to Ancona. After Antonio's departure she gives out that he has been dismissed from service for misappropriation. Bosola praises his noble and righteous qualities and thus gains the confidence of the Duchess. Seeing that Bosola is an admirer of Antonio, she reveals the secret of her marriage to him and he sends this information to Ferdinand as well as that he has escaped to Ancona.

Torture and Murder

The Duchess, at the suggestion of Bosola, goes to the shrine of Loretto, where she meets Antonio. But she has the least hint that this is her last meeting with him. The Cardinal through his influence with the Pope gets the Duchess and Antonio banished from Ancona. The Duchess sends away Antonio and her eldest son to Milan. Soon after, she is arrested and imprisoned in her own palace. She accepts her fate with calm and fortitude. The brothers harass the Duchess and subject her to horrible torture. First, she is offered a dead man's hand in the dark, and she is horrified to look at it when the lights are on. Secondly, she is shown the wax figures of Antonio and her children appearing as if they were dead. Thirdly, mad men are let loose upon her and they talk and sing and dance before her. Finally comes Bosola, accompanied with executioners with coffin, cords and a bell, and she is strangled to death.

The manner in which the Duchess is killed is horrifying. Bosola asks the Duchess to prepare herself for death. Her maid, Cariola, cries out in alarm, but the Duchess remains calm and composed. Next, Bosola tells the Duchess that she will be put to death by strangling. She welcomes death and says that death is the best gift that her brothers can give her. She offers herself to be strangled. When she is strangled she says, with resolute courage:

Pull and pull strongly, for your able strength

Must pull down heaven upon me.

Bosola, the Avenger

The punishment of the guilty is swift to follow, Ferdinand cannot bear the sight of his sister's dead face:

Cover her face; mine eyes dazzle; she died young.

He is filled with deep sorrow and remorse and refuses to reward Bosola for the vile deed he has committed. He becomes mad and Bosola decides to take revenge upon the two brothers. So he goes to the court of the Cardinal. There in the dark he fatally wounds Antonio thinking him to be the Cardinal. Then the Cardinal himself arrives on the scene, and Bosola stabs him. On hearing his cries for help, Ferdinand also comes there and he stabs Bosola and Bosola, in turn,

stabs him. Thus, Bosola's revenge is complete ruin of the family. The eldest son of the Duchess and Antonio is the only survivor to inherit the estate of Malfi.

Partial Justice

Thus the wicked, the forces of disorder, are eliminated, and moral order is established. There is no poetic justice, for the innocent and the virtuous Duchess, Antonio and their two children, also suffer and are destroyed. But there is partial justice as the wicked fail to prosper and get destroyed in the end. The evil is expelled and destroyed; it is another matter that along with it much good is also wasted.

5.1.4 Character of the Duchess of Malfi

Character of the Duchess of Malfi

A Charming Personality

The Duchess of Malfi is a fine and psychologically complex female character portrayed with great insight and poetic power. She is young and beautiful. She has sadly become a widow in the prime of her life, when she is still in full bloom of her youth. She has a charming and fascinating personality. She charms all who look at her. She is noble, innocent and gentle, dignified and graceful. In the very beginning of the play, we find Antonio praising her eloquently. In his opinion the Duchess is "the right noble Duchess", very different in temper from her brothers.

Pious and Virtuous

She is pious and religious minded. Her nights, nay, more, her very sleep, are more in heaven than other ladies' shrifts. Her days are practised in such noble virtue that she inspires respect among her admirers. In short, she stains the time past, lights the time to come.

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Her Tact and Courage

She is often likened to Shakespeare's Desdemona in her innocence, purity and pitiable death. But she is a lady of great tact, courage, resourcefulness and heroic endurance. In the very beginning of the play, Ferdinand warns her against a second marriage more especially against marriage with a person below her rank. But she is already in love with her Steward, Antonio, and her love is as sincere and true as it is profound. As soon as her brothers have departed she proceeds to woo and marry Antonio. Her wooing of Antonio reveals her tact, her womanly modesty, her courage and dignity and the passionate sweetness of her character, and the great charm inherent in these qualities is enhanced by her delicate humour and ironical self-depreciation in the very moment of her loving declaration.

Allen rightly observes, "That her choice has lighted upon Antonio is the surest indication we have of his worth; for it is plain that she is careful to preserve her own sense of her honour and that of her family. It is perhaps surprising that with her high sense of honour she should have been a party to prolonged secrecy in the matter of her marriage; and if we may judge from her own word, the preservation of the secret would seem to have been due to the influence of her husband rather than to her own wish."

Her Resourcefulness

Her resourcefulness and capacity for taking quick decision is brought out at least twice in the play. Soon after the visit of Ferdinand to her apartment, she is apprehensive regarding the safety of her husband and her son, and therefore, she immediately decides that they should leave her and go to Ancona where she would join them later. She then gives out that Antonio has been dismissed from service because he was dishonest and had misappropriated large sums of money. It is again she, who at a later stage, while leaving Ancona, resolves that they should at once separate, her husband and son going ahead of them to Milan. With her quick cleverness she at once apprehends that the letter, which Bosola has brought from her brothers, is a mere trap. In this way, by her prompt and quick decision she is able to save their lives, for, soon after, she is overtaken by Bosola and others and brought to Malfi as a prisoner.

Her Heroic Endurance:

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Such is the nobility of her nature that like sweet herbs, it gives out most sweet fragrance when it is crushed. Adversity brings out to the greatest advantage, her passionate tenderness and heroic fortitude. After parting with her husband and son on the road outside Ancona, she is so upset with grief and rage and despair that at length her mind seems to give way under the burden of suffering and she babbles fondly some old wives' tale of the vanity of the dog-fish and the salmon. The horrible tortures, however, inflicted by her brothers, serve but to save her mind already half-crazed with grief. Each new horror seems but to strengthen the resistance of her agonized soul. Even when life has truly become for her the most horrible curse that one can give, her spirit remains unconquered and unbroken. She says, "I am Duchess of Malfi still". Her last words spoken at the moment of death visibly bring out her faith in religion and the grace of God. She is intensely religious and this gives her strength to bear the horrible tortures that are inflicted upon her and the cruel death that is her lot.

Why Was She Murdered

The question often raised is as to why the Duchess was murdered. Was she really lustful, immoral and irreligious as her brothers think her to be? She was living in a corrupt court, and there is nothing surprising or unnatural if its general corruption has also infected her. Although no definite answer can be given to these questions but there is enough evidence in the play to show that she is chaste, virtuous, pure and religious. Perhaps the real answer lies in the fact that Ferdinand felt incestuous love for her, and it was sexual jealousy, and not any fault of the Duchess on her part, which prompted the murder. Also both the Cardinal and he himself felt that she had disgraced the family by marrying a person below her rank and status.

5.1.5 THE FINEST TRAGEDY IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE OUTSIDE SHAKESPEARE

"The Duchess of Malfi" is the finest tragedy in the English language outside Shakespeare

Its Greatness

The Duchess of Malfi has been highly praised by one critic after another, and Edmund Gosse goes to the extent of saying that it is, the "finest tragedy in the English language outside the works of Shakespeare". We may certainly not agree with such claims, for the play has certain faults and weaknesses and it has not the passionate intensity of *Macbeth*, *Othello* or *King Lear*, but there can be no denying the fact that it is a great tragedy, one in which melodrama has been raised to the level of great tragedy.

The Scenes of Horror

Webster's handling of these scenes of torment is excellent. When the play is staged, our attention is drawn not to the horrors but to the Duchess's reaction to them— she beholds horror, and we behold her. Our attention is fixed on the Duchess because she is so deep and pitiably human in her anguish. With an utmost courage that she has passed through the agony of despair into the hope that lies beyond, she dies with her thoughts on the lives of her children, forgetting that they are supposed to be dead. Filled with Job's faith that the Redeemer lives, she reaches out to the hope of a life after death. Before she is murdered, she kneels in Christian humility.

Representation of Spiritual Anguish

Webster succeeds in raising the melodramatic to the realm of high tragedy by showing its effect on the soul of the Duchess. We get a peep into her deep soul. The nobility, dignity, heroism and majesty of her soul are fully revealed. In spite of all the suffering that is inflicted upon her, she "remains the Duchess still". She does not yield or succumb, or pray for mercy to the evil-doer, but dies bravely and heroically with calm of mind all passion spent. She maintains her integrity against heavy odds. Vaughan observes thus, "The tragedy reveals the resistance of inborn

heroism to all assaults from without in the triumph of the inner self, when outward happiness is dashed to pieces." It is this heroism which is revealed in the present play, and therein lies its greatness as a tragedy.

Subtle Characterisation

One great flaw of a melodrama is lack of subtle life-like characters. In the present play the dramatist has shown great skill in characterisation, and thus has lifted it much above a crude melodrama. We have already seen how nobly the Duchess has been drawn. Indeed, she has been called the finest-drawn female figure in the Jacobean drama, and has been taken note of and admired by all critics and readers of Webster. The character of Bosola is a great triumph of Webster's art, reminding one promptly of Shakespeare's Iago. He is no unredeemed villain. He is a "Machiavellian mediator", a tool-villain and an avenger all in one.

Clarity of Moral Vision

The play is also lifted above a crude melodrama by the clear moral vision of Webster. In the play, there may be no poetic justice. The virtuous may suffer, but the wicked do not prosper and are destroyed in the end. The writers of melodrama showed no such concern with morality. It may be a world of corruption, decay and death, but, "the stars still shine", and the Duchess dies confident in her faith that there is a heaven which she would enter, and where she would surely be rewarded. She dies serenely, on her knees in prayer.

Poetic Imagination

The poetry of the play ennobles it and lifts it above a melodrama. As Vaughan observes, "Webster was a dramatist as well as a poet and, no reader can fail to notice the eagerness with which this poet provides a pictorial setting for the action of his drama, the pains he takes to imprint upon the eye, the countenance, gestures and bearing of the characters in the most significant scenes. It is doubtful whether this quality is so persistently marked in any other dramatist, with the single exception of Marston. It is the imagination of a born poet which is ever at work, transforming and transfiguring the commonplace, the crude and the horrible."

Some Shortcomings

The Duchess of Malfi rises to the heights of great tragedies. Certainly Webster comes nearer to Shakespeare than anyone else among his contemporaries, but it would be wrong to say that *The Duchess of Malfi* is as great a tragedy as *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. It cannot be ranked with Shakespeare's masterpieces. That inner struggle, that conflict between good and evil within the soul of the hero, that spectacle of a soul in travail which we find in Shakespeare, and wherein lies his chief glory and claim to greatness, is lacking in Webster. Hence *The Duchess of Malfi* does not have the same impact, is not gripping and awe-inspiring in the same way, and to the same extent, as Shakespearean tragedy. The death of the Duchess is, surely pathetic, no doubt it arouses the tragic emotion of pity, but it does not arouse the tragic emotion of terror. For, after all, what is the fault, or 'tragic flaw', of the Duchess. Her only visible fault is that she marries a person below her rank.

Element of Horror

In the age of Webster, the drama in England was decadent and degenerate. One of the signs of this degeneration is the use of crude, physical horrors to evoke terror. As Legouis and Cazamian aptly observe, "Webster, has a strange power of evoking shudders". *The Duchess of Malfi* is full of such frightening, hair-raising situations, from the beginning to the end.

The two brothers persecute the Duchess for marrying against their will and subject her to great horrors. Duke Ferdinand visits her in the darkness of the night in her room where she has been imprisoned. He assures her that he has come to make peace, but instead of offering her his own hand he places a dead man's hand in her hand. The Duchess kisses it, but at once realises that there is something wrong in it for it is as cold as death itself. She says: "You are very cold: I fear you are not well after your travel. Ha! lights ! ....O, horrible!" and again: "What witchcraft doth he practise that he hath left, a dead man's hand here."

Soon after, the Duchess is shown the waxen figures of Antonio and his children as if they were dead. The Duchess thinks that her husband and children are dead and feels that life is not worth living. She remarks:

"There is not between heaven and earth one with,

I stay for after this.....……."

The next horror is the letting loose of madmen upon the Duchess so that she may not be able to sleep and suffer from great mental torture and agony.

The last of the horrors to be mentioned is the series of murders committed by Bosola. First of all the Duchess is strangled to death. Then her innocent children, who cannot even prattle, are put to death. Lastly Cariola, the waiting maid, whose only fault is faithfulness to her mistress, is put to death even though she tells her murderers that she is quick with a child. Lastly, Julia is poisoned in a most cold-blooded manner, Antonio is killed by mistake, and Ferdinand, Cardinal and Bosola all meet their death at the end.

Legouis and Cazamian observe that the introduction of such horrors is, an "inferior artistic expedient". In this connection it should be remembered that drama is governed by the tastes of the audience, and in the age people were used to such crude horrors. It is to cater to the public taste that Webster has exploited the horrible to the full. His greatness as a dramatist is seen in the fact that he has made these horrors integral to his theme. The sensational is used to reveal character, the Duchess' reaction to the horrors inflicted upon her brings out the nobility and grandeur of her soul. As Frederick Allen points out, most of these horrors are legitimate. He remarks: "The great majority, however, are more strictly legitimate in a tragedy and were contrived to heighten the effect of pity and terror. It is the dramatist's deliberate aim to make the crimes seem blacker and more horrible and the suffering more terrible and more pitiful," and the horrors which have been introduced serve to achieve this aim. Charles Lamb also is all praises for Webster's capacity of evoking shudders and considers him superior to other contemporary dramatists in this respect. He writes, "To move a horror skilfully, to touch a soul to the quick, to lay upon it fear 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 a Webster can do. Writers of an inferior genius may upon horror's head horror accumulate but they cannot do this. They mistake quantity for quality, they terrify bases with painted devils, but they know not how a soul is capable of being moved; their terrors want dignity, their affrightments are without decorum."

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5.2 THOMAS BROWNE

Sir Thomas Browne hailed from a family of Cheshire squires. He was born on October 19, 1605, in the parish of St. Michael's Cheap. His father was a mercer. The young Thomas lost his father early. One of his guardians was supposed to have defrauded him of his fortune. His widowed mother married Sir Richard Dutton. He was educated at Winchester for six years from 1616. Early in 1623 he went to Broadgates Hall, Oxford. This later came to be known as Pembroke College to which Dr. Johnson also belonged. Browne was the first man of eminence to have graduated from this new College. He took the Bachelor's degree on June 30, 1626, and his Master's degree on June 11, 1629. He accompanied his stepfather to Ireland around 1626 and saw the old Irish castles and fornications. At Oxford, Browne turned to medicine. The medical training at Oxford being very pitiable, he took to books. In 1630 he left on a tour to Holland, France and Italy, the centers of advanced medical and scholastic studies. At Montpellier he attended the medical classes and underwent rigorous practical training. Here one of his teachers was Lazare Riviere, the "Riverius" of Browne's correspondence. It was at Montpellier that he learnt the theory of the organic soul, which appears at many places in his writings. From here Browne proceeded to Padua where surgery, anatomy, medicine and botany were taught. Next he left for Leyden which underlines his study of chemistry. Here he took his degree of doctor of medicine in 1633 and came back to England.

His stay on the continent for three years humanizes Browne. He set himself free from the bond of intellectual convention. In 1633 the posthumous Poems of Donne were published. To this edition were appended some lines signed "Tho: Browne". For some time he practiced physic in Oxfordshire. After that he moved to Halifax in Yorkshire. He began to compose Religio Medici at Shipden Hall, a house near Halifax. It was begun possibly in 1635, though it was published in 1643. On 10th July 1637 he was incorporated a doctor of physic at Oxford. During the same year he was insisted by some Norfolk friends to settle at Norwich. He left for Norwich and established there till the end of his life.

In 1641 Browne married Dorothy, the fourth daughter of Edward Mileham, of Burlingham St Peter. She was twenty and he thirty-six. She was, says

Whitefoot, "a lady of such symmetrical proportion to her worthy husband, both in the graces of her body and mind, that they seemed to come together by a kind of natural magnetism." They had ten children of whom only four survived. Browne took it with a spirit of resignation. He led a very happy life at Norwich, "much resorted to for his skill in physic."

A print of the pirated edition of Religio Medici fell into the hands of Edward Sackville, Earl of Dorset, who recommended it to Sir Kenelem Digby in a letter dated 19th December 1642. Digby who was in a jail for being a Royalist was so impressed by it that he wrote his Observations Upon Religio Medici. When it was about to be published Anderew Crooke, the publisher, informed Browne about it. This made Browne's decide to publish an authorized edition of the text in 1643. But Digby's Observations appeared earlier, in March 1643. This led to a war of pamphlets and Browne emerged as one of the renowned writers of the day. In 1644, there came two Latin editions of the text in Leyden and in Paris. During Browne's lifetime the work was translated into French, German, Dutch and Italian.

In 1646, Browne published in folio his 'Pseudodexia Epidemica'. It is more famous in its English title 'Vulgar Errors'. It was written "by snatches of time", as it could not be "performed upon one leg." Just as the first book was "an apology for carrying on a secular calling", the second was intended "to enforce experimental and exact knowledge." As Pater remarked, this work is "a criticism, a cathartic, an instrument for the clarifying of the intellects."

He was a Royalist and Protestant, and he lived in a Puritan country. He declined to contribute to the fund intended for capturing Newcastle from the Royalists. He had many friends and disciples. He looked after Joseph Hall, the ousted bishop of Heigham, and the Royalist Sir Hamon L' Estrange. Sir William Paston's son Robert was his disciple and friend. In 1657 Evelyn requested Robert Paston to favour him with an introduction to the author of Religio Medici.

Browne was very interested in the collection of relics and antiques. The discovery of the urns in a field at Old Walshingham in the autumn of 1657 led to the composition of Hydriotaphia : Urn-Burial which was published in 1658, along with The Garden of Cyrus. It was the garden of Nicholas Bacon, an admirer of Browne, that led to the incredible metaphysics of horticulture entitled The Garden

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of Cyrus, or, the Quincaunical, Lozenge or Network Plantations of the Ancients, artificially, naturally, mystically considered.

Browne was interested in alchemy as well. The secret of the philosopher's stone was believed to have been known to the circle of Arthur Dee who died in Norwich in 1651. Arthur Dee's manuscripts were placed with Browne. The Restoration of monarchy put him in high morale. The arrival in August 1661 of the liberal churchman Reynolds as the bishop of Norwich made Browne very happy. His Latin correspondence with an Icelandic naturalist, Theodor Jonson, gave rise to An Account of Island, alias Iceland (1663). The only blemish on his life came in a trial of two unhappy women accused of witchcraft, on the first of March 1664. Their release depended on the testimony of Browne, and Browne testified that they were witches.

Browne was keen on getting elected to the Royal Society and he could not succeed. Royal visit to Norwich was to take place on 28th September 1671. The king was to confer knighthood to a prominent person of Norwich on the 29th. He was about to knight the mayor of the town when Thomas Thacker, the mayor, begged the honour to be conferred on the most eminent inhabitant of the town, and he pointed to Thomas Browne. He was conferred knighthood who then became Sir Thomas Browne. On the 18th of October, Lord Howard and Evelyn waited upon Sir Thomas. In his Diary Evelyn records his visit thus: "His whole house and garden being a paradise and cabinet of rarities and that of the best collection, especially medals, book, plants, and natural things. Amongst other curiosities, Sir Thomas had collection of the eggs of all the fowls and birds he could procure….

Towards the close of his life, Browne withdrew from medical practice and devoted his time to science and literature. To this period belong A Letter to a Friend and Christian Morals. In January 1679 he fell very ill. He made his will in December of the same year. A sharp attack of colic came on October 19, 1682. In his Religio Medici he remarked that it "is indeed a remarkable coincidence" for the tail of a snake to return into its mouth on the day of his nativity. This is what happened when Browne's seventy-seventh birthday coincided with the day of his death.

Out of some manuscripts left by Browne at his death, Tennyson published Certain Miscellany Tracts in 1684. A Letter to a Friend as issued in 1690. This

one, as Pater said, is "perhaps, after all, the best justification of Browne's literary reputation, as it were his own curiously-figured urn, and treasure-place of immortal memory". Browne's daughter Elizabeth published his essay on Brampton Urns and the tract Repertorium in 1712, Christian Morals was issued in 1716.

Browne "had no despotic power over his affections and passions, but as large a political power over them as any stoic or man of his time." Distinct from his style, he wore a simple dress. We are told that "he was never seen to be transported with mirth or dejected with sadness. Always cheerful, but rarely, merry." He was sententious, and had no humour.

In 1635 Browne said: "Besides the jargon and patois of several provinces, I understand no less than six languages." These are French, Italian, Spanish, German, Dutch and Danish. He also knew well Greek, Latin, Hebrew and Arabic. He studied astronomy and astrology. He loved the night sky. He had a remarkable memory. His confession is as sincere as it is fascinating: "At my nativity my ascendant was the watery sign of Scorpius. I was born in the planetary hour of Saturn, and I think I have a piece of that leaden planet in me, I am no way facetious, nor disposed for the mirth and galliardize of company: yet in one dream I can compose a whole comedy, hold the actions, apprehend the jests, and laugh myself awake to the conceits thereof. Were my memory as faithful as my reason is then fruitful, I would never study but in my dreams: and this time also would I choose for my devotions."

5.2.1 BROWNE'S PERSONALITY AND THE PERSONAL ESSAY

Browne's Personality and the Personal Essay

Browne extricated himself from the bond of intellectual convention during his stay on the continents. He broke off from contemporary prejudices. Though a Protestant, he "learned to take his hat off whenever a cross or crucifix was carried past him in the street. He felt pity for "the fruitless journeys of pilgrims." He felt sorry for "the miserable condition of the friars." He confesses he never knew how

to wound the conscience of others. He was basically a peaceable spirit. Sensitive and superstitious, he had native sweetness of heart and delicacy of feelings.

Browne prepared to learn not to be dogmatic, as Gosse put it, "desired to comprehend and to feel, to distinguish and to penetrate, the genuine sensations of other". In the posthumous poems of Donne we find his refusal to find fault with others. Kind and multi-talented, Browne had the most lovable personality, which he breathes into his writings.

The "I" of Browne is not egotistic, for it breaches the temper of Montaigne. He declared that his Religio Medici was " memorial unto me." He does not indulge in arguments. It is the work of "the friendliest and most companionable of men." He argues without heat and hence "opens his discourse with a series of statements which are intended to ward off discussion and to rout suspicions." Approaching his subject with an attitude of philosophic doubt, he could say: "In philosophy, where truth seems double faced, there is no man more paradoxical than myself: but in divinity I love to keep the road." When he was not bound by doctrine, he could proclaim: "I perceive every man's own reason is his best Oedipus, and will find a way loose those bonds wherewith the subtleties of error have enchanted our more flexible and tender judgments." This is the goodness of heart. He felt intensely both the sentiment and the principle of religious truth and discovered moral beauty and strength in his fellow being because his imagination conquered reality.

Browne recognizes the Neo-Platonic theory of a universal undivided spirit immanent in the world. He takes many an idea from Paracelsus. He habitually talks of the revival in life and beauty of a flower. There is a hard-core optimism making him feel happy in life. Speaking of hell, he observes: "That terrible fern has never detained me from sin, nor do I owe any good action to the name thereof." The enthusiasm for living was immense, and the gift to live is itself a treasure beyond comparison. He was opposed to the dogmatic moralists and he condemned formalism.

Browne's writings are a series of gossiping confessions. He knew himself very thoroughly and wrote of himself. Browne refers to "the humour of my irregular self." Undogmatically and heretically he was anxious to be orthodox. His first work was written "for my private exercise and satisfaction." It does not try to instruct since it is an intimate journal. But the "I" in his writing is

impersonal. He is himself the type of the human race. He felt that what interested him would interest others also.

Browne says that he inherited from his parents a compassionate temperament, and a humane inclination. But he has not told us more about them. He talks of his habit of fondness for everyone he meets. His enemies are only the enemies of reason and goodness. The second part of Religio Medici is a gossiping autobiography. His human sympathy and deep understanding of the differences among individuals are aimed at making us interested in human beings. Thus he is an egotist without vanity or self-assertion, without envy or ill humour.

In the Vulgar Errors he seeks "to excite the eye and fix it upon material objects." Here is a defense of nature, of the immediacy of living. Facts come before theory. His subject was mankind and he saw the human race in himself. This led him to fall into a reverie about the mystery of life. The civil war, with its "drums and trampling of conquest", to use his own phrase, did not upset him from his "quiet rest". Browne spent his ripe years during the civil war "and yet neither his writings nor his letters contain any reference to this event." He had broad sympathies and he was equally overjoyed by the Catholic and the Protestant rites: "While my consorts, blind with opposition and prejudice, have fallen into an excess of scorn and laughter." A Protestant and a Royalist, he lived in a Puritan country with "a temperament of decided originality." He argues with an Italian physician "who could not believe perfectly the immortality of the soul, because Galen seemed to make a doubt thereof."

Browne had a genius for friendship. He was warm-hearted and he had many young disciples to whom he was tenderly attached. Once he wrote: " I Love my friend before myself, and yet methinks I do not love him enough. Some few months hence my multiplied affection will make me believe I have not loved him at all." He tended the deposed bishop of Heigham, Joseph Hall, till the latter's death in May 1656. In 1650 the Royalist Sir Hamon L' Estrange became his patient and friend till his death in 1660. This zest for friendship enabled him to confide to the readers his troubles and his reminiscences.

Browne's works are of an entirely personal nature. Browne cultivates the reader, takes him into his confidence and talks to him in a familiar, relaxed fashion. The reader may admire his learning but he certainly tolerates the author's oddities and faults in Religio Medici. Browne talks of his own courage, charity,

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pity, matchless in literature; and for his equivalent we have to turn to Charles Lamb.

This personal aura is due to the self-conscious approach that he has towards his work as literature. He is a scientist with a "marveling temper". He feels "the warm gale and gentle ventilation" of the universal soul. Yet the world is "not an Inn, but an Hospital: a place not to live, but to die in." This is the integrated sensibility of the metaphysical. Two dissimilar worlds of knowledge and experiences were available to him at the same time. These diverse elements make him the best example of his description of man as "the great Amphibium whose nature is disposed to be, not only like other creatures in diverse elements, but in divided and distinguished worlds." He called man in Urn-Burial, "a noble animal". Man is a spirit and reveals his ignorance and credulous nature, his blind faiths and prejudices. These stem from his brooding imagination which soften his outlook and cleanses him of some of the superfluous stuff. He rejects, accommodates and proportions his materials and viewpoint.

Browne makes us feel very intimately and instantaneously the problem of oblivion. Man's efforts to perpetuate his name have been futile:

> *Now since these dead bones have already outlasted the living one of Methuselah, and in a yard underground, and thin walls of clay, outworn all the strong and specious buildings above it and quietly rested under the drums and trampling of three conquests; what Price can promise such diuturnity unto his reliques. Time which antiquities, and hath an art to make dust of all things, hath yet spared these minor Monuments.*

The civil war years torn by political and religious conflicts made him express his quiet faith in Religio Medici. When the Royalists were on the point of collapse, he was conveying to the public reality of the phoenix and the griffin and the swan songs. When the Restoration of the monarchy was about to take place, he was meditating on the urns and on the "elegant co-ordination of vegetables." These are the works isolated from tradition or contemporary problems. This is the source of permanent value of Browne's work he wrote on themes of permanent interest. The problems he discusses may or may not be valued by the moderns highly. But the meditations on those problems are for all times and places.

His personality was gifted with rich imaginative sympathy. He sympathized with everything. As he remarked "I am of a constitution so general that it consorts and sympathiseth with all things…. I was born in the eighth Climate, but seem for to be framed and constellated up to all… All places, all airs, make to me one Country: I am in England everywhere and under any Meridian."

The charms in Browne's personal essays stem from the thought which he feels, and from the distinct manner of his thinking with his imagination. It is no petty egotism but an outlook which had an unrivalled eye for the personalities of others, which reveals his supreme force of affection, and which duly recognizes the deep moral sense of the rights of others. He had a life of simplicity and comfort and his works express the ecstasy of living and the meditative spirit of solitude. There is no affectation, no insincerity, but a profound vein of reflectiveness.

5.2.2 OCCASION OF *THE URN-BURIAL*

Occasion of *The Urn-burial*

Browne's interests include the collection on antiquities, more specifically ancient coins. There were many such treasures found frequently in Norfolk. Many a time his patients brought him these rare treasures that include coins, urns, gems, and bones. In the autumn of 1657 between forty and fifty urns were found in a field at Old Walshingham. These were "deposited in a dry and sandy soil, not a yard deep, nor far from one another." These urns contained human bones and ashes, and ornaments of brass and iron. One urn contained what Browne thought was an opal. Similar discoveries of urn were made at Brancaster, Casistor, and Burnham. Browne believed them to be Roman relics. Though modern scholarship recognized these urns as of Saxon origin, Browne considered them to be Roman. This discovery led to Browne's meditations on mortality, on the disposal of the dead, on the nature of the soul, and on the question of life after death. The result was the composition of Hydriotaphia: Urn-Burial.

We do not read Browne for historical veracity. Though he was an Antiquarian, he mistook the Saxon remains to be Roman. On the other hand, we

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approach him for the magnificent poetry set in motion by those urns. Ten years after his first work, he gave Vulgar Errors and twelve year later Urn-Burial. The music of the first work reappears after twenty years. The supposed opal in one of the urns awakened this music. The opal prompted the idea of a romantic attachment, and Browne's imagination rapidly moved around it. As Gosse experienced, "the gorgeous texture of the Urn-Burial was all woven around this opal, the rare dreams and singular fancies pass and return that they may form a silken net for this questionable object, which lies at last hidden in their golden tissue, like the dormant imagination of Browne was awakened."

On the estate of Thomas Le Gros of Crostwick some cinerary discoveries were made. Browne wrote to him on the first of May 1658, moved by the "sad and sepulchral pitchers, which have no joyful voices." In 1604 Johann Kirchman of Lubeck (1575-1643) professor of Poetry at Rostock, published at Hamburg his Latin work entitled De Funeribus Romanorum. Browne refers to him and he took front Luebeck many references.

But it is the brooding, thoughtful mind of Browne that gives eventually the expression to his imaginative thinking. The outcome is the text Urn-Burial.

5.2.3 BROWNE'S APPROACH TO THE THEMES

Browne's Approach to the Themes

The reflection of mortality brings about an exaltation in Browne's spirits. The "continual raking into the bowels of the deceased" has made physicians insensible to death, and their imagination gets deadened. But no such callousness ever affected Browne. The "continual sight of anatomies, skeletons, or cadaverous relics like vespilloes or grave-makers" did not deaden his sensibility. His soul experiences, dreams, fancies, imaginative flights and wild ecstasies at the sight of the "sad and sepulchral pitchers which have no joyful voices."

The urns remind Browne of the rustics who were long forgotten. They are so weak that they cannot offer any record of the past. When the urn lay underground, its life was detained. It brought out the life that seems to be dispersed. It is a receptacle, an abode for the embodied soul. The persons who gave such a sheltered corner to their beloved dead had not anticipated that posterity would sooner or later dig it up. When the funeral pyre was out, and the last valediction over, men took lasting adieu of their interred friends, without expecting that the curiosity of future ages would comment upon their ashes and, without having any idea of the duration of the sustenance of the relics. They had no idea or such after-considerations.

Browne is concerned about finding out the nature and value of these bones. His imagination is kindled by a phrase or a clause, which gives birth to another phrase or clause. Without taking any extreme stand, he offers the methods followed by the ancients in disposing of the dead. He is not interested in the urns for the wealth that may have been deposited in them. He simply discourses on the methods of burial and burning. He traces the methods of the Greeks, the Scandinavians, the Danes, the Egyptians and the Indians.

Just as Browne was critical of the future generations dabbling with the contents of the urns, he was critical of burial. He preferred cremations. He speaks of "being knave out of our graves" and of "our skulls made into drinking bowls". It is a cruel irony of the fate that in 1840 Browne's grave was dug by accident.

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The sexton ran off without Browne's skull and sold it to a collector who later deposited in a museum in Norwich. In 1897 the Vicar of St. Petermancroft claimed it in vain. It is tragic that this should happen to a person like Browne. It was Browne who spoke of the purifying process of fire which "refines the grosser commixture and fires out the ethereal particles so deeply immersed in the bodily tissues."

There is a passionate tenderness and warmth when he talks of the body. Many a time he refers to the toe of the king Pyrrhus, the toe which could not be burnt. This peculiar interest of his in the animal part of man led him to the discovery of adipocere, a wax of human fat.

The thought of death moved him to great imaginative heights. There are people who are "lost in the uncomfortable night of nothings." There are persons who are "vainly contriving their bodies in sweet consistencies, to attend the return of their souls." Such reflections touch him to the quick.

The spacious music of Urn-Burial is at its height and most exalted as well in the fifth chapter. The fullest splendour of the author's genius burns forth when he gives up the approach of the antiquarian. He is not burdened by his Italian and German sources here. From the worn out weight of scholarship he moves into great poetry. This poetry is derived from the deep reflection of the bones that might have "quietly rested under the drums and trampling of three conquests." The bones required a refuge, as they did not want to be troubled by posterity. But compared with the monuments of the great emperors, they have had a diurnity. Browne speculates on the causes behind the death of these rustics: disease, bewildering and vain, and still irresistible and fascinating. This gives us the magnificent paragraph beginning with the justly famous sentence, "What song the sirens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, though puzzling questions, are not beyond all conjunctions."

The radical and fundamental scepticism that Browne denies in Religio Medici and slights in Vulgar Errors, is apparent throughout Urn-Burial. He condemns the longing to subsist in lasting monuments and to overcome oblivion. Nevertheless "all this is nothing in the metaphysics of true belief." Besides, Browne is a physician whose Christian faith is present only in the last two sentences of the book. But he contemplates those over whom "the iniquity of oblivion over the forgotten dead. These dead have confirmed him in his discovery

that the world is only a dream. And "restless unquiet for the diuturnity of our memories seems a vanity almost out of date, and a superannuated piece of folly."

Perhaps Browne pleads for a spiritual experience in the age of science. Probably, he longed for established truth and also had a "marveling temper." He appears on occasions to translate reality into fictitious terms. This endowed him with the gift of the lyric phrase. He is the center round which he arranges the memories of books and things, different opinions and views, and the varied reactions of sensitive soul. He tells what he knows best, but in an impersonal manner. His is the shrewd detachment of a critical mind fused with a keen irony, which is a return to the spirit and method of Montaigne. He decides to write on a specific subject and then allows his memory and fancy to play without restraint. In this process he follows the line of least resistance. He brings the greatest literary skill he was capable of to the aid of his memory and fancy. His pen may not run with great pace, but it does not forget itself. As a result, the Urn-Burial comes to have elaborate edifice. He builds up honeycombs. The paragraphs are accumulated adding ecstasy to similitude. In the end we see that he had not omitted any possible aspect of the subject. It is all visualization of a memory, and not of a problem, and besides the subject is deeply personal.

5.2.4 METAPHYSICAL WIT

Metaphysical Wit

Browne is metaphysical in the sense that he had a scientific and a religious temper—that he was skeptical and credulous. He could feel the world soul in "the warm gale and gentle ventilation", and yet take the world to be "a Hospital; a place not to live, but to die in." He had a unified sensibility. Different fields of experience and varied worlds were simultaneously available to him. His metaphysical wit played on the material supplied by the classics, scholastic philosophy, Christianity, antiquarian researches, and personal sentiments. Each world of experience greatly mattered to Browne, but it is not the only world he treasured most.

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Browne sometimes writes as a Christian and derives his sustenance from his scholastic pursuits. He does write like an archaeologist, but there lies hidden a mystic. He writes as a naturalist, but there is a hidden poet or seer. A fact is not a dull physical fact, but a felt fact, which makes him unscientific and quaint. The emphasis on felt thought makes him speak of "temperamental contrariety", "occult as mere thought". To him "a thought was an experience; it modified his sensibility." He was capable of musing deeply and insert a geometrical image as well: " Pyramids, arches, obelisks, were put the irregularities of vain-glory, and wild enormities of ancient magnanimity. But the most magnanimous resolution rests in the Christian Religion, which trampleth upon pride and sets on the neck of ambition, humble pursuing the infallible perpetuity, unto which all others must diminish their diameters and be poorly seen in angles of contingency".

There is a strange fusion of the biblical story, Greek legend, Egyptian practice, and a calculation in the lines: "But in this latter scene of time we cannot expect such mummies unto our memories, when ambition may fear the prophecy of Elias, and Charles the Fifth can never hope to live within two Methusela's of Hector." Browne is nonetheless detached from all these worlds of knowledge and experience. This makes him wistful and ironical. His all-encompassing personality becomes compassionate and makes the metaphysical wit a true pointer to a composite vision.

His wit reveals a baroque sensibility. It is "tragic, massive and mystical." It has power, inspiration and grandeur and it is enlivened by the taste and vigour of the author. It is usually gathered into fine phrases of unique value. Some of these are: to subsist in bones and be but pyramidally extant", and, "sad and sepulchral pitchers which have no joyful voices". "The supinity of elder days" links the prenatal existence with death. There is the famous sentence: "Diuturnity is a dream and folly of expectation." These appear to be caustic; but they are relieved by wistfulness and by a loving sympathy.

There is a faint irony when he says that "the burial of the dead just a few yards below the surface left unto view some parts which they never beheld themselves." The "some parts", are their bones, which they could not see when they lived. Following their death they denied the sight of these parts. Consider the statement that horses over it, civility content with their companies in effigy which barbarous nations exact unto civility." This is an unusual stroke of sly oblique

glance at the shadows of olden times. There is glamour of retrospective fantasy. Take the passage: "The Musselman believers will never admit this fiery resolution. For they hold a present trial from their black and white angels in the grave: which they must have made so hollow that they might rise upon their knees." This is irony of vein longing, though there is no attempt to teach anything in all this. It only reveals the sanity of outlook, which does not allow him to become too serious. Thus we read: "It is difficult to understand whether unto eight or ten bodies of men to add one of a woman, as being more inflammable, and unctuously constituted for the better pyral combustion were any rational practice." Particularly, this is a more captivating kind of wit. It appears Lamb, his famous descendant in spirit, came "to know weakness, and reliance, and the shadow of human imbecility". The resultant prose is the outcome of an emotion, which does not suppress the brainwork that accompanies it.

5.2.5 THE ART OF PROSE

The Art of Prose

Prose is one of the important literary forms. Historically poetry comes before prose. But the reverse is a linguistic fact. It was only very late in the historical development of literature that serious imaginative writers took to prose. This may be due to various factors, chief among them being the alleged absence of music in prose. In other words, to be literature any literary form ought to be musical. That prose too has a rhythm of its own is a very late discovery of some artists who were gifted with a rare insight. The awareness of this unknown truth is the beginning of a new phase, which succeeded in bringing literature closer to life. It is evidently true that the great poets of antiquity have offered a rich and valuable interpretation of life, and that they have also tried their best in eliciting excellent effects from the speech habits of the masses. But it is also true that their range has been limited by the medium or pattern they have chosen. It is the acceptance of prose of all that it implies that has carried the task ahead.

There were a number of poets who tried to minimize the difference between prose and poetry. Both the forms have common material, i.e. words. A word has a twofold aspect. Every word has a sound of its own and it embodies a

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meaning: the meaning serves a practical purpose besides other purposes. The sound has musical value. Thus language acquires a dual purpose. One is instrumental to something else, while the other tends to become an end in itself. The former leads to the scientific and other forms of expression. Yet, language is both practical and musical. The words used have meaning. They convey intention and yet they reveal the over-tones of feeling to the extent that they cannot escape the rhythm and the genius of the language. At the same time the words are charged with infinite associations derived from experience and imagination. They, as a result, become attractive or repulsive. And in prose we have words that are logical symbols, musical sounds and emotionally charged counters. Prose is representative, communicative and evocative. It can attempt a satisfactory rendering of the whole human experience: and it often takes the aid of poetry whence it becomes an apt vehicle of an imaginative synthesis.

The poetic prose is distinct from mere prose. In the latter language is mainly a means: it is the meaning that is of primary importance. But the literary prose does not employ language as a system of practical signals. The phrases of Browne and Pater, the images and rhythm of De Quincy, and the purple patches of Ruskin reveal to us that the manner of saying is of utmost importance and contains in it half the meaning. It is here that ideas and moods attain a lyrical expression: and the diversity and flexibility of prose is a great advantage to the author in the way of the literary prose. This poetic periphery of prose does not, and need not, become showy or ornate. It swings with a beauty that is unique and moving; and this leads us to the consideration of some of the ways through which prose functions.

Browne's prose aims at intensification, clarification, and interpretation of an experience. The unclear and tentative mass of ideas and feelings is analyzed minutely and intensely. Something is driven home to the mind of the listener who is spellbound by the dominant. Thought or emotion presented. In revealing it, the author comes with a clear mind. There is little room for obscurantism. Yet, it is not a mere reporting of information that he offers. Actually he interprets a fact, brings it forth in all its concrete richness. It is this live touch that makes prose vital and lively. The author cannot afford to stand aloof from his object. He enters into the spirit of his material for good or for bad; and he compels it to express itself. In this act he develops a strange intimacy with the reader into whose ears he seems to be whispering some mysterious secret. Nevertheless the secret is usually

charged with intimations of pathos and of lyricism. Such is the prose offered by Lamb early in the nineteenth century and Browne in the seventeenth.

An essayist can effectively discharge this purpose only when he has felt the spirit of his subject in his own pulse and blood. He should be truthful and true to his feelings. This sincerity always carries with it a certain depth and intensity of thought and feeling. It makes life the great fountainhead, the primal source, of all subject matter. One who has gone to the depths of life cannot afford to become pedantic or mystifying. He has a lucid style that embodies the clarity of thought. This harmony between the thought and the style of a composition makes prose an artistic unity achieved in and through the sincerity and the depth of the feeling of the artist. It is a unity that welds the diverse materials, and such materials must be the most common ones. Thus the great artist takes up the most familiar words and compels them to surrender their full meaning. The word is charged with a life and a mission. It is no longer unfamiliar; nor can it be an obsolete one commissioned by a love of the distant and bizarre. It cannot have a farfetched meaning either. And we thus get at the apt word as a mark of great literature. The greatest sin in literature is redundancy. Not a word is superfluous, and not a word can be substituted by its synonym.

Thus we can easily understand why the great literary writers like Browne took to metaphor so often. Metaphor sums up a rich thought and emotion into one musical expression. In it is focused a complex idea or feeling. This compression is the genuine mark of our normal language; and literature cannot be an exception to it. But in literature the artist is assisted by imagination, which is a shaping power; and this calls forth a supreme effort, a great struggle, directed towards the emergence of an artistic expression. This struggle makes literature possible; but when an author betrays his pains in his compositions, his work ceases to have any great literary worth. Consequently prose composition becomes an art in itself. It is an art that stands on par with the other fine arts. At times this art far excels the rest; and good prose has been recognized to be a rarity.

Objects of deep human interest are ever charged with aesthetic value. When the representation of these objects attains a pictorial value in literature, we have the essence of the spirit of painting. This value is present in the compositions of Browne, Lamb, Pater and Stevenson. Here we come across the artistic vision laid bare through the sensuous vividness and lasting pleasure. There is the

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emergence of an aesthetic reality in and through a harmonious integration of diverse words and rhythms into a unity. A pleasure of the form is thus inseparable from that of the content in great writing. The great prose style thus comes to acquire something of the spirit of sculpture. The logical intentions, the moral attitudes, and imaginative visions acquire in prose style a form akin to that of the plastic art. It is here that the human mind becomes visible, embodied and alive. The spirit and the flesh of humanity acquire a mysterious existence whence it is that a prose composition can be seen from many points of view. And when we come to understand that it embodies an integration of "the colour and line of painting, the decorative and monumental character of sculpture, and the imaginative suggestiveness and persuasion of poetry", we do recognize its architectural character. Like architecture it has both a utility and a value, and both involve infinite pains on the part of their authors. Both reveal the impact of the social mind. To these we should add the rhythm and the movement that prose takes from dance and music, which are the two self-sufficient and pure arts. The tone, rhythm, and melody reveal the presence of music. Sensuous beauty is closely related to emotional delicacy; and these are always integrated to a certain intellectual order which finds its clearest and most rational expression in the great literary essay like that of Browne.

The imaginative prose of Thomas Browne and the imaginative essay of the early nineteenth century had a strange career. It took an established form during the French Revolution, which shook the very foundations of the European mind. The authors became reflective, imaginative, descriptive or critical. As the effects of the revolution began upsetting the social framework of England, there arose a movement of escape. It was a movement that either turned to medievalism or to the sensuous values of sounds. In both these cases we find that the literary essayists did not tell us about something; nor did they abstract from something. They always revealed the what, the content or the value, that they found embodied in their experience. This ideal remained with the essayists for a long time to come; and since the days of Lamb, they were busy expressing the changing social consciousness of Great Britain over a background of the unchanging human values. The disagreement between the background and the superimposed content introduced a tone of melancholic for a short time during the decadence. But the essayists were able to overcome it during this century of internecine warfare. The unusual conditions of the modern age have introduced a rich vein of humour and a

peculiarly modern treatment of all problems. The modern writer has a method of his own. He touches every problem delicately, handles it lightly, admits an undercurrent of pathos, and puts on a natural garb of humour, which fits into the spirit of the age.

This has brought forth a great many literary figures whose primary vocation has not been Literature. The manner or the expression has made them stylists of a rare beauty; and they have forever widened the scope of the literary essay. At the same time their success continues to show that the two wars of this age have not succeeded in destroying the value of literature.

5.2.6 DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH PROSE

Development of English Prose

English prose has had a wide-ranging development down the ages. Its development and growth can be seen in the history of the essay. The themes of the essays are as varied as their purposes and style. In England the essay-form practically began with Bacon, who packs wisdom as in a suitcase into each essay he wrote. In the hands of Addison the thought gets diluted in the essay in a light moral tune, which drifts toward gossip. An Essay by Macaulay is a short dissertation. These examples demonstrate the different ways in which writers in English have handled the essay.

Dr. Johnson calls the essay "a loose sally of the mind, an irregular, undigested piece, not a regular and orderly composition." But this description does not hold good of the many essays. An essay can be about any subject. It is expected to be of moderate length. It is a composition, says Murray, which is "more or less elaborate in style, though limited in range." A good essay can be taken to be limited both in its length and in its range. This limitation implies that it cannot offer an exhaustive treatment of any topic. In the language of Bacon, it is a dispersed meditation. It was with reference to such a form that Crabbe remarked: "The essay is the most popular mode of writing", for "it suits the writer who has neither talent nor inclination to pursue his inquiries farther", and it is addressed to "the generality of readers who are amused with variety and superficiality."

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Despite the fact that this is a very narrow view about the essay it at least explains the attitude of the writers in the 17th and 18th centuries to this form. The eighteenth century essayists took up this form when they wanted to evade certain issues directly, when he sought to conceal his real thoughts under a superficial garb. The essay as developed during the nineteenth century is by no means an essay art form. It tended to become one of the most difficult forms of expression, because the essayist had to compress a good deal within a limited range. In other words, the essayist attempted precision and thoroughness at the same time. To this he added an agreeable and pleasant emotion, which it must evoke in the reader.

We can subsequently consider the essay from two different points of view. The essay is a brief statement because the essayist knows little and wants to be superficial. On the other hand, it may be treated as a short statement because the essayist has a wide knowledge of his subject and therefore he can present one aspect of his subject at a time concisely and clearly. At any rate the essay as an art form should not be an ambitious attempt. The good essayist is usually funded to select his material; in so selecting he knows what aspect or fact he should emphasis and bring into prominence. Thus he achieves the singleness of purpose. The good essay then is a piece of art, and it impresses us by its characteristic unity. The various elements are so unified organically that all the elements become indispensable to one another. Such is the quality of Browne's essay.

The literary essay also affords a quantity of freedom to the author. It is not the author's business to develop an argument like a reasonable advocate. In its early days the essay was employed as an interesting medium in and through which one could enjoy the atmosphere of the table talk or of the coffee house. Bacon described his Essays as being "brief notes set down rather significantly than anxiously." It was with reference to such composition that Lamb refers when he spoke of the schoolmaster who was willing to instruct him in the art of composition. It was at the hands of Lamb and his contemporaries that the literary essay started gaining greater internal consistency and artistic structural unity.

In the course of its history, the essay has become personal as well. It is a form of self-expression on the part of the artist. He reveals his inmost being, his attitudes, thoughts and feelings. He expresses his viewpoint on the theme he has chosen to speak about. It is literally a speaking about: an informal speaking out to an intimate friend. Some of the best essayists have had this precious gift of taking

the reader into their confidence and almost whispering into his ears some secret they have come across. It may be a confidential sorrow and suffering or some adventure in which they participated and in which we too are likely to be interested. In such essays there is a profound undercurrent of pathos enlivened by wit and humour, all the while infusing in us an enthusiasm for life and for the perpetual values of life. They really become human documents manifesting a refined sensibility.

In the great literary essay of Browne and Lamb, we observe the essayist's likes and dislikes. The manner in which he handles the subject, introduces and develops it, and how he reveals his dominant thoughts and feelings—all these are valuable. His presentation and exposition give us glimpses of his art. While developing his ideas he brings forth a wealth of illustration. On occasion all this serves a social purpose too as can be seen from the social essay of the eighteenth century. When this social purpose takes over, there will be a tendency to be formal; and the essay then loses some of its individual charm because of its dissociation from the personal life of the writer, as is the case with some of the contemporary essays.

The essay as a literary form not only gives expression to some valuable thought and emotion, it also is an artistic expression. As an expression of a thought and feeling it embodies definite style. In the way in which he expresses himself, the literary author betrays his outlook and the characteristics of the age in which he happens to live. Modern English prose style actually began in the seventeenth century. Arnold observed, "It is by its organism—an organism opposed to length and involvement, and enabling us to be clear, plain, and short—that English prose after the Restoration breaks with the style of the times preceding it, finds the true law of prose, and becomes modern; becomes, in spite of superficial differences, the style of our own day."

The universal spirit of this argument can be established by comparing the prose of Hooker or Browne or Milton with that of Dryden who was a younger contemporary of Milton. The prose before the Restoration may be beautiful; still it is too involved and cumbrous. With some difficulty we can write in the manner of Addison, but never in the style of Milton or Brown, because Addison wrote in the new prose, which is the real language of the people, developed on artistic lines.

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The older prose is a shade more imaginative and ambitious; and it does not have that naturalness and simplicity which we find in the modern prose.

The emergence and growth of the new prose was due to a variety of factors. After the Restoration there was greater emphasis on the critical temper. In place of romance and imagination there was the spirit of common sense; and common sense, as Hazlitt said, is a rare and uncommon thing in an age of imagination. With the emphasis on common-sense there came forth the love of definiteness, concrete detail, perspicacity and truth to fact. The obscure and the pedantic had no favour with writers and readers living in such an atmosphere. This period saw the birth of the Royal Society, of Newton's Principal, of Locke's Essay and of the Bloodless Revolution. These factors moved in the direction promoting precision and lucidity. This in fact meant the rejection of Browne.

Sprat tells us that the Royal Society demanded "from all the members a close, naked, natural way of speaking; positive expressions; clear senses; a native easiness; bringing all things as near the mathematical plainness as they can." This critical spirit made the writers dedicate larger attention to the details of style. Even a committee was appointed with Dryden, Cowley, Sprat and Waller as some of the members "to settle the language after the fashion of the French Academy."

Prose is then to be the medium of expression for argument, as it had to be used to convince the readers. It must persuade. It must criticize even to the extent of satirizing in that age of acrimonious, political and religious quarrels. And prose then became an established mode of writing for definite purposes.

Other factors were also present that encouraged this healthy change from the nauseating predications of a decadent age that strutted with borrowed feathers prior to the Restoration. The middle classes were emerging and with them the reading public was increasing. The popularity of the coffee houses and the drawing rooms was fast developing. There was also a growing demand for popularizing and propagating knowledge along with the general disfavour for all specialization. The public wanted that kind of writing that can easily be understood by one who has some common sense. This demand resulted in the rise and growth of periodicals, pamphlets, and journals. One who had a ready wit could capture the attention of the reading public.

In particular the Queen brought from France the great influence of French prose, and French prose revealed the qualities of ease, clarity, grace, common-sense and soberness. As Schlosser remarks that these writers of England under the influence of France "began to work for a very different public from that of their predecessors. They attempted to make easy, pleasant, and accessible all that had previously been regarded as serious, difficult, and unattainable." In the "Spectator", Addition asserted that "he had brought philosophy out of closets and libraries, school and colleges to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-table and coffee-houses." Pope could later on treat scholastic subjects in a decipherable and easily understood style. One could find even a drawing room version of Homer.

Limitations that were attached to the new prose style of the eighteenth century were amended and overcome to some extent in the following century. Prose developed in the hands of Lamb and Hazlitt, De Quincy, Carlyle and Ruskin and acquired a greater freedom of movement, richness and warmth. It became more colourful and echoed with sweeter harmonies. This was a going back to Browne and the twentieth century sought to recapture something of the ease, lucidity, wit, humour and freshness that the preceding one had lost in the maze of its quest for the romantic. Even now we do not find a special class of prose writers. Modern prose comes from varied hands. Philosophers and scientists, historians and politicians, have given us an extra enthusiastic prose. Our prose thus seems to be a development of the plan drawn by the prose of 18th century. As in poetry so in prose also we are the descendants of the Augustans. We have thus lost the superior harmony of Browne's prose.

All through we find a demand for good expression, a style that can be followed by all. It is a prose which does not demand much from the average reader. A good prose reveals a variety of features. Originally it has certain intellectual characteristics. Therefore when used properly, we find precision in the statements. When these fine and proper words are arranged in the proper manner, we find lucidity and clarity. No one would fail to understand the intentions of the writer. When the ideas and the expression of these ideas are properly adjusted, there appears harmony. And a good prose style also exhibits certain emotional qualities like force, energy and suggestiveness. These qualities emerge because the author has to express his feelings and emotions and to evoke corresponding images in our minds. Finally, one can discover a few aesthetic qualities too in a

good style. Those are the qualities of music, elegance, charm and beauty. When these great qualities are present, the prose style becomes a joy forever.

5.2.7 THE NATURE OF BEAUTY

The Nature of Beauty

In determining the worth of literature and the arts there is big difficulty in estimating the significance of style. As generally understood, style is the particular manner in which an emotional experience is expressed or embodied. Such an approach implies that style is the kind of medium chosen by the artist. We shall confine our attention to Literature and shall examine the meaning and value of style.

When we, as students of literature, while reading certain lines, gather that so and so must be the author. We associate one characteristic form of expression and thought with one specific author. We refuse to admit the claim of any other writer to the authorship of those lines. If by any chance those lines are not composed by the author we spotted, then we conclude that they are an imitation of that author. This is a deep-seated prejudice and it stems from our innate conviction that style is the man, that style is the index of personality. The choice of the diction, the arrangement of the sounds, the juxtaposition of the syllables, and their rhythm are somehow related to the mind and outlook of an author. As Milton said, it is the precious life-blood of the master spirit that is expressed as the good book. Buffon expressed this very thought when he said that style is the man—it is not mere clothing given to thought. It cannot be put on and off at the whims of the author.

This view holds an element of truth, though that truth is exaggerated. In considering this view, let us take a few examples. Lamb modelled his style on the 17^{th} century, and yet we feel the pulse of Lamb in all that he writes. Stevenson imitated the earlier writers, and yet is unmistakable in his own style. If an author can develop a style by imitating others, the appeal lies in the fact that we find the author's authentic voice in these utterances. The voice moves us because it reflects his sincerity.

Sincerity is the fundamental principle of all good style. One can imitate and yet be sincere, although this paradox may baffle at first sight. But if I imitate another and yet convince you that it is all my own, it only means that instead of being a slavish imitator, I have absorbed the personality and behaviour of the other in my own personality. To be able to absorb another's personality in myself, I must undergo a transformation in myself; I must have become a new personality, which has overcome some, if not all, of its earlier limitations. In other words, there must be some extension and growth of my personality, an expansion in which the others figure as the needed constituent elements; and this assuredly is not my usual personality. It therefore becomes clear that there is a tendency toward greater and greater loss of the exclusive personality, and a realization of a increasingly comprehensive impersonality. The style, which an author like Browne or Lamb can bring forth, is the expression of this impersonality. If this impersonality constitutes our perfection then one may say that style is the man.

Literature is largely concerned with the thoughts, ideas, feelings and aspirations of the individuals. It deals with things only in an incidental fashion. The thought, ideas and feelings are that of the writer's. They are essentially his own, and they are expressed in literature. Thus it may be said that literature is the expression of the subjective side. Those branches of knowledge which deal with things may be said to be objective. The value of literature then lies in the sphere of the individual mind, and this extant style too may be said to be personal.

Here again we have to point out that the thoughts, ideas, feelings and emotions are the contents not of an exclusive personality but of an individual who enthusiastically participates in the social and cultural milieu. Such an individual endeavours consciously to overcome the limitations of exclusive personality. Literature undoubtedly is an inward or mental possession. But the literary artist is not one who detaches himself from the world around him. His creative process is set afoot by his sympathy. And sympathy means the power whereby we are able to feel like others. This feeling is possible when we overcome our exclusion and undergo and expansion of the self within us. This expansion is in the direction of greater impersonality. Consequently our thoughts, feelings and ideas acquire greater depth and intensity only when we become more and more impersonal. And the style is necessarily and expression of this impersonality. And if two authors vary in their style, it is because of the difference in the degree of impersonality they were able to realize. Such a realization is determined and

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regulated by environment, training and experience. And one who accomplishes the greatest degree of impersonality is our great artist who is genius.

A great literary artist has to work with the materials that are already present in the society. These materials appear in the form of language. Language is essentially a social product and it is designed to enable the members of a society to communicate with one another and express their ideas and feelings. As a vehicle of communication it is an instrument designed to refer to the material objects. As Tennyson said, language is matter moulded. But when the literary artist comes forward to express his intimate thoughts and emotions in this matter-moulded language, he discovers that this is insufficient and even a misleading medium. Yet the greatness of the artist lies in overcoming these confines, in making language agreeable to his needs. It is here that the great creative style emerges.

Even if language is not a suitable vehicle, the artist does not invent or coin new words freely, as that would tantamount to creating a new language which will inevitably be foreign to the people to whom literature is addressed. He does not even run after obsolete, obscure and far-fetched expressions, as that would be falsifying the very purpose of all literary expression. The artist in the evolution of his style, which is to reveal his innermost experiences, accepts the familiar words. But since these words are inadequate for the creative purpose, he tries to elicit significant meanings from the ordinary words.

As a result, in great literature certain expressions gain very insightful meanings. Words describing flowers and smells come to acquire deeper meaning through prolonged associations. Sometimes out of these associations crop up words that compress in themselves a complex thought. Such words are known as metaphors. These metaphors form the basic foundation of good style. It is thought metaphor that a creative artist is able to compel a word to yield the meanings he has in mind. But this needs an insight into the nature of the relations which anything or fact has with the rest. That which offers this insight is imagination. Thus strengthened and controlled by imagination, the creative artist perceives similarities and dissimilarities in the universe, observes the interrelated structure and functions of the world, understands the nature of the world in all its intricacy and variety, and then employs language to convey all this vision. Such a language compresses a rich and complex vision in itself; every word becomes charged with

the imaginative insight, and every image evokes the necessary expression. Hence great style is primarily the expression of this imaginative frame of mind. And without this atmosphere of imagination there can be no style.

Besides, the speed with which a thought or a emotion, or a succession of thoughts and feelings comes to the artist in the moment of literary composition is noteworthy. The mind in creative act is almost overwhelming in its speed and rush. Language cannot keep pace with the onrush of thought and emotion. The artist takes up language to arrest the fast fading emotional stream. By the time he expresses one thought or feelings, so many other thoughts and feelings have come and gone. In his anxiety to record all this, the artist has to combine his thoughts and feelings; for, as Shelley said, the mind in execution is like a burning coal.

This renders the literary language still more metaphorical and suggestive. And we arrive at one more secret of great style—its suggestive nature. It suggests all that the artist could not express himself directly to us. Each expression thus not only conveys the plain and simple everyday meaning, it also conveys the feelings and thought that constituted the original experience of the artist. In their suggestiveness the words become powerful weapons in the hands of the literary artist. Each word carries a rich atmosphere of suggestion about it.

It is for this characteristic feature that every artist makes his language his own. It is his own in the sense that it alone is capable of reflecting and embodying his mind sincerely and faithfully; and his mind is to be interpreted as the transformed mind, as the mind that has outgrown the limits of exclusion. It is this transformation that we refer to artist. This individuality imprints a unity on the entire composition. The work of art is an organic unity, whose parts or elements can only be distinguished for our convenience—they can be separated. For example, take the lines:

"Bring forth the horse!"

The horse was brought:

In truth he was a noble steed!

These lines give us the impression in one particular manner. In common language horse and steed mean the same. But if we interchange the words in this passage we get the following lines:

"Bring forth the horse!"

The steed was brought:

In truth he was a noble horse!

Actually the meaning has not changed. But the impression produced by these altered lines is not the same as produced by the original lines of Byron. Likewise take the famous line:

"To be or not to be, that is the question".

Bradley informs us that we can paraphrase it thus:

"What is just now occupying my attention is the comparative disadvantages of continuing to live or putting an end to myself".

The impression produced by the paraphrase is weaker than the original line of Hamlet. Similarly we can read the line: "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever", as "A thing of beauty is a constant joy"; and though our reading does not convey a different meaning from that of the original, it does communicate a different impression.

This variation stems from the fact that in great literature style is not something added to the thought or substance. Style is as much an integral and inseparable part as the thought or content. Due to this integral unity, we cannot alter the order of words, nor can we replace or remove the words, in great literature. Each word is necessary. Its place is unchallengeable and indisputable. It acquires certain sanctity and appears as if it had been divinely ordained. It is precisely this poetic or aesthetic doctrine that has given rise to the various rules that governed the safe transmission of the religious texts in India and elsewhere as revolutions of God.

When each word is to be treated as indispensable, we have to take it for granted that the great artist avoids the redundant and the superfluous. As Pater said, the greatest sin in it is surplusage. The artist then expresses an idea or feeling, and can express it only in the way in which he has done it. This way cannot be made better. It might be defective or faulty: but if it achieves an organic unity with the thought and feeling, then it becomes the most appropriate one. After all, the content of a work of art and the style are the same. They merely represent the two possible ways of looking at the same whole called the poem. As

such Bradley could differentiate a meaning resonance from a resonant meaning in the poem. The sound cannot exist apart from the sense.

Style then is the same thought or content viewed from one point of view. If this is the only point of view, we will misunderstand the work of the art. It only embodies a meaning, and meaning always needs an embodiment, since there is no formless meaning. We may analyze style into all its component elements: but such an examination does not convey the real meaning or value of style. I a certain work have nothing but the merit of style; it is very difficult to read it for a long time. This explains why some students of literature find Swinburne, a part of Tennyson and a part of Pater really difficult and tedious reading. In such cases the real ground of complaint is to be found in the supposed over-emphasis on the formal aspects of style to the exclusion of thought and feeling. Just as we can speak of the poem as an expressed meaning from the point of the content, we can, from the standpoint of the style, speak of it as the significant form, only we should not exaggerated the importance of the form as Clive Bell, Roger Fry and other formalists do.

The secret of great style then is the identity of form with content. The word form includes all the elements that go to constitute style, like words, versification, and arrangement of sounds, symmetry, balance, rhythm and harmony. No thought or feeling can possibly exist apart from such a part; nor can it be other than such a form. It is this essential identity between forms and content that makes the artist bestow his undivided attention on the manner of his expression. A disregard of the expression might carry a force of conviction as in the writing of Carlyle: but it cannot be the unmistakable tone of great literature. Yet if Carlyle's writings have a value for us, it is because we are prepared to treat him as a prophet and less as a literary genius. And the non-artistic forms of expression differ from the artistic specifically because they overlook or ignore the identity of form with the content and because they are satisfied with the communication of ideas. Such communications can even be represented as not capable of beings translated into a symbolic notation; as style is not a changeable symbol in geometry or algebra, nor is it expressible in the quasi-numeral notation of the scientific formula.

In the confines of this framework of identity between form and content we can ascertain certain qualities of style. These qualities tell us something of the

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nature of style. A close examination of the great works of literature will reveal certain intellectual qualities of style. When the right words are used rightly we notice precision, the avoiding of the surplusage. When the proper words are arranged in their proper order, we discern lucidity. When we find a harmonious relation between the idea or feeling and the way in which it is expressed, we discover propriety and harmony. All these are intellectual qualities that need the proper activity of the critical outlook of the artist. The artist in composing a great work must invariably be a critic—a sound critic.

When a style is said to have strength, energy and suggestiveness, we mean the emotional characteristic of style. These terms are applicable to the feelings and emotions expressed in the work and evoked in the mind of the reader. Lastly we may also say that there are certain aesthetic qualities of style also. Such are the qualities that refer to the music, grace, charm and beauty of the composition. These aesthetic qualities, if they are too prominent, have a tendency to mislead us to believe that style is everything.

The intellectual, emotional and aesthetic qualities of style do not refer chiefly to style only; as there is no style, which is not the style of something. They are as much the characteristic of the content of the work of art as they are of the form. It is this that makes it very difficult for the literary artist to embody his thought and feelings in language. It is only a select few that are able to succeed; and such works are always treated as classics. These classics always remind us that style is an inborn gift, which needs proper nourishment and development; it is a gift identical with the poetic gift. And when artists are said to be born, and not made or created, we must conclude that they are born with sensitive souls and suitable styles of expression for all that they feel. And though they are born, they have to tend their gifts tenderly and softly. Style, in that case, is not even the physiognomy of the soul. In spite of Schopenhauer's statement that style is the very soul of the individual. It is only the soul that has transcended the limitations of personality by expanding itself and by making rich its content.

Browne's Prose Style

Browne is the prose-writer of the seventeenth century; when most of the writers were great scholars and had drunk at the fountains of not only English language; but also of Greek and Latin. Browne was an artist of the same age and he made the fullest use of the artistic sense in his prose-writings. Like all other artists of the age, Browne also felt that emphasis must be laid on expression and not very much on the subject matter. No-doubt, subject had its own importance, but the manner of expressing it was more important. Browne had this artistic sense and also his bent of mind was artistic and his love for form was greater than for substance. Edmund Gosse has aptly remarked, "Browne is a pre-eminent example of the class of writers with whom it is form, not substance, that is of the first importance. He is interesting almost exclusively to the student and lover of style. That is to say to the student of style in its wider acceptation, not in the mere melodious arrangement of beautiful words, but in the manipulation of language with such art so as to reveal a personal temperament and to illustrate a human point of view.

Browne is an artist of peculiar kind. He mixes objective with the subjective, scientific with the aesthetic. His prose is highly imaginative. He uses his imagination and takes the readers with him to the Hades of Virgil and Homer. It would not be incorrect to say that he is, in this sense a romantic. His reflective vein is fired at the sight of bones and then he writes about the bones in a highly imaginative and reflective style soaring high on the wings of his imaginative fancy. An attempt at reading the works of Browne would reveal his imaginativeness.

Browne's prose-style is musical. Browne, as Milton, once remarked, is "most musical, most melancholy." Instinctively, Browne chooses melodious words and uses them in his sentences and makes them musical. In fact, his prose is a packet of dreamy harmonies and elfin music. The music of his periods is deep, stately and long drawn, like that of a heroic funeral march or the full stop of cathedral organ. His music combined with his melancholy makes great impression on the readers and touches their heart. It goes to the very marrow of the bones of

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the readers when they read or recite or loudly read his prose. They feel the magic and the music of his words, phrases and sentences.

In the prose style of Sir Thomas Browne, there is dignity and seriousness. This magnificence and dignity is hardly to be equalled in English prose. Like all other writers of his times, Browne is desultory and uneven; his "purple patches" come unexpectedly. But these purple patches have a pomp and majesty which even Milton could not surpass. It would not be incorrect to say that in some respects Browne can stand equal with Milton.

Browne has been charged by the critics to use Latin words and phrases. Latin words and phrases abound in his prose but this weakness is common with the writers of the age. Most of his contemporaries including Milton, Jeremy Taylor, Fuller, write a highly Latinised style and Browne also did the same. He uses Latin words and phrases and coins new words to express his new ideas.

One more charge has been laid against Browne. It is said that Browne uses words not in the usual sense in English, but in the Latin sense. He gives the meaning of *prolong* the long word *produce,* and the meaning of *wishes* to the word *votes*. The result of this excessive use of Latinised words and phrases makes him an artificial prose-writer. It is this that led Edmund Gosse to declare that "Browne's prose style is highly artificial overlaid with the torture shell of his learning and his meditation upon life".

Browne uses wit in his prose. Wit, and not humour, was the domain of Browne. Writers like George Saintsbury, Leslie Stephen and other are of the view that Browne's prose possesses the quality of humour, and they quote the opening lines of *Religio Medici* in support of their view. It is not easy to disagree with such great critics, but where they go a little deeper they would have found that it is not humour, but wit that outweighs the prose of Browne. The element which prevents Browne's mystical impulses from dissolving and disappearing in mist is his wit, which ranges from pregnant ingenuity to sublimity: "for all this mass of flesh which we behold, came in at our mouths; this frame we took upon, hath been upon our trenchers; in brief, we have devour'd ourselves' and in this sense I say, the word was before the Creation, and at an end before it has a beginning; and thus was I dead before I was alive; though my grave be England, my dying place was Paradise; and Eve miscarried of me before she conceiv'd of Cain."

In *Hydriotaphia* a weird yet commonplace item from the pharmacopoeia of London apothecaries is at once particularized and transcendentalized: "Mummie is become Merchandise, Mizraim cure wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams."

The seventeenth century had the metaphysicals, whose wit was very well known to the readers of the age and is also not unknown to the moderns. In fact, the moderns are trying to follow in the foot-steps of the metaphysical. Such metaphysical wits are an instinct for paradoxical contrasts and as in the poets, so in the prose writers realistic particularity barbs the imaginative and emotional arrow.

Sir Thomas Browne holds a very high position in English literature as a great prose stylist. Saintsbury considers him, "the greatest prose writer, perhaps, when all things are taken together, in the whole range of English." Albert sums up Browne's contribution to the prose-writings in the following words.

> *Browne's claim to fame is a literary stylist rather than as a philosopher. He shows the ornate style of the time in its richest bloom. His diction is strongly Latinized, sometimes to the limit of obscurity; and he has the scholastic habit of introducing Latin tags and references. In this he resembles; but in other respects he is far beyond the author of The Anatomy of Melancholy. His sentences are carefully wrought and artistically combined into paragraphs; and most important from the purely literary point of view, the diction has richness of effect unknown among other English prose writers. The rhythm is harmonious and finishes with carefully attuned cadences. The prose is sometimes obscure rarely vivacious, and hardly ever diverting; but the solemnity and beauty of it have given it an enduring fascination.*

A chorus of praise has been heard in the twentieth century on Browne and his metaphysics. Browne to-day is one of the greatest masters of English prose, who brought to English language and literature, words and ideas from far-off unknown lands. Undeniably, Browne can be taken as a representative of the best prose writers of the period.

5.2.9 THE CHRISTIAN CUSTOM OF BURIAL

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The Christian custom of burial of dead bodies and man's craze for immortality

Browne traces the practice of burial prevalent among the Christians and tries to prove that it is the best method of disposing of the dead bodies. Being a devout Christian, he is blind to the advantages of burning the bodies.

The Christians took immense care in burying their dead. Though they believed in the resurrection of the soul, they did not neglect the dead body. They regarded the human body as the living temple of Jesus Christ and did not neglect its burial.

The Christian funeral rites hint at the idea of Resurrection. But it seems that even the heathens had faith in the immortality of soul. The expressions used by Democritus, Phocyllides and Lucretius evince this. Even before that Homer speaks of soul remaining after being separated from body and going to Hades. Lucian said that the immortal part of Hercules, which he inherited from Jupiter, remained even after his death. Socrates was content that the immortal part of him was not to be buried or burnt. Diogenes, believing in the immortality of soul, was careless about burial, the stoics thought that skulls of good men dwelt near the moon and were careless about burial, but the Pythagoreans, who believed in an eternal cycle of birth and death, took great care of that. Followers of Plato are not known to have neglected such care.

Men have been very strict about their religion and one can without difficulty find out the national basis of diverse funeral rites. Burning fire with averted face may symbolize unwillingness washing bones with milk and wine may have some reference to their first stage of life. Looking towards heaven may be considered as a symbol of hope. Some people scattered farewell three times, which is in conformity with the Christian practice as well. The funeral pyre typically consisted of sweet fuel, cypress, fir, larix, yew and other trees that remained perpetually green. These were expressions of silent hopes the planting yew trees in resurrection. Music was also used at funerals to excite or to quieten the disturbed emotions of the relatives of the dead. It also symbolized the pleasant nature of soul, which after death departs to enjoy the primitive harmony.

The dead bodies of infants were not consigned to fire. Fire was not kindled in home for some days after their death – people escaped deep sorrow by holding the belief that the spirit of the dead was disturbed by mournings.

Burning dead on their backs is justified because it is posture of sleep and death and also something like our posture in the mother's womb. Diogenes, the cynic, however, preferred to be buried face downwards. Some Christians also prefer to be buried in an erect posture.

The carrying of the dead with their feet forward is justified in two ways. First, it is contrary to the position in which a man is born, secondly they bid farewell to their homes. Mohammedans, however, believe in a second life and are therefore carried with their head forward. Some people used to close the eyes of the dead because these were the parts which feel the effect of death first. Some used to cry loudly to revoke the dead to life.

Sucking of the last breath of the dead was rather irrational .It had perhaps some connection with the Pythagorean concept that souls could pass from one body to another. Pouring of oil on the pyre facilitated the burning of the corpses; but placing auspicious things along with the fuel was only a superstition. The custom of having jesters who imitated the actions of the dead person was certainly too light for such serious occasions. Burying gold or coins along with the dead was foolish. But this custom is of great importance for the antiquarians, because the coins and medals enclosed help him in ascertaining the date of the urns etc.

Certain persons were not allowed to have the usual burial or burning. But persons, whose ashes are contained in the Walshingham urns were probably neither burnt to death by lightning nor traitors not even suicides, who, according to the custom were not allowed to be buried and were thus condemned to eternal pains of Tartarus's hell.

Besides these practices, some of their conceptions and stories about man's existence are debatable. It is to be doubted if adding one body of woman to every eight or ten bodies of women were of any use. Similarly it cannot be said that Periander's wife was naked and shivered from cold because she had not had her funeral.

It is incomprehensible why female ghosts appear to Ulysses before the male ones, why soul of Tiresias is spoken of as a masculine person, why funeral

supper consisted of eggs, beans etc., while the dead eat only asphadels and why men set up the deity of Morta, when there is no escaping from death.

The soul or the dead seem to be living in humour but cannot speak well except when they are allowed to drink blood. They can merely chirp or chatter.

It is stranger that spirits know about past and future but are ignorant of present. The ghosts in Homer fear word, though they are supposed to be invulnerable. The spirits forget their malice and enmity. In Virgil we find the ghost of Deiphobuscut and Brutsed, whereas in Homer women wounded ghosts appear in their proper form.

We do not know how Achilles could be happy in Hades, while he preferred to be a ploughman's servant to being an emperor of the dead, or how Hercules could, at the same time be in heaven as well as in hell, or how Julia's soul could be turned into star and yet present in hell. We may say that this lower region contained only shadows of the soul; but we are as ignorant about these things as about a dialogue between two infants in the womb.

In Dante's account of hell, Pythagoras is not mentioned and Cato is not condemned to the severe fate of the suicides Epicurus has mentioned later. He was virtuous without expecting a reward for it and who did not fear death because he did not believe in the existence after death.

If men could know about the felicities of the next world, it would have become very difficult for them to live in this world; but if they did not believe in existence after death, they would have been fearful of death, because death, to them, would mean annihilation. Machiavelli's statement that Christianity makes cowards of men is not true. The guts, with which the ancient martyrs faced death, is a thing to be appreciated.

In Dante's description of hell, Epicurus is placed very low, though he lived better than many philosophers who had better theories than he. It is a sad question to ask whether he would even come to the level of Christians who professed more sound principle, but were really much worse than Epicurus.

Great doubts were expressed and discussions held on the subject of futurity and immortality. Socrates, Cato and Plato expressed their weighty opinions but none was sure.

Melancholy tells a man that he is at the end of his life, that there is nothing beyond. Some world quarrels with the justice of their constitution and would be satisfied by saying that Adam had fallen lower they enjoy the happiness of lower creatures. But there are some who are not satisfied with this and say that they are more than what they appear to be presently.

Thus he has compared and used Greek and Roman scholars regarding the idea of immortalizing the body.

5.2.10 BROWNE'S VIEWS ON IMMORTALITY

Browne's views on immortality

Man lives in deeds, not in monuments so the desire for being immortal led to the building of great mausoleums to perpetuate the memory of the dead. But in Christianity the dead are to rise on the Day of Judgment and hence burial of the bodies is the best method for dead bodies.

The bones of Walshingham urns are older than the age of Methuselah and the age of all the buildings. No king can promise his bones a longer duration of existence.

It is not the monuments that make a man immortal but his deeds. The persons, who do some memorable things while they live, are remembered after they are dead and gone, but persons who do nothing are not remembered in their own lifetime.

Old age should fortify and secure us against death and reconcile us to it but it is just the contrary. Persons, in difficult circumstances become prematurely old. But the fear of death or adversity is not as tedious as the thought of annihilation.

The names and identity of the persons, whose bones are contained in these urns, cannot be found out. The bones are there but nobody knows the names. The Christians knowing full well the pointlessness of all such attempts should never indulge in these mortal vanities.

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A true Christian cannot hope to be perpetuated by his monuments. They have hope of a life beyond and daily pray for it and therefore cannot hope to perpetuate their monuments or tombs. That would be contradictory to their beliefs.

Death comes to all and everyone. He is to be forgotten by his successors. Gravestones and Latin epitaphs are no proofs against oblivion.

To be remembered by mere name is useless. To be unknown is better than to be ill known. The anaanite woman and good thief are better. Though their names have not been given, than Herodias or Pilate.

Oblivion does not deal fairly with memories of men, making good and important persons unknown and bad and ordinary persons known. Bad persons are often, as popularly known as the ones and it is possible that more good men have been forgotten than are today remained unknown but for the Bible.

Oblivion cannot be bribed and the majority must be content to be known. The record of all men is to be found only in the book of history. Death alone can bring us to the eternal life and it is foolish to wish for perpetuity of name.

Forgetfulness is a universal law. We forget our own injuries and sorrows in a short time .The forgetfulness actually makes us able to endure our life. The ancients believed in transmigration of soul and thus had hope for survival after death. The Egyptians used to preserve dead bodies with great care. But all this was vanity.

We cannot hope to achieve immortality or to escape oblivion. Our idea that the heavens have to change is also false. The soots of the sun change and new comets and stars appear every now and then.

Only immortality is immortal. God also does not come under the power of mortality. Having no beginning, he has no end the Christian religion promises us the resurrection of soul. It frustrates earthly glory. Even then man wants to be splendid in life as well as in death.

Life is a pure flame hence the folly of burning the bodies. It is therefore necessary to provide a wood pitch or an urn where the ashes be kept.

Great monuments are no guarantee of immortality. Even people without tombs have become greater and better known than others. It is known that there

will be a day when graves would open and the dead would come out. When men shall wish the coverings of the mountains, not of monuments.

Some have studied monuments; others have avoided it. Some want to meet the person in the next world; others do not; some wish for immortality, others do not seek it.

The Egyptians and Romans were very proud of their monuments but Christianity teaches us to be humble and meek.

Holy men did not bother much about this world nor did they care for immortality through monuments and buildings. They believed in good deeds and noble thoughts that would lead them to heaven.

Monuments are vain and inglorious as compared to noble and virtuous deeds. It we understand what it means to live indeed, that is, to live forever, it matters not where or how we lie buried in death.

5.3 WILLIAM CONGREVE

NOTES

A Great Play Writer

Congreve was a great play-writer next to Shakespeare. He had great longing for beauty. Coleridge considers him wicked. He had a dazzling personality. He had full knowledge of human nature. He observed the society of his time minutely. His style and natural dialogues were superior to his contemporaries. Henby calls him a classic. He was a great writer as well as the man of fashion. He was a man of finer sensibility. His plays are famous.

Plays of Congreve

Incognite (1692)

Old Bachelor (1693)

The Double Dealer (1694)

Love for Love (1695)

The Morning Bride (1697)

The Way of the World (1700)

5.3.1 THE WAY OF THE WORLD

The Way of the World

Fainall and Mirabell are discussing about the love of Millament and Mirabell. The oddity of Lady Wishfort is mentioned. There is an intrigue in which Foible, the maid of Lady Wishfort and the servant of Mirabell are married. If Millament marries against the wishes of her aunt she would lose her fortune, and it would go to her husband. Mirabell plans to involve in an intrigue in marriage with Sir Rowland. Thus Mirabell wanted to blackmail Lady Wishfort.

Mrs. Marwood, whom Mirabell had rejected, reveals the matter to Mrs. Wishfort in order to harm Mirabell. Lady Wishfort declares that if Millament marries Mirabell she would be disinherited. Sir Rowland was already married to Foible, but this is concealed from Lady Wishfort. Mrs. Marwood comes to know the plot of Mirabell to blackmail the Lady. Marwood conspires with Fainall, her lover, to inform the lady.

Fainall threaten to divorce his wife and discredit Lady Wishfort unless he gets Mrs. Fainall's property and Millament's portion. Foible tells Mirabell that she would put the picture of Lady Wishfort in her pocket to show it to Waitwell.

Lady Wishfort prepares to receive Sir Rowland. Mr. Rowland arrives and makes live to Lady Wishfort. A letter from Mr. Marwood is delivered to Lady Wishfort revealing the identity of Mr. Waitwell, disguised as Sir Rowland.

Foible and Lady Wishfort talk together. Lady Wishfort tells that she was seen in talking to Mirabell. Foible attempts to hide the intrigue to the lady. She tells that Mirabell told many ugly things against her. Lady Wishfort determines to marry Sir Rowland. Mrs. Marwood tells the lady that she should persuade Sir Wilful to marry Millament. Millament sings a long song. Mrs. Marwood tells Fainall that they would destroy Mirabell's conspiracy against Lady Wishfort. Lady Wishfort chides Sir Wilful for his excessive drinking. Lady rebukes her daughter for her infidelity.

Now Mr. Fainall tries to blackmail Lady Wishfort. He lays certain terms and conditions and claims the portion of money which is in the hands of Millament. She draws a legal document. Lady Wishfort does not like Fainall. Lady Wishfort is somehow convinced and made to forgive Mirabell.

Fainall tries to take Lady Wishfort's signature on a document. Wilful rebukes him. Lady Wishfort comes to know that Mrs. Marwood was a party in the intrigue. Wilful leaves Millament, and Mirabell is married to Millament.

5.3.2 *THE WAY OF THE WORLD* MIRRORS SOCIETY IN A REALISTIC MANNER

The Way of the World mirrors society in a realistic manner. Discuss.

Or

The age of Congreve was an age of 'unbridled license'. Discuss.

Or

'_The Way of the World_ may seem to mock at love and marriage, but is in reality built on a serious social purpose'. Discuss.

Introduction

Congreve's *The Way of the World* is about the infidelity of married women, the lustful sex relations, the fashionable society, scandals and intrigues, jealousy and gambling in a realistic manner. He had a good sense of morality which is revealed in the bargaining scene. He did not approve of the immorality of his time, but depicted the society in its ture colours. He has taken the social vices with a purpose to reform them. Macaulay says: "Adultery is the calling of a fine gentleman, contempt and aversion are the portion of unfortunate husband". Congreve has set forth the ideal of morality in the characters of Millament, Mirabell and Sir Wilful. Millament dislikes unfair sex relations. Sir Wilful, a drunkard dislikes the manners of the bad metropolis and lashes at the coxcombs, dandies, and fops.

Women Characters

In the plays of Congreve, women cause a social problem. They are disloyal to their husbands. They hold unfair relation with other men and are thus commercialized. They betray their husbands without hesitation, without any regard for morality or social obligation. They discuss scandalous affairs on the conduct of persons in the cable nights. Congreve has solved this problem through the marriage of Millament to Mirabell in *The Way of the World*. There were seen social vices in the women, which created jealousy and mutual suspicion. They deceived their husbands and made their life miserable. The husband being cuckolded by his wife

cries: "My wife has added lustre to my horns, by that increase of fortune." I could have worn them tipped with gold. The house-mistresses were also anguished by the unfair conduct of their maid servants. Foible became a source of anxiety to Lady Wishfort when she played in the hands of Mirabell and married Waitwell. The men also had no regard for moral or social obligations. They freely formed friendship with the wives of other gentlemen and of their faithlessness to their own wives. They lack a sense of honesty, honour, conscience, manner, good nature and regard for religion at all.

Obsessive Interest in Sex

Congreve has lashed at the condition of society and depicted sex in a very ugly form. He has treated sex with all its social implications. Sex had spoiled the society at large and ruined its moral fabric. It had no social or moral sanctity. Its physical side was fearful and brutal which had spoiled the men and women of upper strata of society. There was seen vulgar sex affecting social health of the people. Materialism and monetary standards had completely dominated the sexual life. The cable nights spoke of the disorder, a social chaos and vulgarity of sex. Love affairs were rendered in cable nights. Sir Wilful says to Lady Wishfort involving the honour of Millament in a peculiar tone. Mirabell says to Fainall involving the reputation and honour of Lady Wishfort.

Social evils

Numerous social evils were prevalent at the time of Congreve. The law courts, the hawkers and the press carried immense propaganda on sex. Mrs. Marwood tells Lady Wishfort about this kind of social behaviour. Showy and self-conceited people roamed about and chased women. Millament had avoided such lovers because she had a moral sense. Congreve has condemned this sort of eve teasing. Wits were also a source of nuisance to the women. Millament asked Mincing to stand between her and the wits. In the chocolate house Mirabell and Fainall were gambling. There were intrigues in the society playing upon seducing women and aspiring to make money. A maid-servant served as an agent in such intrigues like Foible in *The Way of the World*. Some anonymous letter was sent to the victim of intrigue. Mrs. Marwood sends a letter to Lady Wishfort. The bawds were part of the intrigues in seducing ladies.

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People took excessive wine and this was a vital cause of social evils. There were scandalous places like St. James park, chocolate houses where lovers indulged in secret love affairs. Hyde park served as a resort for lovers. The maidservants like Foible served the role of a female bawd. Lady Wishfort condemns Foible for their part in intrigue. The intimacy between women related with some scandals as Mrs. Fainall talks with Mrs. Marwood that money was the motive behind marriage. Mrs. Fainall marries to get material gain without any response to love or pure affection. Travelling was appreciated in those days as Sir Wilful intends to go abroad. The nightlife was meant for sexual purposes. The practice of cuckolding husband by their wives was very common. Fainall admits his cuckold condition and complains of his wife's infidelity.

5.3.3 Characteristics Of Restoration Comedy

What are the characteristics of restoration comedy? How does it differ from comedy of humour?

Or

How would you classify *The Way of the World* as a comedy of manners or a satirical comedy?

Introduction

Menander was the chief exponent of the Restoration Comedy. Congreve gave it a refined shape to suit his own purpose. Such a comedy has no hero in the real sense of the terms. The action is diffused throughout the play. The characters display the general norms of the society of which they themselves are victims. The mirth is obtained satirically which is often suggestive and convincing. The work is conditioned to the state of society. It displays the social behaviour of the time.

Leigh Hunt says: "We see nothing but a set of heartless fine ladies and gentlemen coming in and going out, saying witty things at each other, and buzzing in some maze of intrigue."

A Comedy of Manners is not profound and free from human motives. It's light, airy, witty, full of dexterity with peculiar stagecraft. The picture of society is drawn with its eccentricities. *The Way of the World* gives out satire against the social foibles of the people. It is the satire against the ladies of the time whose main occupation is the interest in other men folk.

Purpose of Comedy of Manners

The characters are handled in a light manner in a Comedy of Manners. The social portrait is so much mixed with fancy that truth is minimised. It is intellectual in its appeal and appeals to our reason. The wit being intellectual does not appeal to our emotions. Congreve in *The Way of the World* sought for the rationalisation of sex, and his Comedy became a source of laughter to the audience. The purpose of such a Comedy is to hit at the follies and foibles of the people. Congreve lashed at the society of his age through the purposeful dialogues in his comedies. He established universal values through sweeping from general to the particular effects. The exposition of the play displays such characters that show certain weak traits of a Cuckold, an unscrupulous lover or a wronged wife.

Mr. Marwood says to Fainall: "True, it's an unhappy circumstance of life, that love should ever die before us; and that the man so often should outlive the lover. But say what you will; it's better to be left, than never to have been loved."

A Source of Wit

The Comedy of Manners takes nourishment from wit and epigrams based on satire which is devoid of all sorts of malice. The dramatist is concerned with delineating surface things of life and ignores to probe into the human psyche. The peculiar vitality is found in the exposition of this Comedy in a delicate and ornate style. The typical Cuckold becomes the laughing stock to the audience. Nicoll says: "This kind of Comedy is wholly intellectual."

Dissimilarity between the two Comedies

The Comedy of Manners differs from the comedy of humours in several respects. The Comedy of humour does not treat of the manners of society. It is mainly concerned to a single humour in a character like greed, jealousy, anger, etc. It delineates the inner traits of a character. It is like a psychic operation of an individual. In 1598 the word humour passed from medical men to common

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people. It is a kind of eccentricity on the part of an individual. Ben Jonson says that humour is a bias of disposition, a wrap. he classified it into four forms—choler, melancholy, phlegm, and blood. It is a kind of 'Manomania' agitating the mind of a man at times. He based it on old psychology.

Bonamy Dobree says, "The difference between the comedy of manner and that of humour lies in the stage craft rather than in the outlook on life." In France, Moliere gave humour a concrete shape, there is seen some originality in the character which invokes the sense of humour. The comedy of manner deals with the surface behaviour and is concerned to the wholeness of society. It does not concern to some eccentric trait in a man. It simply concentrates upon the prevailing condition of society. It does not take into consideration any absolute standards of morality."

William Hazlitt writes, "Congreve's style, as the language of the nation, and Millament as the language of the individual". Dr. J Ronson opines: "The Comedies of Congreve are fictitious and artificial, with very little of nature, and not much of life."

5.3.4 CONGREVE'S ART AS A DRAMATIST

Write a brief essay on Congreve's art as a dramatist.

Or

Congreve is the master of style. Discuss.

Introduction

Congreve had displayed supreme art and culture in his plays because of his balanced temper and love for beauty. The culture arises from fashion of the society in his times. He sought beauty in the fashionable quarters. His culture does not show any association to the puritanical temper in the literary coterie. His plays have been fittingly called as a well-preserved culture sanctuary.

William Hazlitt writes: "His cultural outlook on life is a singular treatment to those who have cultivated taste for the niceties of English style".

Congreve had a sensitive soul that played its part in aesthetic manner; he neglected the crudity of country life. But he had the knowledge the vulgarity of village people. His character in *The Way of the World*, Sir Wilful shows village vulgarity. He did not find beauty in the bare facts of existence but in the fashionable circles. He presents in his plays the conversation of the fine society of pre-Restoration period. He has portrayed the rougher side of life through his poetic art.

Congreve's Art

A delicious beauty is to be witnessed in his art. His sense of delight and cultured consciousness gives rise to the aesthetic aspects of his art. He had a good sense of selection of the matter and ability to produce the refined language. There is seen aesthetic ruggedness in his plays which may be due to the vulgarity of the subject. He lends prismatic colours to his prose and produces aesthetic effects.

His Musical Style

There is always a gay atmosphere in his tune. Hazlitt says: "There is seen a sort of scrupulous sanity tempered by reserve in his style, and a gay life in his characters". But Dr. Johnson does not see life in him. He is of the opinion that "his writing are fictitious and artificial with very little nature and not much of life". The music of his style arises from the joy of living. Dr. Johnson failed to see the magnificent gaiety and buoyancy in his style.

Social Concept

There is often seen coldness and snobbery, wickedness and heartlessness in his writings. But Congreve has delineated the external facts of life and these defects may be due to the choice of subject. He's more interested in social life than in the individual life. He lacks humanistic spirit to a marked degree. His characters possess a social life, which appeal to his imagination. It is peculiar to find in his writings an extraordinary ring of the intellectual honesty.

Wit and Humour

The grandeur of the Congreve's art is due to his wit, humour and brilliant style. He blends the tragic with the comic scenes in *The Way of the World*. The

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character of Lady Wishfort is more tragic than passionate. Her humour is soaked in tears for the desire of having a male issue. Coleridge accused him as a wicked artist due to his Puritanical prejudice. Congreve found his world wicked and he honestly drew wicked images in his plays. He possessed a poetic talent and showed it in the prose medium. His sensibility, his intellectual humours. His sincere approach, the quality of his art and, the airness of his artistic fancy are praiseworthy. Leigh Hunt observes: "Every page presents a shower of brilliant conceits, is tissue of epigrams in prose, is a new triumph of wit, a new conquest of overdullness."

Knowledge of Vowels

Congreve is more rhythmical than Johnson. He knows the art of vowel changing. His satire is very sharp and direct. He tried to poetise the rougher sides of life by describing the intimate relations between men and women. He loves the sound of words and their use. He held the English comedy of manners on a realistic basis. His *Way of the World* is full of the vowel sounds and stresses. In *The Way of the World* he has laid stress on wit and epigrams with little care to plot and characterization.

Thackeray says about wit in *The Way of the World* "a weary feast, that banquet of wit where no love is." He uses dialogues contrasted in a most witty manner. He had a very decorative style.

Macaulay says: "His style has a jewellery". Aiming at refining upon human existence, he refines upon the language. He shows airness of fancy and delicacy of pointed style. He uses conceited metaphors to grace his sublime style, and it is ornate and full of brilliant effects. His sentences sound like a melodious tune of music.

He presents the urban culture in his prose with fine phrasing. He writes for the coterie, for aristocrat and refined society. He has cultivated taste for the niceties of English style, and he imparts satire through sharp and stylistic touches. His prose shows a rhythm of poetry, and the cadence of a high music is to be seen in his prose dialogues.

5.4 COMPREHENSION EXERCISES

1. Give a general estimate of Webster as a Dramatist.
2. Write a note on Webster's Art of Characteristics.
3. Give a character sketch of *The Duchess of Malfi*.
4. Write an essay on Browne's prose style.
5. Express Browne's views on immortality.
6. *The Way of the World* mirrors society in a realistic manner. Discuss.
7. How would you classify *The Way of the World* as a comedy of manners?

5.5 LET US SUM UP

After having finished Unit V you have become armed enough to discuss John Webster, Thomas Browne and Congreve. You have become quite enlightened to speak on their lives and also bring into discussion some of their most important works— Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, Thomas Browne's *The Urn Burial* and Congreve's *The Way of the World*.

SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Edward Albert A History of English Literature
2. Hudson An Outline History of English Literature
3. Ifor Evans A Short History of English Literature
4. M H Abrams A Glossary of Literary Terms
5. M. H. Abrams (ed.), The Norton Anthology of English Literature, London: Norton

6. Pat Rogers (ed.), The Oxford Illustrated History of English Literature, London, Oxford University Press.

7. A N Jeffares (ed.), The Macmillan History of Literature, London, Macmillan.