MODERN LITERATURE-I
(1550-1700)
(DEG03)
(M.A. ENGLISH)

ACHARYA NAGARJUNA UNIVERSITY

CENTRE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

NAGARJUNA NAGAR,

GUNTUR

ANDHRA PRADESH

Lesson - 1

The Elizabethan Age (1550 – 1620)
The Elizabethan Age

Contents

3.1.1. Objectives

After going through this lesson you will be able to understand:

- the background to the Elizabethan age by knowing about
- the Renaissance and its Reformation and their impact on the Age
- the development of early drama and classical influences on it
- the precursors to Shakespeare.

3.1.2 Introduction

The study of science has become so important in the modern world that we often wonder if other studies are not a waste of time. Literature should hold the mirror up to nature; it should be life-enhancing or a criticism of life. At times we suffer from a feeling of helplessness and separation when some one we love is suffering grief or pain which we are powerless to relieve. At such times we have an almost frightening sense of the fact that every human being is separate from every other. Good literature, be it a poem or a drama projects a concern with thoughts and feelings which we recognize as belonging to real life. This is what Alexander Pope meant when he wrote the well-known couplet,

"True wit is Nature to advantage drest;
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed"

Decay of Feudalism

The latter half of the 15th century saw the decay of feudalism and the building up of strong monarchies. It saw Louis XI create France; it saw that union of Arragon and Castile in the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella, which made Spain; it saw the Tudor line begin to heal the wounds left by the Wars of the Roses and set up a monarchy which was really supreme. In each country came a vigorous growth of national spirit and a pride in national power. France and Spain were at loggerheads and they realised that the religion for each nation was a matter for its own concern and its own decision and in the rivalry for the New World.

New Trade Routes

Henry VII's reign saw the Genoese navigator Columbus discover the New World for Spain in 1492 and Vasco Da Gama go round the Cape of Good Hope and open the route to the East for Portugal in 1497. In 1497 some Bristol merchants reached the mainland of America. Commerce, as a result, began to pass from the "thalassic" to the "Oceanic" stage. The change of trade routes meant much to England. The new highway lay at her door.

Renaissance - Beginnings

The Hundred Years War with France resulted in wasteful futilities. Feudalism that had been a power in Norman times survived as a spent force. After Chaucer, there is a certain sterility of English literature. At the same time there was a stirring of fresh life, a kindling of new desires in Italy and Germany. In Italy the Renaissance thrilled through the senses. The human body, so long despised and ill-treated, came into its kingdom and was glorified. The kings of England, so far, were thinking of only personal aggrandizement. They tried in vain to prop up the tottering edifice of mediaeval thought.

Importance of 1453

Two events make it convenient to consider the true beginning of the "rebirth" – Renaissance – as taking place around 1450. After the fall of Rome, the eastern part of the Roman Empire, with Constantinople as its Capital, had remained innact for nearly a thousand years and had preserved the learning and works of ancient Greece, which had been lost in Western Europe. But on the morning of

May 29, 1453, the Turks breached the walls and Constantinople fell. The result was a diffusion of fugitive scholars, bringing valuable manuscripts with them; these scholars who were assembled there fled to Western Europe, bringing with them as much of their libraries as they could manage to rescue and transport. They settled at first mainly in Germany and Italy and so started that intellectual awakening of Europe, which has come to be known as the Renaissance. The full flood of the New Learning reached England about the year 1500 and it had a marked influence upon the English language and literature. This new scholarship did produce new forces and added new worlds to the vocabulary. It was a classical Renaissance and mainly a Latin one; it introduced and gave currency to words of Latin origin or from Latin roots. In the wake of the Renaissance followed the Reformation and though its importance was primarily religious and political, if had its effect on the language.

Tiptoft's Contribution and Caxton

John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, was a scholar and a traveller and he gifted valuable manuscripts brought from the continent. As a translator of the classics he had done a splendid work. The politics of the Age got him executed in 1470. A Kentish man William Caxton (1422 – 1491) brought the Printing Press into England in 1476. He was a man of business as well as a man of letters. He had a pretty taste for literature and as early as 1468 – 1469 translated into English, a favourite mediaeval romance. King Edward IV and Richard III both favoured him. The Renaissance had come with Caxton and the great nobles of the day and the monarchs were stung with the desire of knowledge. For the first time in history it was possible for a book or an idea to reach the whole nation. Schools and Universities were established in the place of the old monasteries. Greek ideas and Greek culture came to England in the Renaissance and man's spiritual freedom was proclaimed in the Reformation. Probably the very turmoil of the age prevented any literary development because literature is one of the arts of peace.

Popular Movement

Since the Renaissance and the Reformation were two different aspects of the same-intellectual ferment, the two movements are more or less complementary. In Italy, where the Renaissance was at its strongest, the Reformation was hardly felt. In France and England both movements were felt, but neither in its full concentration. People awoke to a sense of their national life. So Renaissance was not a scholar's monopoly but a far-reaching popular movement. Sir Thomas Malory, the author of Morte d' Arthur, got his poem printed by Caxton, sings the praise of love with a seriousness of passion. For nearly 50 years after the death of Caxton the start made by him was not maintained.

Period of Transition

1485 – 1557 was a period of transition and new words from Latin, French, Greek and Italian poured into the English language and numberless translations flooded the literary landscape. Among the classical authors given in an English dress during the sixteenth century were the Greek and Roman historians, the biographer Plutarch, the orator Demosthenes and Cicero, the poets Homer and Virgil.

Renaissance

In the long reign of Henry VIII the changes are less violent, but have more purpose and significance. His age is marked by a steady increase in the national power at home and abroad, by the entrance of the Reformation "by a side door" and by the final separation of England from the ecclesiastical bondage in Parliament's famous Act of Supremacy. It was an age when the human spirit was reborn or awakened after the long slumber of the Middle Ages. By Renaissance or Revival of Learning we refer to the gradual enlightenment of the human mind after the darkness of the Middle Ages. The names Renaissance and Humanism are often applied to the same movement. It means the revival of art resulting from the discovery and imitation of classic models in the 14th and 15th centuries. This rebirth or awakening was brought about by a revival of interest in the culture and civilisation of ancient Greece and Rome. As we have already noted the study of classical Greek and Roman art and literature came to be called Humanism and its devotees Humanists. Humanism means the religion of humanity or devotion to human or secular interests as opposed to divinity.

Erasmus

The sponsors of Humanism followed the example of Petrarch because they held that the study of the classics is more human than the old theology. Revival of Learning thus means that man discovered himself and the universe and that man, so long blinded "had suddenly opened his eyes and seen". Thus the Revival stirred men as the voyages of Da Gama and Columbus stirred the mariners of the Mediterranean. The Flemish scholar Erasmus mocked at the theology of the monks. Erasmus through his book Praise of Folly laughs at the old fashioned scholastic learning of the monks. Ridicule of the monks and their opinions naturally resulted in contempt for their order and their faith. What Erasmus taught was put into practice by Martin Luther. Luther, leaving a monastery in 1508, became a teacher of theology in the new Saxon University. He explained his view and invited discussion. Papacy had no mind for such a discussion. The papacy was becoming unpopular; Luther appealed to the Germans in their own language and not in Latin; Luther was condemned; he had hit the papacy hard; no powerful state rejected the authority of the Pope. This momentous step was first taken by England. So the English Reformation was an event of paramount importance over the length and breadth of Europe.

Break with Tradition

In the 15th and 16th centuries the king directed the policy of the Country. All statesmen were match – makers. Henry VII accepted the hand of Catherine of Arragon for his eldest son Arthur. Arthur, however died within a year of his marriage, and the bride was affianced to the King's second son Henry, afterwards Henry VIII. Thus the marriage entwined the fortunes of England with those of Spain and Austria, securing its aid against the ambition of France. Henry VII's eldest daughter Margaret was married to James IV of Scotland in 1502. Thus England was raised to a position of great influence.

Thomas Wolsey

It is in such a context that we must consider the fortunes of Thomas Wolsey, a statesman and a diplomat who easily won the complete confidence of Henry VIII. He abandoned the policy of opposing France and determined to turn that country into an ally. In France when Louis XII's queen died,

Wolsey, with the utmost secrecy negotiated a match between Louis XII, a widower of 52 and Henry VIII's youngest sister Mary who was only 17. Wolsey proved that he was as subtle, silent and speedy as any other diplomat. From now onwards Spain was treated as an English rival at sea and in the New world.

Fall of Wolsey

Erasmus taught at Cambridge and influenced and inspired, Latimer and Fisher. "Utopia" a fantasy by Thomas More shows how the human soul may leap forward out of the trammels of its time. Wolsey saw the need for reform; his few efforts were cautious and prudent. The great source of Henry's power was that Henry VIII was so completely an Englishman of his time. This king had no deep-grounded respect for the papacy. The king was disappointed that Catherine of Arragon, his Queen, had no son to follow him and secure the succession. Besides he fell voilently in love with a lady of the court named Anne Boleyn. To win Anne, Henry must get rid of Catherine and turned to Wolsey for help. Catherine had been King Henry's brother Arthur's widow. So Pope could declare the marriage null and void. Henry wanted Wolsey to negotiate the deal but Wolsey wouldn't. In anger Henry seized Wolsey's goods, deprived him of the Great Seal and dismissed him. Henry summoned the Parliament which had not met for 14 years; the sway of the Church in politics was tottering.

Dissolution of Monasteries

The seven years from 1529 to 1536 during which the British Parliament sat saw the breach between Henry and Rome. Henry was ready to do without Rome. When Parliament met for its fifth session to divorce had been granted. No church ordinances were to be made save by the King's consent. Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy by which Henry VIII was declared the supreme Head of the Church of England. The reformation Parliament conveyed to him all the Papal powers. The monasteries were dissolved; their properties were acquired by the Crown. Henry VIII's time was a period of peace and prosperity. Rome was routed and England became popular. During the time of Henry VIII, Edward VI and Elizabeth religious opinions had veered from one extreme to another. Out of political expediency Elizabeth remained consistently inconsistent about her marriage.

More's Utopia

Erasmus's Praise of Folly and More's Utopia were written first in Latin but they were later speedily translated into all languages. The Praise of Folly is like a song of victory for the New Learning, which had driven away vice, ignorance and superstition, the three foes of humanity. It was published in 1511 after the accession of Henry VIII. In this, the vice and cruelty of kings, the selfishness and ignorance of the clergy and the foolish standards of education are satirized. More's Utopia published in 1516 is a powerful and original study of social conditions. In this land of Nowhere do we find for the first time the foundations of civilised society rest on the three egalitarian ideas and words, namely, Equality, Liberty and Fraternity. More wonders why after fifteen centuries of Christianity, England is so little civilised. Tyndale's translation of the New Testament – 1525 – which fixed a standard of good English brought that standard not only to scholars but also to the homes of the common people. Crammer's Great Bible was brought out in 1539, which was the foundation for the authorised version of the Bible, which appeared nearly a century later.

French Supremacy

The century and half following the death of Chaucer (1400 – 1550) is the most volcanic period of English literary history. These changes seem at first to have no specific aim or direction. Henry V was typical of the life of his times first let Europe feel the might of the new national spirit. The battle of Agincourt was fought in 1415 and by 1420 France acknowledged Henry V's right to all his demands. Henry died in 1422 leaving his son Henry VI heir to the crowns of France and England. Henry VI was a puppet in the hands of powerful nobles. All Henry's foreign possessions were won back by the French under the magic leadership of Joan of Arc. The bloody Wars of the Roses (1455 – 1485) voilently destroyed England's energies. Still at the end of the war we find feudalism dying a natural death and the growth of national sentiment under the popular Tudors. In the long reign of Henry VIII the changes are less violent but have more purpose and significance.

Spenser's Distinction

When we reach Spenser (1552 – 1599) and Sidney (1554 – 1586) the tentative flutings are over; the music is sweet, spontaneous, full-throated. Drama inspired the grandest poetry as well as the sweetest lyrics; drama gave a variety, flexibility and clarity to prose. Philosophic reflection, poignant introspection, joyousness of heart, agony of spirit – all these things clamoured for utterance in the drama. Elizabethan poetry voiced them all. The drama made for intensity of expression; it made also for extensity. The Old Testament contains 6000 words whereas the plays of Shakespeare have about 15,000 words. The quaint technique with which the performances abounded served again as grist. It created blank verse and thus handed on to Milton the torch with which he glorified English poetry.

3.1.3 Definition and Origin of Drama

The origins of the Drama have always been deeply rooted in the religious instincts of mankind. Drama made its appearance as a distinct and well established form of English literature in the 15th century. The drama arose in England in the attempts of the clergy to teach the masses the tenets of the Christian faith by dramatizing the services of the Church at Christmas and Easter. The plays were in Latin and the actors were the clergy. Such scriptural plays in Latin are known to have been performed as early as the 12th century. They were first given in the church, later in the churchyard. They became very popular after the institution by the Pope of the Festival of Corpus Christi early in the 14th century. The sets of plays which were given separately at Christmas and Easter were combined into one cycle and performed. Stories derived from the Bible, called Mysteries dealt with the lives of saints and they were also called Miracle Plays. During the next stage the play emerges from the Church into the market place. This was done when the Guilds were entrusted with the performances in the 14th century.

Early Plans

In these plays, however, there was no attempt at scenery, but attention was given to stage property. There was a monstrous Head with movable jaws to represent Hell. The play of Noah gives us some insight into the nature of these plays. It shows the blending of rough English humour with didactic purpose. Though the drama had its source in sacred story, in the method there were the pegeants and May games, the horseplay of the juggler and the quips of the jester. Slowly the Mystery

and Miracle plays gave place to the Moral plays or the Morality and Interlude. These grew up side by side with the Miracles in the fifteenth century.

The earliest extant Morality, the Castle Of Perseverance dates back to early 15th century. The Morality was a sort of allegory of human life showing man struggling between Good and Evil. The characters were abstractions – personifications of virtues and vices. The early Moralities like Mankind, Hickscorner are awfully dull. The only exception is Everyman which is good. Every man is summoned to God by Death. He seeks company, and visits one after another, Fellowship, kindered and Goods, but in vain. He, at last, remembers Good Deeds who willingly accompanies him. The moral is obvious. At the end of the 13th century these plays had passed into the hands of the laity and were rendered by trade guilds.

Cycles of Plays

Four Great Cycles of Plays have come down in literature – viz York, Chester, Towneley and Coventry. The York Cycle put on boards 51 plays but only 48 have been preserved. A number of plays deal with different incidents in the life of Christ, the Passion and Crucifixion. Other plays treated of resurrection of Christ, Ascension and the Day of Judgement. The Towneley plays, also known as Wakefield plays of which Shepherds Play is important.

Regular Drama

The Miracle Plays ceased to be acted about 1600 but by that time the Regular Drama was established. Moralities were acted in the reign of Henry VI and like the Miracle plays, they continued to flourish until the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. The Moralities, like the Miracles were adapted to the audience. Vice and Devil were serious and comic characters respectively. The Interlude of the four P's (1540), that is, the Palmer, the Pardoner, the Poticary and the Pedlar is the best known of the Interludes.

Real Founders of Drama

With the advent of the Renaissance and the triumph of Protestantism the Miracles declined. The Moralities, however, survived. Moralities became either secular or religious. Skelton's Magnificence (1516) was aimed at the extravagance of Henry VIII. The Reformers used Morality to propagate their own views. Lindsay's Satire Of The Three Estates satirizes the Clergy, the nobility and the Citizens. Towards the close of this transitional period appear a group of highly gifted writers who raised and recognized drama as a form of art. The members of this group were all University men and they are known as University Wits. They are John Lyly, George Peele, Robert Greene, Thomas Lodge, Thomas Nash, Kyd and Christopher Marlowe. They were the real founders of the great Elizabethan Drama.

Classical Influence on the Drama

The domestic drama began with the crude home scenes introduced in the miracles and development in a score of different ways, from the coarse humour of Gammer Curton's Needle to the

comedy of Manners of Jonson and the later dramatists. Though humanism had used the Morality for its own purposes early in the 16th century, it was not till 1550 that the classics made their full impact upon English Drama. The first English Comedy was Ralph Roister Doister written by Nicholas Udall, headmaster of Eton. It was first acted about 1553. It was modelled on the Latin Comedy of Plautus and Terence and divided into five acts. It was not pure imitation. Some of the characters are borrowed from the classics and others are taken straight from English life. Ralph, a foolish braggart, and Mathew Merrygreek, the mischievously funny servant are stock characters of Latin Comedy. Dame Constance, the heroine (betrothed to Goodluck) and her two maids, are contemporary English types. The fun and laughter arise from Merrygreek's changing the punctuation of Ralph's love letter. Ralph is beaten and driven away by Constance and her maids. Goodluck is reconciled to her. The play, written in rhymed verse, is based on a careful study of plautus. The classical form has absorbed elements belonging to both morality and interlude. Udall is justly entitled to be called the "Father of English Comedy".

The Three Unities

The revival of Latin literature had a decided influence upon the English drama as it developed from the Miracle pays. Seneca became a favourite Latin author, and all his tragedies were translated into English Between 1559 and 1581. This was the exact period in which the first English playwrights were shaping their own ideas. If we compare a tragedy of Seneca or of Euripides (the Greek dramatist) with one of Shakespeare, we can see how widely the two masters differ in methods. In the classic play the so-called dramatic unities of time, place, and action were strictly observed. Time and place must remain the same; the play could represent a period of only a few hours, and whatever action was introduced must take place at the spot where the play began. The characters, therefore, must remain unchanged throughout. The English drama strove to represent the whole sweep of life in a single play. The scene changed rapidly; the same actors appeared now at home, now at court, now on the battlefield; and vigours action filled the stage before the eyes of the spectators. The dramatist had free scope to present all life in a single place and a single hour. Tragedy and comedy were presented side by side, asthey are in life itself. As a rule Lyly, Peele, Greene, Marlowe and many others who recognized the English love of action disregarded the dramatic unities in their endeavour to present life as it is.

The First English Tragedy

Gorboduc, or Ferrex And Portex, the first English tragedy, was written by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton and acted in 1561. The action takes place behind the scenes, and each act ends with a chorus, in imitation of the tragedies of Seneca. It departs from the classical model in the use of dumb show and is written in blank verse. Gorboduc treats of an episode in national history, the story being taken from Geoffrey Monmouth's Chronicle, chosen for the specific purpose of Emphasizing the need for "Concord and unity" at this particular time – the latter half of the 16th century England — . It was acted in 1562, only two years before the birth of Shakespeare. It is remarkable not only as the first tragedy in English but also for the blank verse in which it is written. The latter was most significant since it started the drama into the style of verse best suited to the genius of English playwrights. The artistic finish of this first tragedy is marred by the authors' purpose to persuade Elizabeth to marry. It aims to show the danger to which England is exposed by the uncertainty of succession. In the play

there is very little action on the stage; bloodshed and battle are announced by a messenger; and the chorus sums up the situation with a few moral observations at the end of each of the first four acts.

Second English Comedy

Another and even better comedy or rather farce was Gammer Gurton's Needle (1575). The authorship is not certain, (a) by Mr S. Mr of Art (b) Bishop Still (c) John Bridges (d) William Stevenson. Like Ralph Roister Doister in structure and form it is modelled on Latin Comedy, but the matter and characterisation are native. It is the second English Comedy where we have the Interlude of John Heywood expanded and developed under the influence of the foreign classical school. Gammer Gurton loses her needle – at that time an article of value. Doccon accuses Dame Chat of stealing it. This upsets the whole village; the parson, the bailey, the Constable, Doctor Rat – are all called to assist in the emergency. The tumult and confusion increases; eventually the needle is found sticking in the breeches (pants) of Hodge, the Gammer's farm servant. Hodge has become a generic title for the farm labourer. These two Gurton's Needle And Ralph Roister Doister, historically important, are the precursors of English Comedy; yet they did not contribute much to the progress of the drama beyond separating the comic element from the serious, which in fact had already been done in Heywood's Interludes. In these plays there is a gradual approximation of the drama to the life of the day – especially the comedy side.

John Lyly

Lyly who made his name with his Euphues belongs more to the history of prose than to that of drama. His plays in euphuistic prose were written for the entertainment of the court, are masque – like comedies, namely, Campaspe, Endymion Love's Metamorphoses. The dramatic element in them is slight but they are highly artistic and they prepared the way for the Romantic Comedy of Shakespeare. Peele's plays show a great variety of subjects: classical, romantic, biblical and historical – His important plays The Arrangement of Paris, David And Bethsabe, Edward I and The Old Wives Tale. Greene, Lodge, and Nash form more or less a distinct group of playwrights who wrote for the popular stage. Of these Greene occupies a pride of place. In Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay and Jamesiv he sketched charming pictures of pure, self-sacrificing women.

Lyly's Contribution to Drama

John Lyly (1554 – 1606) brought out his noted Euphues said by Charles Kingsley to be "as brave, righteous, and pious a book as man need look into". His best known dramas include Alesander And Compaspe, probably played for the first time on New Year's Eve 1581, Sapho And Phao, 1584, Endymion (written round the friendship existing between the Queen, and the Earl of Leicester) 1591 and Midas 1592. These plays written after the publication of Euphues were acted the "the children of Paul's before her Majesty". In character they were mythological or pastoral, and approximated to the Masque rather than to the narrative drama of Marlowe. They were written in prose intermingled with verse which is almost wholly charming. Among his plays are The Woman In The Moon, Compaspe, Midas and Love's Metamohphosis. They plays are less rich in concrete humanity and in stage effectiveness but exhibit superior culture and finer sense of style. The plays approximate more to the

masques than the drama and he provides beautiful songs for which he was such an adept. His dialogue is admirable at times, happy in clear-cut phrases and allusiveness. If not a born dramatist, he was a brilliant man, who did good service for the drama, on its more purely literary side.

Shakespeare Indebted

We find him in his plays as a skilful dramatist, exhibiting his skill in clever repartee, and in his continual use of puns, conceits and all sorts of verbal fireworks. These are evident in shakespeare's early comedies such as Loves's Labours Lost, and A Midsummer Night's Dream. None of Lyly's comedies has much dramatic movement or plot, but they are graceful. Especially 'Compaspe', according to Boas, is remarkable for its polish and neatness of workmanship. Its main story is the rivalry between Alexander the Great and the painter Apelles for the fair Theban Captive Compaspe. "The contrast between the man of action and the artist foreshadows a favourite Shakespearean device, and Alexander exhibits many of the qualities of a Theseus or a Henry V. As a musical relief, it was Lyly who set the fashion of introducing lyrics and Shakespeare followed this method".

Drama As a Form of Art

During the latter half of 16th century appear a group of highly gifted writers who pulled the drama out of the sphere of childish experiment into that of art. These University Wits, as they were called, were John Lyly, George Peele, Robert Greene, Thomas Lodge, Thomas Hash, Kyd and Cristopher Marlowe. They were the real founders of the great Elizabethan Drama and the immediate predecessors as well as contemporaries of Shakespeare. Of them George Peele (1556 – 1596) on leaving Oxford, came to London, where, in company with Marlowe, Greene and Hash, formed one of that band of dissolute young men endeavouring to earn a livelihood by literary work. Peele was an actor as well as a writer of plays. Notwithstanding his irregular life, Peele was a hard worker; he not only wrote plays and poems but also three pageants for ceremonial occasions in London.

Geroge Peele shows in his verse the same taste for fine words as does Lyly in his prose. He flatters Queen Elizabeth in this graceful pastoral as it contains an elaborate tribute to the Queen. In this play Paris has to award an apple, the prize of beauty, to the fariest of the three goddesses, Juno, Pallas and Venus. His choice falls on Venus but the issue is referred to Diana. Diana's praise of England "Breathes exactly the spirit of John of Gaunt's eloquent apostrophe in Shakespeare's Richard II".

Peele's theatrical work is diverse in character. The breadth of his mind and the range of his genius are reflected in his works, a pastoral, a romantic tragedy, a chronicle history, a kind of mystery play and a romantic literary satire. The Old Wives' Tale has a perfect charm of romantic humour.

3.1.4 Shakespeare's Predecessors:

Robert Greene

Robert Greene who took his M.A degree from Cambridge was a story teller and pamphletter who turned his attention to drama. Although he relies on some of the old devices of the Miracle and

Morality, contributes to the development of drama by his sincerity and real insight into character. Encouraged by patrons like Essex, leicester and Arindel, and estranged by his wife in 1586, he brought out a number of plays :- Orlando Furioso, Friar Bacon and Friar Bongay, Alphonsus King Of Aragon, Looking Glass for London and England, George – A – Greene and The Pinner Of Wakefield. Greene was a novelist as well as a playwright. His writings are almost always moral. Shakespeare's drama "The Winter's Tale" is based on Greene's Pandusto. In so far as he is a story-teller, he manages to hold the reader's attention despite irrelevances and prolixities. Though he relies on some of the devices of the Miracle and Morality he contributes to the development of the drama by his sincerity and real insight into character. In Friar Bacon And Friar Bungay Greene describes the tricks of the Friar with a straight – forward romantic love-story. This play, in a way, contributes much to the development of romantic comedy in England. Greene has woven together three distinct worlds, the world of magic, of aristocratic life and of country life, and thus showed the way to Shakespeare to write "A Midsummer Night's Dream". In this play Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay we meet with members of every social class, prince and peasant, earl and shoe-maker, philosopher and clown, all mixing in easy familiarity. So it is in the world of Shakespeare, "where rank is never the measure of merit, and where the ideal ruler wandering in disguise among his soldiers declares to them that the king is but a man as other men, with like senses and conditions".

Thomas Lodge

Thomas Lodge (1558 – 1625) is well remembered as having contributed his finest story Rosalynde as a quarry for Shakespeare's AS YOU LIKE IT. Rosalynde is shapely and equable; Lodge nods towards the example of Lyly and sprinkles the soliloquies, or 'meditations', of his characters with choice moral observation in the manner of Euphues. Lodge's principal dramatic works are The Wounds Of Civil War, and A Looking Glass For London And England, neither of which were very popular.

Thomas Nashe

Thomas Nashe (1567 – 1601) was fascinated by the potential of learned, innovative, allusive and polemical English prose. He allows his various narrators to express themselves in styles appropriate both to their condition and to the often disorienting circumstances in which they find themselves. The chief point that distinguishes Nashe is his "Comedy" attitude towards life. His style is neither Euphuistic nor Arcadian. He did his best to cultivate an individual style, vigorous, easy and vital, which was well suited to his subject matter.

Thomas Kyd

Thomas Kyd (1558 – 1595) was a dramatist and a translator and achieved great popularity with his first work The Spanish Tragedy. He is the author of Cornelia, Jeronimi, The Rare Triumphs Of Love And Fortune, Solyman And Perseda. In The Spanish Tragedy or Hieronimo Is Mad Again he adheres to the senecan school; he popularised the "blood and thunder" element that proved one of the attractive features of the Pre-Shakespearean drama. Violent and extravagant, he helped to break away

from the nerveless monotony of Gorboduc. There are touches of genuine force behind the extravagances of The Spanish Traged. Kyd gives the Englishmen the drama, or rather the melodrama, of passion, copied by Marlowe and Shakespeare. The evolution of theatre, buildings and companies in the last years of Queen Elizabeth's reign was to some degree parallel by the rapid development of a newly expressive blank verse tragedy. Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy introduced a new kind of central character, an obsessive, brooding, mistrustful and alienated plotter and it set a pattern from which a line of dramatic explorations of the theme of revenge developed. What particularly established Kyd's reputation was the intermixture of dense plotting, intense action, swiftly moving dialogue, and long, strategically placed, rhetorically shaped speeches. Kyd's revenge dramas stimulated a public appetite to which Shakespeare responded with a sensational replay of Kyd's themes and echoes of his rhetoric in Titus Andronicus.

Christopher Marlowe

Christopher Marlowe (1566 – 1593), according to William J.Long, Marlowe is one of the most suggestive figures of the English Renaissance and he is the greatest of Shakespeare's predecessors. His soul was surging with the ideals of the Renaissance, which later found expression in Faustus, the scholar longing for unlimited knowledge and for power to grasp the universe. In 1587, his first play Tamburlaine, was produced and took the public ear at once, by reason of its impetuous force, its splendid command of blank verse, and its sensitiveness to beauty. Tamburlaine is a seythian shepherd obsessed with the idea that his mission in life is to be the scourge of God. He becomes a terror to the world. Tamburlaine is the story of Timur, the Tartar; he truimphs over the Persian king; intoxicated by his success, Timur rushes like a tempest over the whole East. The play is an epic rather than a drama. Blank verse, that is, "the mighty line" became instantaneously famous as the instrument of all dramatic expression. Cowardice is an abomination for which he slays one of his sons. Tamburlaine was succeeded by The Tragical History Of Doctor Faustus in which Marlowe gives an old mediaeval legend a glowing Renaissance setting. The story of the alchemist who sells his soul to the Devil never lost its fasination. The play has an unusual number of passages of rare poetic beauty. Marlowe makes Mephistophiles say, "Why this is Hell, nor am I out of it" – In this line we recall Milton's satan's utterance. Marlowe's third play The Jew Of Malta is a study of the lust for wealth which centres about Barabas, a terrible old money lender, strongly suggestive of Shylock in Shakespeare's The Merchange Of Venice. Marlowe's last play is EDWARD II, a tragic study of a king's weakness and misery. It shows rare skill of Construction, while the characterisation is wholly admirable. In these plays Marlowe raised the subject matter of the drama to a very high level. Marlowe's subjects were the insatiable spirit of adventure, the master passions of love and hate, ideals of beauty and the greatness and littleness of human life. He gave life and reality to his characters. He fathomed the immense possibilities of blank verse. He gave a unity to the drama,

————"his raptures were
All air and fire which made his verses clear"
(Michael Drayton)

Queen Elizabeth

With the coming of Queen Elizabeth (1558 – 1603) to the throne of England the Protestant religion was restored. But she was not a fanatic. All she wanted was the people should acknowledge her as head of the national church. Like here ancestors Elizabeth was an absolute ruler. She wisely sought the cooperation of Parliament in her governance of England. Her reign was marked by intense patriotism and pride in English achievements. The exploits of the "sea dogs" were climaxed by the defeat of the Spanish Armada. "Perhaps her supreme moment of calculated theatrical bravura was her appropriately costumed address to her troops at Tilbury in 1588 as the Spanish Armada threatened the shores of her kingdom". This image of the eloquent and armour – plated Elizabeth of 1588 may well have contributed to the most conspicuous of many tributes to the Queen in Edmund Spenser's The Faerie Queene. England became a great sea power. The renaissance or Revival of Learning reached England late but Literature, Art and Music flourished under Henry VIII. This reached glorious flowering under Elizabeth. Under her patronage there was a flood of writings of all sorts; poetry, prose and drama. The monumental works of the dramatists with Shakespeare at the top testify to the vigour of the artistic impulse in the Elizabethan period. English Universities and many of the schools that fed them with literate students shared the pan – European vogue for reviving and performing classical plays and for sponsoring new entertainments, which would show off the proficiency of their authors and actors. Children'' companies, and notably the boys of the Chapel Royal in London, remained a significant feature in the development of Elizabethan drama, but it was the revival of interest in classical tragedy that proved decisive in the evolution of a distinctive national mode. Native English tragedy was distinctly marked by the bloody, high-flown and sombre influence of Seneca and Heywood published English translations of Seneca's Troas, Thystes, and Hercules Furens.

Elizabeth's Astuteness

Elizabeth with all her vanity and inconsistency, steadily loved England and England's greatness. Elizabeth fashioned herself in her chosen roles as brilliantly and as self-consciously as her faithful courtier Ralegh acted out his. As an astute, wary and wily Renaisance politician she readily recognized the intermediary influence of secular icons. She accepted the flattering addresses of courtly poets and she submitted herself to the equally flattering arts of her maids of honour. When occasion demanded she was a master of emphatic assertions of royal dignity, golden promises, and fine words. The Queen liked to dwell on the convenient idea that she was "married" to England. She proudly conveyed to the commons that she worked for them with more zeal, more care and concern than any other monarch before. The image of this eloquent Queen must have contributed to the most conspicuous of many tributes by Spenser. Spenser's figure of the warrior virgin in Britomart is truly a British heroine who had actively present in each of the six massive books of The Faerie Queene. Elizabeth could be recognized as a Faerie Queene. Though Spenser looked back on the past from an essentially Renaissance perspective, and with modern Italian models in mind, his allegory and his language suggest a more immediate response to native literary traditions.

Defeat of the Spanish Armada

Queen Elizabeth inspired all her people with unbounded patriotism. Under her administration the English national life progressed by gigantic leaps and English literature reached the very highest point of its development. Spenser, therefore, pays personal devotion to Elizabeth in the 'Faery Queene". The most characteristic feature of the Elizabethan Age was the comparative religious tolerance. She favoured Protestants and Catholics and both the sects acted together as trusted counsellors of a great sovereign. The defeat of the Spanish Armada – the crowning glory of her life – established the Reformation as a fact in England and united all Englishmen in a national enthusiasm. It is purely from this new freedom of the mind that the age of Elizabeth received its great literary stimulus.

3.1.5. Summary

The Elizabethan Age is an age of dreams, of adventure, of unbounded enthusiasm springing from the new lands of fabulous riches revealed by English explorers. Bacon tells us that he has taken all knowledge for his province. In the vedas too we learn to accept knowledge coming from everywhere. While the Elizabethan explorers searched the New World, her poets created literary works that are young for ever. This age was a time of intellectual liberty, of growing intelligence and comfort among all classes. Such an England could well be compared to the Age of Pericles in Athens, or of Augustus in Rome. In the age of Elizabeth literature twined instinctively to the drama and brought it rapidly to the highest stage of its development. To quote William J. Long, "In the Age of Elizabeth all doubt seems to vanish from English history". The accession of a popular sovereign Elizabeth (Who had received a broad and sophisticated education as a preparation for her public life) was like the sunrise after a long night, and, in Milton's words, we suddenly see England, "a noble and puissant nation, rousing herself, like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks". The most characteristic feature of the age was the comparative religious tolerance, which was due largely to the queen's influence. The defeat of the Spanish Armada established the Reformation as a fact in England. It was an age of comparative social contentment. Such an age, of thought, feeling, and vigorous action finds its best expression in the drama; and the wonderful development of the drama, culminating in Shakespeare, is the most significant characteristic of the Elizabethan period.

3.1.6 Sample Questions

1. What historical conditions help to account for the great literature of the Elizabethan age?
2. Give an outline of the origin and rise of the drama in England.
3. How did the Miracle and Mystery plays help the drama?
4. What influence did the classics exert on the English drama?
5. Name some of the predecessors of Shakespeare and their contribution to English drama.

3.1.7. Suggested Reading

1. English Literature – William J. Long
2. A History Of English Literature – Arthur Compton – Rickett.

3. *Introduction To The Study Of English Literature* – K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar & Dr Prema Nandakumar

4. *Outline History Of The English Language* – Fredrick T. Wood.

5. English Literature – R.J. Rees.

6. *The Reader's Companion To World Literature* – Calwin S. Brown (Ey) – The University Of Georgia

7. The Oxford History Of English Literature – Andrew Sanders.

8. A History Of England – Robert M. Rayner.

9. Shakespeare And His Predecessors – F.S. Boas

10. An Outline Of History Of English Literature – W.H.Hudson.

11. Theme Of Revenge In Elizabethan Comedy – Percy Simpson.

12. British Drama – A. Nicoll.

13. History Of English Literature – Legouis.

Prof. S.N. Kulandaisamy

Lesson -2
Thomas Kyd (1558 – 1594)
The Spanish Tragedy

Contents

3.2.1 Objectives

The Objectives of this lesson are to:

i. introduce the Revenge Tragedy Tradition.
ii. give an account of the Machiavellian villain to gain one's ends.
iii. show how the Senecan type of tragedy opened new doors.

3.2.2 Life And Works of Thomas Kyd

According to Professor Trivedi towards the close or beginning of 1550 the classics made their full impact upon English drama. The first English Comedy was *Ralph Roister Doister* by Nicholas Udall. Another and even better comedy or rather farce, *Gammer Gurton's Needle* was produced at Cambridge. It is a farce of English rustic life. These two may be termed the precursors of later English Comedy. Real advance was made in the first tragedy *Gorboduc* or *Ferrex And Porrex* and it was acted in 1561. The author's aim was to depict the consequences of a disputed succession and thus indirectly to persuade Queen Elizabeth to marry and leave an heir. It is the first play in English written in blank verse. It took about twenty five years before effective use of blank verse was made in Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* and Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* (1586). Between 1550 and 1590 there were hundreds of plays – morality, Interlude, history, romance, classical, tragedy, farce – these were adaptations or imitations of Spanish and Italian plays. "This twilight period" (Saintsbury) of English drama has no poetic or dramatic merit.

It was during this period of confusion that the national theatre was born. The Reformed Church was hostile to the drama; the Church of Rome, the Protestants and the Puritans were also critical of drama. Professional players were regarded as rogues and vagabonds. So the players formed companies under the patronage of some lord or noble. The first Theatre was built in 1570. Towards the close of this transitional period appear a group of highly gifted writers who pulled the drama out of the sphere of childish experiment into that of art. The members of this group were all or almost all university-men known as University Wits. They are John Lyly, George Peele, Robert Greene, Thomas Lodge, Thomas Nash, Kyd and Christopher Marlowe. They were the real founders of the great Elizabethan drama and the immediate predecessors as well as contemporaries of Shakespeare. Shakespeare collaborated with some of these dramatists, notably Kyd and Marlowe. While all these dramatists made real contribution to the development of the drama, they did not supply thrilling action demanded by the public. This was supplied by Kyd and Marlowe. The SPANISH TRAGEDY which outdoes Seneca as a "horror" play was a sensation, and its popularity was not only immediate but lasted till the end of the century. The literature of the time is full of references to it.

Brief Biographical Sketch

"The Age of Thomas Kyd (1558 – 1594) falls under the Age of Queen Elizabeth (1558 – 1603). Kyd was born in the year in which Elizabeth became Queen of England. It was a golden age; an epoch of growth and gaiety, of peace and prosperity, of stability and sustenance. It was a period of the flowering of the Renaissance in England. Much authentic material on Thomas Kyd's biography is not available. He was baptized on November 6, 1558, in the Church of St. Mary Woolnoth in London. His father was Francis Kyd, Scrivener, writer of the Court Letter of London, several times Church warden of St. Mary Woolnoth, Lombard Street, London. His mother was Agnes Kyd. The dramatist had a sister Ann, three years his junior.

On October 26, 1565 Kyd entered the Merchant Taylor's school where Richard Mulcaster was the famous headmaster. Accounts are not very clear about his biographical details. He was arrested on a warrant by the Privy Council; his room was searched; incriminating documents were seized. The last days of Kyd were not very happy. He died in 1594. With the *Spanish Tragedy* alone, Kyd enters the foremost rank of Elizabethan writers prior to Shakespeare. In the 1580's, Kyd rose rapidly to fame as a dramatist, with *The First Part Of Hieronimo*, *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Soliman And Perseda*. Kyd undertook and finished one or two

translations. Kyd was a seminal force in Elizabethan drama. He is the father of the revenge play; his mastery of construction is unequalled before Shakespeare, and he may deserve some of the credit for introducing classical rhetoric and blank verse to the English stage. It was he who introduced blank verse to English drama before Marlowe. His *Spanish Tragedy* was probably the most popular and influential of Elizabethan plays. Though Kyd was gifted with little imagination, he had a real flair for the stage and gift for plot-construction which was unusual. It was Kyd who adopted the academic Senecan tragedy to the popular theatre. He is the first great English master of melodrama. "The devices he borrowed from Seneca were tremendously influential – the careful articulation of plot and sub-plot, the ghost superintending the action, the Machiavellian villain, the suffering heroine, the revenge theme, the hesitating avenger, the madness real and feigned, the murders and physical horrors, the dumb shows, the play within the play, the deflamatory and sententious speeches – all this Kyd articulated".

3.2.3 The Spanish Tragedy: Dramatis Personae

(a) Ghost of Don Andrea, once "a courtier in the Spanish Court – brave man-at-arms", the friend of Don Horatio and the beloved of Bel-imperia "This Knight both lived and died in love, … and by war's fortune lost both love and life",

(b) Revenge, his companion and conductor,

(c) Hieronimo, Marshal of Spain, "the hopeless father of a hapless son", who has won "common love and kindness".

(d) Don Horatio, his son, "the very arm that did hold up our house, a mirror in our days", friend of Don Andrea and "hinderer of (Balthazar's) love.

(e) Bel-imperia, "daughter and half-heir" to Don Cyprian, "on whom (Don Andrea doted more than all the world) – she loves Horatio, her "Andrea's friend".

(f) The King of Spain.

(g) Don Cyprian, Duke of Castile, his brother.

(h) Lorenzo, Don Cyprian's "proud and politic son", brother of Bel-imperia, and custodian of Don Balthazar. "Had he lived, he might have come to wear the crown of Spain".

(i) The Viceroy of Portugal.

(j) Don Balthazar – his son, "the war-like Prince".

(k) Isabella – Hieronimo's wife, mother of Don Horatio.

(l) Maid to Isabella.

(m) Pedringano – traitorous servant to Bel-imperia, "full of merry conceits".

(n) Serberine, Balthazar's serving man.

(o) Pedro & Jaques – Hieronimo's servants.

(p) Don Pedro – brother to the Viceroy of Portugal

(q) Alexandro – a loyal Portuguese nobleman.

(r) Villuppo – his envious lying enemy "a false, unkind, unthankful, traitorous beast".

(s) The Portuguese Ambassador to Spain.

(t) Bazardo, a painter, whose son has been murdered.

(u) Don Bazulto, also called Senex, another "grieved man".

(v) The Spanish lord general.

(w) The Deputy to Hieronimo as Justice.

(x) Christophil, custodian of Bel-imperia

(y) (1) A hangman, (2) A Messenger (3) Three Watchmen.

(z) (1) Three Kings & Three Knights in a dumb show

(2) Perseda – beautiful lamp of excellence

(3) Soliman – The Turkish emperor

(4) Erasto – Knight of Rhodes.

ALL THESE CHARACTERS DID WHAT HEAVEN UNPUNISHED WOULD NOT LEAVE.

3.2.4 Critical Analysis

"The Spanish Tragedy" is considered the continuation of another play, "Jeronimo". Jeronimo depicts the tragedy of Andrea. Andrea is appointed Ambassador from Spain to Portugal. This arouses the jealousy of Lorenzo who employs a murderer to kill Andrea. Andrea is in love with Bel-imperia, sister of Lorenzo, but Lorenzo does not like this love affair. Andrea shows his courage in Portugal and this arouses the jealousy of Balthazar. There is a war and Andrea and Balthazar meet. On the first occasion Andrea is saved by his devoted friend Horatio. On the second occasion he is killed by Balthazar's soldiers. Horatio achieves a victory for Spain over Portugal. Lorenzo joins the fight and gets the credit for the Spanish victory. Andrea's body is burried with full military honours and the funeral is attended by Andrea's ghost, along with Revenge. They (Andrea's ghost and Revenge) want Horatio to avenge the foul murder of Andrea. *The Spanish Tragedy* continues the story from this stage.

Act I Scene I – Introduction

Enter the Ghost of Andrea and with him Revenge

Don Andrea recounts (as a Ghost) the salient points in his life. Born of a noble ancestry; with his devotion and dedication in service, he secretly won a maiden's love; her name was Bel-imperia, of high birth and sweet temperament. His bliss of love came to a rude end; his physical contact with her terminated on account of his being slain in a conflict with Portugal. When he was slain his soul descended straight to cross the river Acheron which flows into the underworld. But the ill-bred Charon, the only boatman refused to ferry him across saying that because his funeral rites were not performed, he was not eligible to be included in the group of his other passengers. To placate Charon, his funeral rites were performed by the Knight Marshall's son Don Horatio. Only then the hell's ferry man agreed to transport him to the slippery shore of the cruel ugly lake Avernus, the supposed entrance to the netherworld. There he came face to face with Cerberus, the dog who guards the entrance to Hades. The ghost of Andrea, after having eluded Cerberus, sought a passport from Minos, Aeacus, and Rhadamanth, the gods of Hell, but, because Andrea was both a lover and a soldier, they could not rightly decide where to place him. Hence, at last, he was sent for judgement to Pluto's court itself, past more hellish sights than a thousand tongues can tell, and now at the request of Proserpine, goddess of Hell, delivered over to Revenge. Soon the goddess ordered Revenge to lead Andrea's ghost through the gates of Horn, where dreams come through the quiet of night. No sooner had she passed her judgement, than the two – Andrea's ghost and Revenge – found themselves transported to the world in the twinkling of an eye. The two have come to see Don Balthazar, the prince who slew Don Andrea in battle, be deprived of life by Bel-imperia, and to serve as Chorus to this tragedy.

Act I Scene II

The Spanish General reports to the king of Spain that their army has won the battle against Portugal. Horatio and Lorenzo have captured Balthazar, the son of the Viceroy of Portugal. Both sides have suffered casualties. The king profusely thanks God from whose kind influence they receive such justice. Castile says, "O, man, you are very lucky. It is for your sake (the king's sake) the heavens fight and the enchanted peoples fall on bended knees. Victory is sister of true right." On the borders of Spain and Portugal the armies encountered each other. The battle raged violently. Even after three hours of fierce fighting, victory was not in sight to either side. Don Andrea fought well and in the conflict Andrea was killed. Though brave in fighting, the General says, Andrea proved weak against Balthazar (son of the Viceroy) of Portugal. At that very moment Horatio, the son of Knight Marshall, challenged Balthazar to single combat. The fight between Balthazar and Andrea was

not long drawn. Balthazar was beaten down from his horse and forced into being taken prisoner. All the combatants took to their heels and were chased to death. To the good lord General, the king presented a chain. Thus the Spanish army achieved victory and forced the vanquished host to promise tribute and customary homage. Balthazar was taken prisoner in single combat with Horatio, the valiant friend of Andrea and son of Hieronimo, the Spanish Knight marshal.

When the army arrives in Spain with the royal prisoner, he is claimed by two Captors, Don Horatio and Don Lorenzo. Lorenzo, the King's nephew claims to have seized Balthazar's horse and disarmed the prince. Horatio claims to have captured the prince. Without investigating either claim the king settles the dispute by granting Horatio the ransom for the prince's person, dividing the spoils between the two captors, and decreeing that while negotiations with Portugal are pending, Balthazar be the guest rather than the prisoner of Lorenzo. The captive prince expresses his admiration of Don Horatio's chivalry, and his wish that this valiant young man also bear them company.

The viceroy of Portugal who is the father of Balthazar is under the impression that his son has been killed in war. He has been made to believe so by a scheming villain Villuppo. The viceroy feels guilty in having started the war; he nurses his sorrows by trusting in his nightly dreams of disaster. Naturally he takes a pessimistic view of every bit of news that he hears. In the court we witness a quarrel between two courtiers, the loyal Alexandro who sensibly believes that Prince Balthazar is a prisoner of war and the villain Villuppo. Villuppo accuses Alexandro of shooting the prince in the back during the combat. Alexandro is not given an opportunity to narrate his case; he is not give time to defend himself; Alexandro is hurried off to prison. Viceroy blurts out,

"Away with him (Alexandro); his sight is second hell.
Keep him till we determine of his death:
If Balthazar be dead, he (Alexandro) shall not live.
Villuppo, follow us for they reward".

In an aside Villuppo exults thus,

"Thus have I with an envious, forged tale
Deceiv'd the king, betray'd mine enemy,
And hope for guerdon of my villainy".

Meanwhile, in Spain, Don Horatio reports to Bel-imperia how her lover Don Andrea met his death and brings her as a momento the scarf of hers which Andrea wore upon his sleeve. Bel-imperia says,

"I know the scarf: would he had kept it still;

For had he lived, he would have kept it still
And worn it for his Bel-imperisa's sake:
For it was my saviour at his last depart".

She bids Andrea's friend now to wear it for them both, and while Horatio goes to seek the prince, Bel-imperia in soliloquy expresses her grief for the loss of her lover and speaks out,

"I'll love Horatio, my Andrea's friend,
The more to spite the prince that wrought his end".

She expresses her desire for revenge of Don Andrea's death, and her choice of Horatio as Andrea's successor to further that revenge. Moreover, she reveals the fact that Don Balthazar, Andrea's slayer and her brother's guest, has already begun to make love to her, "yet, I must complain to your gracious self, in whose fair answer lies my remedy on whose perfection all my thoughts attend, on whose aspect mine eyes find beauty's bower in whose breast my heart is lodged", saying these, she moves away, indignantly. But, as she does so, she contrives to drop her glove so that it is Horatio, returning, and not Balthazar, who picks it up and receives it as a favour for his pains. Lorenzo covers up the entire incident as best as he can, and the three men hasten to a banquet where the Portuguese ambassador is being entertained. The king adds,

"Now, lordings, fall to : Spain is Portugal,
And Portugal is Spain: we both are friends:
Tribute is paid, and we enjoy our right
But where is old Hieronimo, our marshal
He promised us, in honour of our guest,
To grace our banquet with some pompous jest".

Thus Marshal Hieronimo who has some skill at court theatricals, presents a masque importing comfort and consolation to the Portuguese in their defeat, by reminding them that Portugal, and Spain too, had before been conquered by little England.

Chorus

Andrea's ghost appears and asks Revenge if they have come all the way from Hell just to see Balthazar feast and to witness nothing but spectacles of friendship, love and banqueting,

"These pleasant sights are sorrow to my soul:
Nothing but leagues, and love, and banqueting"

Revenge assures him that before they go, this friendship will turned to fell despite (cruel hatred) this love to mortal hate, "their joys to pain, their bliss to misery".

Act II

Finding Balthazar depressed because of his lack of success with Bel-imperia, Lorenzo encourages his guest and assures him that there must be a cause why Bel-imperia shows him no favour. Lorenzo swears that any obstacle to the prince's suit shall be removed

Lorenzo sees Pedringano, Bel-imperia's servant, and reminds him that he stood between Pedringano and his punishment and assures him that he will add a reward not only of fair words, but plenty of golden coins besides land and dignified life: but all that only on one condition; Lorenzo at dagger's point wrings the name of Bel-imperids new lover and binds the servant to secrecy. The servant confesses that Bel-imperia is in love with Horatio.

To Balthazar this news is intolerable that his rival in arms is also his rival in love and that the man who has overthrown him in battle is also preferred before him in love. Lorenzo encourages the servant to go and attend on her with the promise of more money and more property. But Balthazar vows revenge.

I think Horatio be my destined plague".

Concealed by Pedringano, Balthazar and Lorenzo witness a meeting between the lovers and hear them agree upon a rendezvous at night in Hieronimo's pleasant bower. The angry Lorenzo keeps on encouraging Balthazar by assuring him that he can win Bel-imperia's love by killing Horatio.

There is a delightful love scene in which we find the young lovers Horatio and Bel-imperia making love to each other, with the sweetest words. Both of them reflect:

"On dangers past, and pleasures to ensue

On pleasures past, and dangers to ensue".

As Horatio and Bel-imperia converse, Pedringano shows everything to the Prince and Lorenzo, placing them in secret. Balthazar and Lorenzo watch from their hidden seats. Meanwhile, at court, plans are going forward for cementing the amity between Spain and Portugal by means of a marriage between Balthazar and Bel-imperia. Don Cyprian, her father, sends assurances to the Viceroy of his approval of the match and of the girl's good will, while the Spanish King, her uncle, promises a handsome dowry, release of the tribute, and succession to the Spanish crown, should Balthazar and Bel-imperia have a son.

At night Balthazar settles his score with Don Horatio. Disguised and accompanied by the servants Serberine and Pedringano, he and Lorenzo surprise Horatio and Bel-imperia at their love-making, hang Horatio in the arbour, and stab him with swords as he hangs. The lady recognizes the assailants, however, and cries for help, but her mouth is stopped and she is carried off. It is Hieronimo, aroused from bed, who discovers the murder and cuts down Horatio's body. He is

joined by his wife Isabella, and the aged parents, almost beside themselves with grief, lament their son. Hieronimo dips his handkerchief in the blood, vowing never to part with the memonto nor to bury Horatio's body until he has discovered his murderers and avenged his death. The parents decide to hide all their feelings and quietly work for the discovery of the culprit. Again the Ghost of Andrea objects. The Ghost wonders if he was brought hither from Hell only to increase his pain. He had hoped to witness Balthazar's death; but it is his friend Horatio who is slain and his sweetheart Bel-imperia who is abused. Revenge bids him wait for the harvest till the corn is ripe.

Act III

The scene shifts to Portugal. Alexandro is about to be executed on the charge of having murdered the Viceroy's son, Balthazar. But he is saved in the last minute when the ambassador from Spain brings news that Balthazar is alive. This piece of news saves the life of the loyal Alexandro, who is already tied to a stake for burning. Confronted by his villainy, Villuppo admits that his only reason for treachery was hope of preferment from the viceroy, and then is justly sent off to execution.

In Spain, however, court rivalry and ambition have already taken the toll of an innocent life. Intrigue is followed by counter-intrigue, as the avengers seek their victims, and the murderers try to conceal their crime. One day as the sorrowing Hieronimo is passing the Duke of Castile's house, a letter written in blood and purporting to come from Bel-imperia, is dropped from a window to his feet. The letter accuses Don Balthazar and Don Lorenzo of Horatio's murder and urge him to avenge his son's death. Instantly suspicious, however, Hieronimo thinks it a trap and determines not to risk any accusations without first by indirections confirming the revelations made by the letter.

Hieronimo tries to meet Bel-imperia and get the information confirmed. But he only ends up rousing the suspicions of Lorenzo. Lorenzo by a cunning trick gets Pedringano killed so that there will be no one to give evidence against him. Lorenzo is now feeling very secure and gives his sister greater liberty to move about. The king supports the suggestion of a political marriage between Bel-imperia and Balthazar. Hieronimo is plunged in grief. He is struggling to find out some means of taking revenge on the murderers of his son. He is groping in the dark. Just then the executioner who has hanged Pedringano brings him a letter which he has found in Pedringano's pocket. IN this letter Pedringano has confessed all the truth relating to the murder of Horatio. This helps Hieronimo confirm the information given by Bel-imperia in her message. Still his unhappiness is not over because he knows that it

will be extremely difficult for him to punish the culprits since they are too highly placed to be dealt with by an ordinary man like himself. In utter despair he thinks of committing suicide.

He determines not to die without getting the culprits booked and punished. Isabella is overpowered by grief and frustrated by the delay in justice. She has almost become insane, and she runs here and there in mentally deranged condition. She makes frantic cries while running about here and there. Bel-imperia also is now found in a distracted condition. She is plunged in grief and despair and cries out expressing her feelings of frustration over the delay in avenging of Horatio's death. She even addresses the dead Andrea imploring him to hasten the revenge. The two schemers Lorenzo and Balthazar propose that Bel-imperia accept Balthazar as a lover and go into retirement with Lorenzo as keeper. But they do not convince Bel-imperia. Worse still, grief and his own ineffectiveness at revenge have caused Hieronimo to rave, and all who come into contact with him are convinced that he is mad. The old man contemplates, therefore, suicide. He drops this desperate plan because it will prevent his avenging the murder of Horatio.

It is while he is in this melancholy state of mind that Hieronimo has his first opportunity to accuse the murderers to the king; but the circumstances are most inopportune. His Majesty is just receiving from the Portuguese ambassador the news of the acceptance of the marriage plans, and Lorenzo takes care that he shall not be interrupted. The ambassador also brings Balthasar's ransom to Horatio; the king orders the sum to be paid to him. At the mention of his son's name, Hieronimo cries out for justice, digs in the ground with his dagger, and is generally so unrestrained and action, that the king readily accepts Lorenzo's explanation that Hieronimo covets for himself the ransom due his son and so is lunatic. Such frustration and the caution he must exercise soon lead to other outbursts; Hieronimo's servants believe him to be mad and when as judge he receives petitions for justice, he sees in the petitioners lively image of his own grief, loses restraint, and even publicly addresses his son Horatio as if he saw his ghost come to seek justice and avenge his death. At last the Portuguese viceroy arrives in Spain. The king welcomes him most warmly.

But the Duke of Castile has heard reports of how his son Lorenzo has interfered with Hieronimo's suits to the King, and he speaks to Lorenzo about the matter. The son, however, easily convinces his father that Hieronimo is "a silly man, distract of mind".

Lorenzo tells his father that Hieranimo's interruptions of His Majesty were unseemly, and whose talk about a murdered son merely a figment of the imagination.

Nevertheless, the duke, at Lorenzo's suggestion, effects a reconciliation between the two. Moreover the duke assures Hieronimo that he has no need to suspect his son of interference, and receiving in turn ironical assurances of perfect amity for one who loved his son well. Apparently old grudges seem to be forgotten – the scene closes with these words of Hieronimo, "He who fawns on me more than his custom, has betrayed me or wants to betray me".

Chorus

At this seeming reconciliation, the Ghost of Andrea passionately calls upon Revenge and all the forces of Hell to awake and rouse themselves to action. But Revenge again patiently reassures him and interprets for him a dumb show in which two nuptial torch bearers are followed by Hymen clad in sable and a saffron robe, who blows out their bright torches and quenches them in blood. The Ghost understands and settles himself quietly to watch the rest; The Ghost declares,

"Sufficeth me; thy meaning is understood,
And thanks to thee and those infernal powers
That will not tolerate a lover's woe-
Rest thee, for I will sit to see the rest".

Act IV

Impatient at his delay, Bel-imperia blasts, rebukes and shames Hieronimo, vowing to undertake Horatio's revenge herself. But the old man apologizes for suspecting her letter, bids her bear with him a little longer, and receives her assurance of full cooperation; He says to Bel-imperia

"And here I vow – so you but give consent,
And will conceal my resolution:
I will ere long determine of their deaths
That causeless thus have murdered my son".

Hieronimo's opportunity comes almost immediately. To grace the wedding celebrations and to entertain the Portuguese viceroy, the King requests one of Hieronimo's theatrical entertainment. Hieronimo further adds that he may be allowed to put on boards "a stately written tragedy…. Fitting kings, containing matter, and not common things" which he wrote while a student at Toledo. The play is called *Soliman And Perseda*, and for variety each part was written in a different language. This he suggests that Balthazar, Lorenzo, Bel-imperia, and himself enact, and to humour him the three accept their parts.

However, nothing can pacify grief stricken Isabella and in a fit of violent frenzy she hacks down the tree on which her son was hanged and finally thrusts the knife into her own breast.

Now the tragedy is enacted before the Viceroy of Portugal (father of Balthazar), the Spanish King, the Duke of Castile and others. Real daggers have been brought in the place of the false ones. "Soliman and Perseda" is presented before the royal audience. The tragedy concerns a beautiful Italian lady named Perseda (taken by Bel-imperia), who is married to a knight of Rhodes named Crasto (taken by Lorenzo), but wooed by the Turkish emperor Soliman (taken by Balthazar). To one of his Pashas (taken by Hieronimo), Soliman reveals his passion. The Pasha, too, has long loved Perseda, and knowing that she cannot otherwise be won, he advises the murder of her husband Erasto, whom treacherously he slays. Perseda then slays Soliman, and finally to avoid the Pasha, stabs herself. In Hieronimo's production, instead of killing in sport, the actors of this tragedy kill in earnest. As the play proceeds Bel-imperia kills Balthazar and herself. Hieronimo kills Lorenzo. Now Hieronimo is the only survivor in the group of players. In a long curtain speech Hieronimo draws the parallel between his play and his real tragedy, reveals the body of his murdered son, and retells the whole course of his revenge. Showing his dead son Hieronimo laments,

> "See here my show, look on this spectacle;
> Here lay my hope, and here my hope hath end;
> Here lay my heart, and here my heart was slain;
> Here lay my treasure, her my treasure lost;
> Here lay my bliss, here my bliss bereft;

At the end Hieronimo runs to hang himself, but is prevented; bites out his tongue when he is questioned, and, at last, pretending to be ready to write a full confession, calls for a knife with which to mend a pen and stabs both Lorenzo's father and himself. Thus Hieronimo does not reveal anything except the fact that Lorenzo and Balthazar have been revenged for their murder of Horatio.

Chorus

Satisfied at last, the Ghost of Andrea summarizes the whole unhappy spectacle, anticipates the pleasant reunion he expects to have with his friends, asks that his enemies replace the victims on Hell's famous torture engines, and hurries down with Revenge to meet these friends and foes.

3.2.5 The Plot Of The Play

The Spanish Tragedy does not really end as a tragedy but reverts to the traditional rhythm of the Morality play for the simple reason that the act of revengeful

murder becomes a fulfilment of the will of the gods. "As a play which represents a period of transition, the transition from the Moralities with their pre-occupation with every man or Mankind to the early Elizabethan play which showed greater concern for the individual man or wordly man *The Spanish Tragedy* almost gives a moral sanction to acts of revenge". Kyd's play represents a new dramatic tradition in which old Christian ideals of mercy and forgiveness are no longer possible. Forgiveness gives way to retributory action. In Act I scene ii this is what we read:

> "Revenge: Then know, Andrea, that thou art arriv'd
> where thou shalt see author of thy death,
> Don Balthazar, the prince of Portugal,
> Depriv'd of life by Bel-imperia
> Here sit we down to see the mystery,
> And serve for Chorus in this tragedy".

As Hunter would put it, "The play's central preoccupation seems to be justice". The tragedy's chief unifying theme according to Johnson is not revenge but the problem of justice". To the Elizabethans, revenge was after all a form of wild justice. This revenge motif has a function in this play, which contributes to its moral and ethical dimensions.

However, the principal merit of the play lies in its strong eventful plot, in its impressive melodramatic scenes and in its swift moving action. The ghost of Don Andrea reveals that he has been foully murdered by Balthazar and calls for revenge. This story forms the framework of the action. Horatio, son of Hieronimo, Marshal of Spain, tells princess Bel-imperia (Lorenzo's sister and daughter of Cyprian, Duke of Castile and brother of the king of Spain) how her fiancé Andrea has been treacherously murdered by Prince Balthazar. They (Horatio and Bel-imperia)instantly fall in love and at night meet in a garden. Their meeting is interrupted by appearance of assassins who kill Horatio. Hieronimo and Bel-imperia vow vengeance and Hieronimo feigns madness. They stage a play at the wedding of Bel-imperia to Balthazar. The play turns into a real life problem and every one of the wedding party is killed or kills himself. Hieronimo kills the father of one of the murderers and also himself "Such a piling of horror upon horror was the wine that intoxicated the audience". The audience never cared for the regular construction or the unities of classical drama".

What the Elizabethans wanted was thrills and Kyd supplied them with a vengeance. "This sensational plot together with the appearance of the ghost, intrigue, violence and bloodshed, declamatory speeches in blank verse and the feigned and the Machiavellian villain beginning from Lorenzo and culminating in Shakespeare's Iago – and these established the medium of the romantic drama. It is

true that the sensational plot of Kyd's tragedy attracted much contemporary audience". It is even possible as most critics suggest, that Kyd may have read an older *Hamlet*, now lost, written by him. Kyd popularised the "blood and thunder" element that proved one of the attractive features of the pre-Shakespearean drama. Edward Albert remarks, "Its horrific plot, involving murder, frenzy, and sudden death, gave the play a great and lasting popularity. There is a largeness of tragic conception about the play that resembles the work of Marlowe and there are touches of style that dimly foreshadow the great tragical lines of Shakespeare.

The Spanish Tragedy has a strong eventful plot. The play has a definite theme. Kyd's play anticipated the skill with which the main plot and the sub-plot were woven together and episodes were "contrived to reflect and balance each other" in the best Elizabethan play. "The viceroy's mourning for his son insists, anticipates, and extends Hieronimo's mourning. The grief and anguish of old Bazulto adds a dimension to the thoughts of Hieronimo in the same way in which Gloucester's sufferings do to the thoughts of Lear in Shakespeare's play". There are many parallelisms in the episodes. It is Mulryne who points out that Kyd, in order to keep the plot firm, arranged that Horatio becomes a second Andrea. Kyd knows how to use stage action as well as set speeches to underline the symmetries of the plot (Wolfgang Clemen). There is a geometrical pattern and a structural cunning which reflect at the level of the plot the rhetorical niceties of the character's language. This structural cunning is reflected even in Kyd's use of the play within the play. Kyd maintains the sense of the tragedy even in the earlier part of the play by introducing the Villuppo incident which he uses as a counter balance to the happenings in the main play. Villuppo's punishment comes just when Lorenzo's wickedness reaches its climax. We feel then that justice is not after all dead in the world. So the sub-plot has a thematic function in the play.

3.2.6 *The Spanish Tragedy* As a Tragedy or Melodrama

Arthur Symonds observes that the plot of *The Spanish Tragedy* contains the stock ingredients of a tragedy of blood. Jut because there are five murders, two suicides, two judicial executions and one death in duel, we cannot condemn the play as cheap melodrama. Kyd transacts all the important incidents (mostly murders) on the stage, and does not report them to the audience through the monologues and dialogues of the dramatis personae as was the Senecan practice. After the play. Within the play, there are many scenes of crude horror and bloody massacre. This may lead the spectator to consider this play as pure melodrama.

Of course the term melodrama has in popular use become a term of abuse and contempt. Even the best of real tragedies have in them a strong melodramatic content. Most of the serious conflicts and crises of our every day lives have melodramatic content. Most of the serious conflicts and crises of our every day lives have melodramatic elements rather than a tragic potential. Melodrama is a dramatic form which expresses the reality of the human condition as well as experience and it is part of a truly popular theatre. In fact it is melodramatic excess that accounts for plays like Hamlet, Macbeth and other plays by Shakespeare. Therefore melodrama is an essential part of good theatre and a revenge play following the Senecan tradition had to be melodramatic.

A tragedy need not necessarily centre around the tragic hero alone. In the opinion of Raymond Williams we should think of tragedy not as what happens to the hero but as what happens through the hero. Even the horror and gruesomesness of the play ending with a heap of dead bodies on the stage need not be considered as part of the play's melodramatic machinery. They may be interpreted as a solemn commentary on the tragic sense of life which is an awareness of the fact that death is absolute and to our living, simply relative. The play can be interpreted in terms of concepts like non-hero, hero as victim and private tragedy.

Though *The Spanish Tragedy* cannot be termed a dramatic masterpiece, no one can deny the progression of the events which are so sensational and melodramatic which deserve the name of a tragedy. The play is full of action, full of bloody action, crude and melodramatic action which may mar its literary appeal. It is a revenge play and hence, as in Webster's *The Duchess Of Malfi*, there is bound to be an excessive bloody action. The very nature of the theme demands a lot of murder and bloodshed, scenes of horror and violence which are part of all revenge drama; in such plays the elements of suspense and mystery have to be strong and powerful. The murder of Andrea who appears as a ghost along with Revenge (a character), the bloody letter and handkerchief, the tongue-biting, the hanging corpses, Isabella's madness, and her stabbing herself to death, the manner in which Hieronimo kills and gets killed – all these are characteristic of the melodramatic machinery of the Senecan type of tragedies.

3.2.7 Kyd And Shakespeare

It is a fact that *The Spanish Tragedy* does not have all the depth and complexity of a Shakespearean play. The hero of this play does not have the stature of a Hamlet or a Lear. Hieronimo does not answer to the usual description of a Shakespearean tragic hero. Where most of the characters are controlled by the

overwhelming passions of revenge, jealousy, malice and hatred, individual human character can have very little place. This tragedy presents characters who are symbols of revenge or retributory justice or again of friendship, filial love and betrayal of faith. It has characters like Pedringano, villains who represent some of the stock characters of Elizabethan drama. Hence there is very little scope for the development of individual character in this play. The tragedy of Hieronimo is not a consequence of error or tragic flaw in character nor is it brought about by blind fate. It is an injured man's lone and unaided quest for justice. It is the tragedy of a man who is helpless against cruelty and injustice. Hieronimo, however, is a type of tragic hero who may be destroyed but not defeated. He is an example of the tragedy of isolation and alienation.

3.2.8 Structure of *The Spanish Tragedy*

There are many subsidary episodes which seem irrelevant to the main theme; they are Alexandro – Villuppo incident; Pendringano – Serberine affair; letter device; mime presented by Hieronimo; dumb show of revenge (III xv) – these in their turn perform several useful functions. They illustrate Hieronimo dramatic talent in preparing the spectators/readers for the final play scene and foreshadow the catastrophe in store for Spain and Portugal. Kyd's play, as a matter of fact, depends much less on character than on plot, that is, on suspense. Many of the situations are accompanied by skilful use of irony – irony is a manner of saying or writing in which the meaning literally expressed is the opposite of the meaning intended and which aims at ridicule, humour or sarcasm – a literary technique in which characters and situations are treated in such a way as to show the incongruous between appearance and reality, between intention and achievement.

The Spanish Tragedy uses the necessary delay in revenge to create and maintain suspense. Hieronimo tries to unravel the mystery of tracking the murderer; Lorenzo tries to conceal the truth. The conflict is drawn out (a) by the discovery of Pendringano's and Bel-imperia's letters (b) Hieronimo's suspicion of trap. (c) Lorenzo's action in preventing access to the king (d) the apparent reconciliation of Lorenzo and Hieronimo and (e) Hieronimo's play device. There are a number of things to suggest a melodramatic trend. Briefly these may be indicated thus (I) the murder of Horatio (2) the bloody letter and hand kerchief (3) the tongue-biting (4) the ghost (5) the hangings and corpses (6) the threats of torture and the (7) violent loves of Bel-imperia. There are no characters in the round; the characters, in fact, are sketchy portraits, i.e, Andrea, Horatio, the indeterminate Balthazar, the intriguing Lorenzo, the proud and inflexible Bel-imperia – are caricatures. Kyd employs such

dialogues to maintain decorum. There is considerable variation from verse to prose, from full scale rhetorical speech to incisive brevity.

It is only natural that as Andrea is unable to find rest in the underworld, he seeks retribution. Goddess Proserpine bids Revenge to sponsor his privileged view of subsequent events, can he achieve rest. The gods have a role to play in *The Spanish Tragedy*. The play's major characters appeal at one time or other to Acacus, Minos, Rhadamanth, Pluto or Proserpine. The play is remarkable for the extent to which Kyd exploits the ignorance of the characters for ironic effect. Andrea's doubts and Revenge's reassurance carry us through the play. We are aware that the play's outcome will be disastrous for any one who opposes Andrea's revenge even though the path to vengeance may be tortuous and delayed. Andrea's concern is that Horatio must be killed; Bel-imperia should be sequestered; Hieronimo ought to be thwarted; the action of all these take place within a determined framework. The plot of the play is further structured with intrigues, ironies and suspense. *The Spanish Tragedy* is ironic in that truth is gradually vindicated. The episodes are contrived with striving skill to reflect and balance each other. Alexandro, the Viceroy, Isabella, Bel-imperia, Hieronimo, Pedringano – all see themselves at one time or another the victims of an oppressive fortune. The whole range of each character is linked by Kyd. The play within the play is an example of Kyd's structural cunning, as it reflects and interprets the play's governing theme.

3.2.9 Sample Questions

1. Kyd's achievement as a dramatist was a definite advancement over that of his predecessors – Explain.
2. Point out the essential differences between Kyd and Marlowe as dramatists.
3. Why is The Spanish Tragedy said to be "Senecan"?
4. The principal merit of *The Spanish Tragedy* is said to be its plot – Substantiate.
5. What is the central theme of *The Spanish Tragedy*? How is it developed in the main plot and sub-plot?
6. Discuss Kyd's handling of the "revenge motif" in *The Spanish Tragedy*.
7. Discuss the elements of melodrama in *THE SPANISH TRAGEDY*.
8. Can you explain Hieronimo's delay in avenging the murder of his son in terms of character?
9. Discuss critically the function of the play – within – the play in *The Spanish Tragedy*.
10. What was Thomas Kyd's contribution to the development of English drama.

3.2.10 Suggested Reading

1) William J. Long, English Literature – Its History And Its Significance.
2) Arthur Compton Rickett, A History Of English Literature.
3) Edward Albert, A History Of English Literature.
4) Emile Legouis, A History Of English Literature.
5) F.E.Schelling, English Drama.
6) B.Ifor Evans, A Short History Of English Drama.
7) Prederick S. Boas, Shakespeare And His Predecessors.

Prof. S.N. Kulandaisamy

Lesson - 3

Christopher Marlowe : Edward II

Contents

3.3.1 Objectives

i. to show that Marlowe's best play is certainly ' Edward II'
ii. to compare this with Shakespeare's best history plays.
iii. to validate the idea that an irresponsible King will be destroyed by his own weakness
iv. to attempt a comparison between 'Richard II' of Shakespeare and Marlowe's Edward II
v. to show that all Marlowe's tragedies are about men whose minds are dominated by a single idea:

With Tamburlaine it is power
With Faustus it is knowledge and
With Edward II it is homosexual friendship.

3.3.2 Life & Writings of Marlowe

Christopher Marlowe was born of John Marlowe, a shoe – maker and Catherine of yeoman stock in February 1564. Educated at the king's school, Canterbury through the help of a patron he went up to Cambridge in 1581 and obtained his degree in 1583. Nothing is known of his life after 1583 but in 1581 he brought out his first play Tamburlaine and it was an instantaneous success because of its impetuous force, its splendid command of blank verse, and its sensitiveness to beauty. Tamburlaine

was succeeded by The Tragical History Of Doctor Faustus which is an old Mediaeval legend. The Jew Of Malta was the next play but it lacks the grip and imaginative appeal of the earlier plays. "Edaward II" was Marlowe's last play. The other plays are not worth notice by a student of literature. Marlowe's subjects were an insatiable sprit of adventure, the master passions of love and hate, ideals of beauty and the greatness and littleness of human life.

University Wits

We should find out in the course of our study whether he gave life and reality to his characters, whether he fathomed the immense possibilities of blank verse, whether he gave unity to drama and whether his achievements were really high. Marlowe belonged to a group of youth palywrights known as University Wits. They were called university wits, because they graduated from one university or other. Such enthusiastic dramatists were Marlowe, John Lily (1554-1606) Thomas Lodge (1557-1601) Robert Greene (1558-92) Thomas Nashe (1567-1601)George Peele (1557-96) and Thomas Kyd (1558-95).

Features

Marlowe's dramatic career lasted for six years from 1587 to 1593. The plays of these university wits had several common features.

(a) There was a fondness for heroic themes

(b) Heroic themes needed heroic treatment – great fullness and variety, splendid descriptions, long swelling speeches and the handling of violent incidents and emotions (c). The style also was heroic. The chief aim was to achieve strong and sounding lines, magnificent epithets, and powerful declamation (d) The themes were usually tragic in nature. Edward II (1591) shows the truest sense of the theatre of all his plays. Its plot is skilfully woven, and the material, neatly compressed from Holinshed's Chronicles, shows a sense of dramatic requirements new in his plays and, indeed, in English historical drama. Its hero is not great enough to be truly tragic, but it works up to a fine climax of deep pathos. In its multiplicity of 'living ' characters and lack of bombast it stands apart from the other plays.

Dramatis Personae of Edward II

Edward II	: King of England, the fundamentally son of Edward Longshanks, weak and unfit to rule.
Isabella	: "Sole sister of the Valois", king of France, and neglected Queen of Edward II.
Prince Edward	: Son of Edward II and Queen Isabella, afterwards King Edward II. He "is yet a child".
Piers Gaveston	: The flattering favourite of the King.
LADY (Margaret De Clare	: Niece of Edward II, later married to Piers Gaveston.
Inconstant Edmund	: Earl of Kent, brother to King Edward II.

The Bishop of Coventry : Only cause of Gaveston's first exile.

The Archbishop of Canterbury : Who protests to the Pope against this "violence … offered to The church".

Old Roger Mortimer : A moderate noble.

Young Roger Mortimer : His nephew, a haughty, ambitious baron.

Guy, Earl of Warwick : Rough and proud.

The Earl of Lancaster : High minded … aspiring

Hugh Spencer The Younger : A base upstart.

Hugh Spencer, the Elder : His father

Badlock : The smooth tongued scholar

The Earl of Arundale : Supporter of the King.

Beaumong, clerk of the Crown : The King's messenger to Gaveston.

Levune : A French diplomat.

Sir John of Hainault : A French diplomat.

Rice AP HOWELL

The Mayor of Bristol : Captors of the King.

The Earl of Leicester

Sir Thomas Berkeley : Messenger an gentle jailer of the King.

Gurnew, Matrevis : Brutal jailers.

Lightborn : a murderer, hired by Mortimer to kill King Edward.

Berkeley, Bishop of Winchester : Witness for the Church at King Edward's deposition.

Sir William Trussel : Proctor of parliament, representative of the laity at King Edward's deposition.

James : Horseboy to the Earl of Pembroke.

The Abbot of Neath : At whose Abbey King Edward II seeks refuge

A Mower : Who betrays the king to his enemies

The King's Champoin : Who officiates at prince Edward's coronation.

A Herald : Messenger from the barons to King Edward.

Monks of Neath Abbey, Lords, Ladies, Poor Men, Posts, Messengers, Guards, Soldiers and Attendants.

Setting : England and Paris in the early 14th century.

Synopsis — Reign of Edward II – His Deposition And Assassination

The king's doting upon Piers Gaveston is resented by the nobles led by young Mortimer. In the battle that ensues Edward II is victorious but he spares Mortimer's life - Mortimer escapes to France. Edward's queen Isabella joins Mortimer and in the second battle Edward is defeated , captured and put to death. He is presented as an extremely selfish and wicked person in the first half of the play. Edward

with his suffering and stoicism earns our sympathy and admiration in the second half of the play. The deposition scene is full of pathos. He thinks on the emptiness of earthly joys, the paradox of earthly power, and the instability of worldly grandeur. Marlowe thus presents a personal tragedy in Edward II. During the course of the play we are impressed by the king's love of music and poetry, Mortimer's defiant attitude and rebellious spirit and classical allusions and cosmic images. Marlowe's tragedies depict the able and flow of exultant individualism and despairing fatalism in the minds of the heroes.

Memorable Passages

(1) "Proud traitor Mortimer , why dost thou chase
Thy lawful king , thy sovereign , with thy sword" (V v 12-13)

Edward is capable of inspiring feelings of loyalty and friendship in others. Arundel and Kent stood by the king. Kent denounces the unnatural revolt of Mortimer.

(2) ——— " the prince my son be safe ,
whom I esteem as dear as these mine eyes" (V ii 16-18)

Queen Isabella's heart is gnawed by the apprehension that Mortimer may work surreptitiously against the interests of the prince. So she implores Mortimer in these lines.

(3) "My heart in an anvil to sorrow
which beats upon it like the Cyclop's hammers
And with the noise turns up my giddy brain
And makes me frantic for my Gaveston"

This is king Edward's passionate outburst lamenting the separation of Gaveston – The passage is typically Marlovian in tone and temper.

(4) "Base fortune, I see, that in thy wheel
There is a point, to which men aspire
They tumble headlong down, that point I touched."

Insolent Mortimer, unruffled by the death sentence pronounced upon him speaks like a typical Marlowian character.

(5) "The Roman Tully loved octavius
Grave Socrates ,wild Alcibiades' (I iv 396-7)

Elder Mortimer cites parallels from mythology and ancient history in defence of Edward's weakness of having minions.

(6) "The griefs of private men are soon allayed,
But not of kings" (V I 8-9)

Edward refers to the inconsolable nature of the kings sorrow, makes his condition very pathetic.

(7) "And sooner shall the sea o'erwhelm
Than bear the ship" (I i 151-2)

Matrevis intends to whisk Edward into killingworth by darkness. The sea here denotes the absence of kingly duty and moral scruple.

(8) "For now my lord the king regards me not
But dotes upon the love of Gaveston"…..

The despicable behaviour of the king is the result of his "homoerotic" attachment to his favourite, Gaveston,

The king says, "Because he (Gaveston loves more than all the world"…. Again the king says, "To frolic with my dearest Gaveston".

(9) "Yet once more I will importune him with prayer" (II iv 63)

The disillusioned Queen Isabella is tempted to seek refuge in the sympathetic arms of Mortimer. However, she wants to try her luck with Edward for the last time.

(10) "The more my grief " (V ii 84)

Queen Isabella, on hearing that the king is healthy but pensive, pretends to bemoan his lot that is her husbands voluntary abdication.

(11) "I shall so dear
the king, upon whose bosom let me die" (I i 13-14)

If Mortimer is a consummate Machiavellian because he is a ruthless power- seeker; the Frenchman Gaveston is of course, a self-seeker but undoubtedly he is stirred by sincere love for Eaward.

(12) "As for the multitude, that are but sparks
Raked up in embers of their poverty" (I i 20-21)

Gaveston despises ordinary people on the ground that he is not going to benefit from their friendship.

Analytical Summary

Act I (Scenes i,ii,iii & iv)

During the reign of Edward I, Piers Gaveston, favourite of the Prince of Wales, had been banished from the realm. He gets back to England on the death of the old king at the invitation of the present monarch Edward II to share the kingdom with his dearest friend; cynically Gaveston looks forward to the opportunity of lording it over the nobles and the masses. Three poor men offer to serve him. Gaveston tries to calm their ruffled feelings. He promises to employ them if he wins the king's favour. Gaveston tells himself that he does not need men of this type. He must have wits, poets,

musicians and actors who will entertain the king with indecent jokes and shows. The weak king will be completely in his power. Gavestons's return disgusts both the nobles and the commons of the realm, who clash bitterly with their young sovereign on the subject; King Edward receives his minion Gaveston with open arms and creates him Lord Chamberlain, Chief Secretary of State, Earl of Cornwall and Lord of the Isle of Man. Mortimer Junior says that he, his uncle and Lancaster swore to the dying king Edward I never to allow Gaveston to return to England. If he returns Mortimer will never fight for the King. Edward II threatens Mortimer and Lancaster and declares that he will have Gaveston at any cost. Gaveston immediately exercises his influence over the king by avenging himself on the Bishop of Coventry, who had been the cause of his exile, having the Bishop dissolved and flung into the Tower and his estates confiscated to himself. News of this high-handed treatment of the bishop, Gaveston's preferment, and the unhappiness of Queen Isabella, who has even more reason to object to Gaveston, arouses the Archbishop of Canterbury and confirms the barons – chiefly Warwick, Lancaster and the Mortimers – in their opposition to the upstart Gaveston. Edward's love for Gaveston is such that he is prepared to give him anything that he wants, a bodyguard, gold and the right to punish or save. Warwick, Lancaster and the Mortimers discuss the imprisonment of the Bishop of Coventry. The younger Mortimer wants all the noblemen to act together and pass and execute a sentence of death on Gaveston. Warwick, Pembroke, and the Mortimers openly express their contempt for Gaveston. The Archbishop of Canterbury requests the king to show him the order of exile passed on Gaveston. Edward defies them. Finally he signs the order of banishment. Gaveston says that he regrets leaving the king and not in enduring banishment. Soon after, in spite of Gaveston's reflections upon the Queen's character and the king's readiness to believe the worst about her, Isabella so pities her husband's sorrow at his separation from his favourite. Queen Isabella intercedes with the barons to procure Gaveston's recall. Beaumont is sent to Ireland to fetch Gaveston, who will be married to Lady Margaret de Clare, daughter of the Earl of Gloucester.

Act II (Scenes i,ii,iii,iv & v)

The death of the old Earl of Gloucester makes it necessary for his dependents, Young Spencer and Baldock, who are men of small ability and capable of any kind of hypocrisy, to seek a new patron. Hearing of Piers Gaveston's recall, and knowing that he is to marry the Earl's daughter, they resolve to cast their lot with him, and through him with the king. At Tynemouth Castle, Edward is anxiously waiting for Gaveston. People know that Gaveston is a Caterpillar seeking to be equal in status to the eagles who are the barons. The king effusively welcomes Gaveston and expresses his pleasure at the reunion. In a wordy quarrel the younger Mortimer wounds Gaveston and Edward at once banishes Mortimer from the Court. The elder Mortimer is captured by the Scots and king Edward refuses to pay his ransom, although his captivity occurred in the royal service. Mortimer and Lancaster upbraid the king for exhausting the treasury; English troops were defeated in France; the Scots have made incursions; the Danes have taken command of the English channel. Foreign kings disdain the English court which is full of flatterers. Kent advises Edward to banish Gaveston whose presence is provoking a rebellion; Gaveston flees and is taken prisoner and he is about to be executed. King Edward begs to see Gaveston. Gaveston is placed in the custody of the Earl of Pembroke. Meanwhile Queen Isabella determines once more to try to reclaim the king, and, if she fails, to go to France with the Prince of Wales and there complain to the king, her brother.

Act III (Scenes i,ii & iii)

The third Act is short and ends with the king gaining ascendancy. The play reaches its culmination here. On the road to Boroughbridge, the ruthless Warwick and some of his men seize their opportunity to ambush James and the other guardians of Gaveston, force surrender of the prisoner, and execute him. At the death of his favourite, the foolish, weak king does not reform his manner, however; immediately he adopts a new favourite in Young Spencer, a haughty upstart who is as alarming to the barons as the old, and they continue their rebellion. The Queen and her young son come with a Frenchman Levune, bringing news of Normandy being seized by the king of France. He wants Isabella and his son to go to France for diplomatic negotiations. Edward kneels and solemnly swears that he will kill the rebels who have slain Gaveston. As the battle progresses, the rebels get defeated. The prisoners include Kent, the king's brother, who had at first supported Gaveston but later joined the rebellion, Lancaster, Warwick, and young Mortimer. Lancaster and Warwick are executed. Kent is banished, and Mortimer imprisoned in the Tower. After his triumph at Boroughbridge, the king is at the height of his power, and he purges his land of as many rebels as possible.

Act IV (Scenes i,ii,iii,iv,v & vi)

As the act opens we find Mortimer and Kent sail for France with the determination to take revenge upon king Edward. Here they join the neglected Queen, who is befriended by Sir John of Hainault. By now Isabella's devotion to her husband has faded and at last her wavering affections are transferred to Mortimer. They plan an attack on King Edward. The King is happy because many of the rebels have been put to death. But he is angry because the young Mortimer has escaped from the Tower. The Queen openly declares her revolt against the king. Mortimer lands near Harwich, raises the rebellion anew, and near Bristol defeats King Edward's army. The elder Spencer is taken prisoner., King Edward, young Spencer and Baldock seek refuge in the Abbey of Neath but they are surprised and captured.

Act V (scenes i,ii,iii,iv,v & vi)

King Edward is now a prisoner in Killingworth Castle. The Bishop of Winchester asks the king to surrender his kingship. Mortimer places the sovereign in the hands of Gurney and Matrevis, cruel men, who keep him in a dungeon, starve him, and shave his beard in puddle water. Mortimer realizes that the commons are already feeling pity for the deposed king and that Edward must die if he is to remain in power as protector. Hence Mortimer hires Lightborn to murder the king. In the dungeon of Berkeley Castle, where the unhappy king is now confined in mire and filth, Edward II is the victim of a peculiarly horrible murder. Young Edward III has just been crowned. He orders Mortimer to be beheaded and orders the Queen, his mother, who is suspected of complicity, to be imprisoned in the Tower.

Marlowe's Purpose

Marlowe's purpose is to illustrate weakness not strength. Weakness does not act but is acted upon, or if it acts, its actions are frustrated and ineffective. So he distributes the interest over a variety

of characters that is to exhibit not only the central figure of Edward in whom the play's intention is chiefly expressed but also the agents of power and corruption who act upon this figure. The stage is set for the conflict to follow in the four movements of the first scene

(1) Gaveston just returned from banishment; eager to meet the king and devise sensuous pleasures which delight them both.

(2) The king's quarrel with the lords bitterly jealous of the upstart Gaveston.

(3) The reunion of Edward and Gaveston – the king's words show the absence of all sense of kingly duty and moral scruple:

"I have my wish, in that I joy they sight; And sooner shall the sea o'erwhelm my land, then bear the ship that still transport thee hence."

(4) Edward and Gaveston violently abuse the Bishop of Coventry and add to the hostility of the lords the powerful hostility of the church.

Debt To Holinshed

We may safely affirm that Marlowe's gifts were really dramatic. With a fine art of selection, condensation, and adaptation Marlowe has shaped out of the chronicle(Holinshed's account) history of a disagreeable reign an historical tragedy. The title suggests a chronide The Troublesome Reign And Lamentable Death Of Edward The Second, King Of England: With The Tragical Fall Of Proud Mortimer. The dramatist manages deftly historical dating and historical sequence; he cared more for economy and coherence and for the balance of dramatic power.

Adaptation Of Holinshed

Marlowe made no mistake in departing from the chronicles which make no mention of an intrigue between Isabel and Mortimer before Edward's murder. Of this intrigue we hear much in the first two acts, but always from Edward and Gaveston.

"For never doted Jove on Ganymede so much as he on cursed Gaveston."

This the queen speaks in soliloquy, and by conventions of Elizabethan drama we are to suppose her speaking her inmost thoughts. Not until often-repeated failures to win the affection of her husband, not until after her question. "No farewell to poor Isabel, they queen?" has received the brutal reply 'yes, yes, for Mortimer, your lover's sake,' does she betray the first hint of affection for Mortimer, again in soliloquy:

"So well hast thou deserved, sweet Mortimer, as Isabel could live with thee for ever"

she continues,

"In vain I look for love at Edward's hand, whose eyes are fix'd on none but Gaveston,

yet once more I'll importune him with prayers."

And if prayers fail, she will take refuge with her brother, the king of France.

Richard II & Edward Compared

The humiliation and murder of Edward are narrated in full by the chroniclers. The details are sordid, pitiless, horrible. And Marlowe leaves out little. In Holinshed we don't have the washing and shaving of the king in puddle water. Compassion did not come easily to Marlowe and there is a eruelty in these last scenes which we do not find in Shakespeare. In Richard II there is every sort of alleviation. Richard is brought face to face with his accusers, and allowed to indulge himself in scenes, which make him at once the playboy and the poet of the English kings. He takes affectionate farewell of his queen. In place of Mortimer we have a Boling broke. And at the end no passive submission, but death in courageous action. Shakespeare's compassion is nowhere more evident than in his invention of the faithful groom of their stable and the talk with his master about "roan Barbary", when king and groom share a common humanity. With sardonic humour Marlowe calls the murderess Lightborn, the professional murderer who takes a pride in the fine handling of a man. The wail of the murdered man rang through the Elizabethan theatre. Charles Lamb said that this death scene moved pity and terror beyond any scene ancient and modern with which he was acquainted. In a short last scene. Mortimer and Isabel meet their doom, and the young king Edward takes control.

(Reference : From Marlowe and the early Shakespeare- Oxford 1953 pp 90-103)

3.3.4 Edward II- Power and Suffering

Introduction

Clifford leech thinks that Marlowe was much concerned with the ideas of power and suffering and the relation between the two, and it was this that led him to choose the subject. What concerned him most was the spectacle of human life, the things that happened to Edward and Mortimer and Isabells and Gaveston. On stage, through the persons of the actors, we could become more deeply aware of their mental pressures exerted on Edward and Isabells and the rest. The play was their story, not a demonstration of any Tudor myth. Nearly all the best plays of the time have indeed this quality of objectivity, of belonging ultimately to their characters rather than to the dramatist.

Structure

When Marlowe was writing Edward II, he was much concerned with the ideas of power and suffering and the relation between the two. But during and the actual process of composition what concerned him more directly was part of the spectacle of human life, the things that happened to Edward and Mortimer and Isabella and Gaveston. On stage the spectators could become more deeply aware of the mental pressures exerted on Edward and Isabella an d the rest. The best plays of the time have the quality of objectivity, of belonging ultimately to their characters. In Edward II Marlowe came closer to Shakespeare's normal structural method than elsewhere in his writing. The action was spread widely through the country, from London to Tyne mouth in the remote north and to Neath in South Wales and a short excursion to France. Edward II is a personal play and the rapid movement of the action gives us the feeling of Edward being driven by the course of events haphazardly through his realm, until at the end he is confined to a small dark cell in which he is secretly murdered. As we read the play we find that Edward is a more important figure in Marlowe's play than Henry VI is in Shakespeare's. Marlowe was interested in Edward, not as embodying a suffering England, but as a

man, a man who had and lost power.

At the beginning no one makes a good impression on us. First we meet Gaveston who is delighted to be recalled to England on Edward I's death. He does not seem to love London except for the fact that London has in it one who is held dearly by him i.e. the king. In a soliloquy he thinks of how he may " draw the pliant king which way I please" and the devices he imagines show how he thinks to exploit Edward's homosexual leanings. When we meet the king and his nobles, we find Edward thinking only of Gaveston. Then Edward and Gaveston meet, and we see Edward bestowing on him almost any office that comes into his mind:

" I here create thee lord High Chamberlain,
Chief secretary to the state and me,
Earl of Cornwall, king and Lord of Man."
(I i 154-6)

Next Edward and Gaveston lay hands on the Bishop of Coventry; the king sends the bishop to prison and gives his see and revenues to Gaveston. The conduct of the king and Gaveston is arbitrary but it is in tune with the times. In the second scene we meet Isabella, and her grief at Edward's desertion of her is likely to strengthen the audience's feeling against him. We have a hint of a special relationship between the queen and Mortimer. Her last words here are:

"Farewell, sweet Mortimer; and for my sake,
Forbear to levy arms against the king."
(I ii 81-2)

when we see the king and the nobles together again, Edward is confronted with a demand for Gaveston's exile. The king has no concern for his country:

"Ere my sweet Gaveston shall part from me,
This Isle shall fleet upon the ocean,
And wander to the unfrequented inde."
(I iv 48-50)

He yields only because the Archbishop of Canterbury threatens to release the nobles from their allegiance. When Mortimer asks Edward;

Why should you love him whom the world hated so?(I iv 76)

Edward's reply is simply:

"because he loves me more than all the world" (I iv 77)

Edward becomes an emblem of the human need for love, the very human joy when love seems offered.

Gaveston is banished; Isabella makes free use of her power over Mortimer to effect Gaveston's return; there is a conversation between Mortimer and his uncle; the older man counsels peace; " the mightiest kings have had their minions"; Mortimer will not and cannot tolerate Gaveston's enjoyment of riches idly; Mortimer is firm in his utterance,

"But whiles I have a sword, a hand, a heart
I will not yield to any such upstart,"

(I iv 421-2)

When we come to the end of Act I, we realize that Gaveston is a rogue, Mortimer is rough and self centered; Isabella is anxious for Edward's love; Edward is doomed; he can control neither his barons unruliness nor his own blind passion.

Earl of Gloucester is dead; the Earl's Daughter, Edward's nice, is betrothed to Gaveston; the niece has the misfortune to have Gaveston; Gaveston's return is the cause of an fresh outbreak of enmity; it ends with the barons declaration of revolt. The king's forces are defeated and Isabella is abandoned by her husband; she meets Mortimer and the rest and tells them the route that Gaveston has taken. This is the first time she has acted against the king. She has been long conscious of Mortimer's feeling for her; how Mortimer has been to her 'gentle', and "sweet". It is psychologically right that the moment of crisis should come without her realizing it.

Next Gaveston is captured. When the king hears of Gaveston's death, he vows revenge and instantly adopts Spencer as his new favourite, making him Earl of Gloucester and Lord Chamberlain. Edward was a man incapable of profiting from Fortune's momentary favour. It is clear too that in replacing Gaveston by Spencer, Edward has learned nothing. Kent and Mortimer are in France; Mortimer escapes from the Tower and he meets Isabella and prince Edward. Together they plan new wars, nominally on behalf of the young prince. We next see Edward being defeated and becoming a fugitive. He takes refuge in the Abbey of Neath but there he is quickly apprehended. He envies the monks and their quiet life for contemplation.

No Reference To Cosmic Power

There are few references to cosmic powers; the conflict is on a purely human level, between a king who cannot control his lords or his passions and his unruly subjects who over-reach themselves. In the end Isabella is sent to the Tower and all the rest of the prominent characters are dead. The king's capture is a piece of effective but unobtrusive symbolism. The abdication scene follows. There is great poignancy in Edward's relinquishing of his crown. Like Faustus he too would have the day not cease. For a moment he admits his guilt but at once retracts the admission:

Commend me to my son, and bid him rule
Better than I yet how have I transgress'd,
Unless it be with too much clemency?
(V i 121-3)

Marlowe could enter fully into the mind of a man whose power was slipping away from him.

No other tragic figure in Elizabethan or Jacobean times is treated in the degrading way that Mortimer permits for Edward. Lightborn pretends to sorrow for the king's wretched state, and then the murder is done. The mode of killing may have been one of the reasons why Marlowe chose this story for dramatization.

To quote Clifford Leich, " In this play the final impression is of Edward's suffering. It is bound up with power, the power that Edward loses, the power that Mortimer wins, the power, he delegates to Lightborn.

If a man had no power over other men there could be no suffering such as Edward knew. In a story where there was much to interest the playwright, Marlowe comes into full command of his imagination when he considers the last stages of Edward's journey (1) The association of the king and Gaveston,(2) the process of Isabella's inconstancy(3) the barons' resentment of the favourite of humble origin(4) the show transformation of Mortimer from a quarrelsome noble to a ruthless autocrat(5) the changing loyalties of Kent,(6) the lightly sketched relations of the royal and the papal power—— all these are part of the play, and they help to give to it the solidity of the world we know.

The king is foolish; he is at his best pathetic in the belief that Gaveston loves him more than all the world; he is cruel to his wife and drives her to Mortimer; he knows himself so little that he thinks he erred only in too much clemency. Marlowe makes us deeply conscious of humanity that we share with this man who happened to be also a king. He has human folly and in his suffering makes contact with an ultimate.

Marlowe focuses attention on certain aspects of the human scene. In this play the suffering, still consequential on the exercise and dream of power, is the major fact. " Marlowe considers in man not the subtle distinctions and varying relationships that mark him off from other men or bind him to them, but the immutable element in man, the spirit of man which can be matched against the universe" (U.M. Ellis Fermor)

Characterization

Character of Edward

Wrong uses of several traits of character- proverbial for his weakness for favourites-kingly nature thus suffers lacks nobility of soul- As a youth he was courageous-won Isabella often defeating his rival in a duel-fight against rebels where he acquits himself creditably-Too weak to control nobles-A defeat crushes his spirit totally- he is voluptuous-seeks pleasure- the despicable behaviour of the king is the result of his " homoerotic" attachment to Gaveston-ready to divide England to fragments and distribute among nobles – indifferent to Isabelle his Queen – refers Isabella as "French Strumpet" – he has genuine paternal love for his son Prince Edward – think that Mortimer and his friends may kill the Prince – describes his son as "a lamb encompassed by wolves" – petulant and peevish – The overbearing barons disobey his commands – king lacks a tenacity of purpose – maladministration – willful neglect of his queen – imbecile – his despondent condition induces pity – kept awake with drum beats in a dungeon for several days – he is denied human contact-abdication very pathetic – refuses to face the grim, sordid realities of life, which is the trait of a tragic hero.

Younger Mortimer

Has overvaulting ambition, indomitable spirit and a Machiavellian temperament — a minor Timburlaine — most courageous — insolent aggressive and rebellious but wrong heads high spirited — outspoken and patriotic — latter half — unscrupulous and callous — his hostility to the king — taunts the king with being brain sick — accuses the king and his friendship with Gaveston — to correct the king causes a lawful revolt — wishes that Gaveston should be banished — Insists on the deposition of

Edward II — wishes that Edward should die — Abhors Gaveston — Gaveston's treatment of the pears angers him most — Mortimer — Queen Isabella casts her lot with Mortimer — The antidote to her woeful plight of loneliness is Mortimer's tenderness — she indicts the king for his misrule — in a way she aids and abets Mortimer's villainy — pretends to feel grieved at the news of her husband's voluntary abdication — Probably she wants Mortimer to be a tool which she casts in the political game to enthrone the prince — she hates Gaveston —who is a base peasant — Her son becoming Edward II knows that his mother is an accomplice in his father's murder, condemns her to the Tower — This nemesis strikes her almost at the very moment of her triumph.

Gaveston

The evil genius of king Edward – By him / Because of him the king grossly neglects the state of affairs – By his conduct pushes the king and the peers into two warring camps – a self aggrandizing Machiavellian – has a vicious hold on the king – Love for the king – Is it genuine or opportunistic? – Has he a sinister motive in his love for the king – feels joy to be with the king – Edward says that he loves Gaveston more than all the world – He is wordily wise – he seeks felicity nowhere else except to be near the King – flattery is a courtier's game – Marlowe suggests that the attachment of Gaveston is a homoeratic love towards the King - Gaveston is instrumental in emptying government coffers – convinced that the welfare of the nation lies in Gaveston's exile or execution – His love for Isabella – abides by her request to recall Gaveston – The Queen, by force of circumstances, is driven into the sympathetic arms of Mortimer – The capture of the king fans the flames of his ambition – Is a consummate Machiavellian – a ruthless power – seeker – cunningly contrives to do away with the king – he is cruel – orders Baldock and the fair-minded Kent to be beheaded – Proud – Nothing can subdue his inflexible spirit – Nemesis strikes him in the very hour of his glory – hides his ambition under the garb of patriotism.

Queen Isabella

Early part of the play devoted wife – frustrated in her attempt to win Edward – takes extreme step of plotting her husband's death in collusion with Mortimer – realizes her husband's infatuation with his French favourite Gaveston – does not want the nobles to bring about neither the dethronement of the king nor the banishment of Gaveston – implores him not to lift his sword against king – she is called by her husband French strumpet – Gaveston traduces her as fawning on Mortimer – Tries her might to win Edward's love – wish that she should have died on her wedding day – persuades Mortimer to repeal Gaveston's banishment – Edward insults her and her leaning towards the king an overt warmth – Gaveston "clasps his cheeks", "hangs about his neck", "smiles in his face" and "whispers in his ears". The king is love sick for his minion – He looks upon the Queen as a rival to the king's affections – knows that his survival hinges on her estrangement from her husband – he sows the seed of suspicion about her character in Edward's mind – Isabella flares up, and rails at Gaveston – he claims greater right over the king than the Queen herself -–he is hostile towards the nobles – He knows that the barons abhor him – He speaks scornfully of Lancaster – he is cruel and cynical – He despises ordinary people – he is an epicurean hedonist by nature – he offers the king a variety of sensual entertainments – He is repeatedly humiliated by Mortimer's jibes.

3.3.5 Technical Terms

(1) ACT I Scene i line 8

like Leander – Leander was the young hero of the love story celebrated by Marlowe in his Hero And Leander. He was in love with Hero, a priestess of Aphrodite (Venus), in Sestos. One night he was drowned in the sea, and on hearing the sad tidings, she perished in the foaming waters by jumping into them.

(2) ACT I Scene ii line 30

Peasant – Gaveston is contemptuously referred to as peasant. The term reveals the hatred of Mortimer against Gaveston, king Edward's favourite.

(3) ACT I scene iv line 15

Can kingly lions – creeping ants

It is ridiculous that a king who is as majestic and strong as a lion showers his affection and favour on a creature who is as insignificant as a slow – moving, frail-looking ant. Gaveston is compared to a creeping ant and this comparison reveals the great scorn of Pembroke for the king's favourite.

(4) ACT I Scene iv lines 312 - 318

The passage vividly describes the disconsolate condition of the king. His heart is like an anvil on which the hammer of grief is inconsolable and immeasurable, and this idea is suggested by the phrase Cyclops' hammers. The hammers of Cyclops were deadly strong and powerful. Such humanly unimaginable hammer of sorrow makes the king feel giddy.

(5) ACT II Scene ii 16 - 19

A lofty cedar – The cedar tree refers to the king, the eagle to the Barons and the canker to Gaveston. Just as the Canker reaches up to the top of the tree and destroys it, Gaveston is raised above the barons and placed close to the king only to ruin.

(6) ACT II Scene v 15 - 16

Greekish knights – refers to Helen of Troy whose charm was the cause of the Battle of Troy. Just as her beauty led to the death of many great soldiers, Gaveston's behaviour towards the king – homoeroticism – has led to the death of several valiant knights.

3.3.6 Sample Questions

1. Examine whether EDWARD II is a moving tragedy.
2. What are the defects and merits of this play?

3. How does EDWARD II differ from other Marlowe's plays?
4. Sketch the role of Gaveston.
5. 'EDWARD II' is a play of subdued tragedy, subdued comedy – Elucidate.
6. There is a natural development of character in EDWARD II – Examine.
7. Consider "EDWARD II" as a historical play.
8. Consider EDWARD II as a tragic hero.
9. What are the ironies of kingship that are exhibited in 'EDWARD II'.
10. Consider power and suffering as exhibited in this play.

3.3.7. Suggested Reading

1. English Drama – R.P. Rossiter.
2. Some English Plays and Players – A.F. Leach.
3. An Introduction to the study of English Literature – W.H.Hudson.
4. A History of English Literature — Edward Albert.
5. A Compendious History of English Literature – Trivedi.
6. A History of English Literature – Arthur Compton Rickett.
7. Critics on Marlowe – Ed. By Judith O' Neill.
8. Outlines of Tudor and Stuart Plays (1497 – 1642) – Karl J. Holzknecht.
9. Edward II – T.K.Dutt
10. Edward II – S. Rengachari.
11. English Literature – R.J. Rees.
12. Edward II – A.N.Parasuram.

Prof. S.N. Kulandaisamy

Lesson - 4

Christopher Marlow : Doctor Faustus

Contents

3.4.1. Objectives

Marlowe's Dr. FAUSTUS has aroused a lot of discussion and controversy. As such we should well begin by

i. knowing the meaning of this play,
ii. its allegorical implications,
iii. the dualistic view of the world implicit in the play iv. considering it as a morality play.

3.4.2. Christopher Marlowe (1564 – 1593)

Christopher Marlowe, "the Muses" darling", was the most brilliant of all the 'University Wits' and the earliest first-rate artist, to write plays. The son of a shoemaker and a clergyman's daughter, Marlowe was born in Canterbury in February 1564. He had his early education at king's school, Canterbury. Later he joined the Cambridge University as a scholarship holder. He passed the B.A in 1583 and his M.A in 1587 the latter only by direct intervention of Her Majesty's Privy Council as a reward "for his faithful dealing". Probably while still an undergraduate, Marlowe was already in government service as a confidential agent. Certainly he was in bad odour with the University authorities. In 1587 Marlowe arrived in London and he wished to embark on a literary career. His career in the theatre begins in the same year 1587 and is over in May of 1593. "A hot tempered rebel and a man of ungoverned life, Marlowe could be charming when he wanted to be; but his personal reputation even for Elizabethan London was not high. He was more than suspected of atheism, and he had enemies. On may 30, 1593 Marlowe was killed in a tavern brawl at Deptford by one Ingram Frizer. He was only twenty-nine.

To those Puritan writers intent on attacking the corrupting influence of stage-plays, Marlowe's sudden and violent death seemed a clear sign that God had judged him for his atheistical views, his immoral life, and his flamboyant writing. He cursed and blasphemed to his last gasp; he was stabbed to death by a bawdy serving man, a rival of his in his lewd love. These were the rumours they heard and passed on, adding new details in the reading (Judith O' Neill). Meanwhile, in 1925, a young American scholar, J. Leslie Hotson, made a series of remarkable discoveries in London that completely changed the traditional picture of how Marlowe had met his death. Hotson's brilliant piece of detection established the true facts of Marlowe's death and showed conclusively that the 'lewd love', 'the low resort' and the 'bawdy serving man' were all misleading rumours.

Some critics paint his life as one of luxurious learning and leisurely refinement. He startled the theatre going public by his very first play Tamburlaine – The Great in two parts (1587). His great significances for the Elizabethan drama are that he was a poet who cast his lot with the theatre, and that he created on the stage energetic, individualistic characters who are true children of the Renaissance. In each of his great dramas there is one figure who dwarfs all the rest, a kind of superman about whom all the action centres. According to Karl J. Holzknecht in Tamburlaine this figure is a conqueror with an undeviating pursuit of a vision who personifies and voices the boundless aspiration of the Renaissance in a great ten-act epic drama. In Doctor Faustus he is the idealist in pride of life seeking knowledge infinite and selling his soul to attain his aspiration and the lusts of the flesh.

In technique, this play is a blend of the old and the new; the Good and the Bad Angels and the Seven Deadly Sins derive from the mediaeval moralities, but the central figure belongs to the Renaissance. The Jew Of Malta depicts a consummate crafty, self-centered intriguing villain who, at last, overreaches himself. Edward II transforms the old loose-jointed chronicle play into a tragedy of character. Shakespeare was to learn a great deal from Marlowe when he wrote Richard II. The main source of Edward II which covers twenty three years of history 1307 – 1330 was Holinshed's Chronicles (1577 – 1587) with some reference to Fabyan's and Stow's.

3.4.3 The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus

Consists of fourteen short scenes with the Chorus being allotted four places consuming 66 lines in all. Some modern critics make the following arrangement.

(i) Act I includes scenes i,ii,iii and iv totalling 420 lines

(ii) Act II consists of scenes v and vi totalling 367 lines.

(iii) Act III has scene vii with the Chorus preceeding it accounting for 93 lines.

(iv) Act IV is made up of scenes viii, ix, x and xi with a total of 285 lines.

(v) Act V is formed by scene xii, xiii and xiv with a total of 283 lines

Thus we have the play containg 1514 lines (which includes the chorus).

According to Mr Lunt the play may be read as five Movements (a) striking of the bargain between the doctor and the devil (b) Faustus at Rome (c) Faustus at the Emperor's Court (d) Demonstrations

Magical and (e) Climax and Death. Una Ellis Fermor would prefer to consider this drama with six episodes (1) Faustus sets the play moving towards a crisis, (2) Faustus summons Mephistopheles, (3) Faustus sells his soul, (4) domination of Evil powers (5) Disintegration of Faustus and (6) Triumph of the Evil Angel. Catastrophe and Faustus is carried to hell after death.

3.4.4 Dr. Faustus – Dramatis Personae

Faustus, learned doctor of the University of Wittenberg, proficient in the liberal arts, in law, in physics and "excelling all whose sweet delight disputes in heavenly matters of theology," but possessed of an inordinate desire for power as well as knowledge;" till swollen with cunning (that is, learning), of a self-conceit, his waxen wings did mount above his reach, and, melting, Heavens Conspired his overthrow. For, falling to a devilish exercise, and glutted now with learning's golden gifts, he surfeits upon cursed necromancy…Hell arrives with grace for conquest in [his] breast….[yet] the serpent that tempted Eve may be saved, but not Faustus".

Lucifer, Prince of Hell, "Chief lord and regent of perpetual night", to who Faustus delivers himself by deed of gift, signed with his blood.

Beelzebub – his companion.

Mephistophilis – one time servant to great Lucifer, the agent of Faustus' damnation and his attendant, always obedient to his will.

Valdes Cornelius – Magicians, infamous thourghout the world as practitioners of the damned art, the friends and instructors of Dr Faustus.

The Evil Angel
The Good Angel — Advisers of Dr Faustus

An Old Man, who makes a final effort to reclaim Faustus from his loathsome life, but who, for his pains, is tormented by devils. His faith is great and triumphs over the vile friends; "the heavens smiles at [their] repulse and laughs [their] state to scorn".

Wagner, servant to Dr Faustus, his famulus (attendant on the scholar) or poor scholar.

A Clown, a boy hired by Wagner.

The Pope
The Cardinal of Lorraine
Friars attending them
upon whom Dr Faustus and Mephistophilis play pranks.

The Emperor of Germany (Charles V)
The Duke of Vanholt (Anhalt)
The Duchess of Vanholt
Before whom Dr Faustus demonstrates his gifts of magic

Robin, the Ostler, a clownish conjurer.

Rafe, his man

A Vintner, from whom Robin has stolen a goblet

A Knight of the Emperor's Court who scoffs at Faustus and is punished.

A Horsecourser, to whom Dr Faustus sells his steed.

The Seven Deadly Sins : Pride, Covetousness, Wrath, Envy, Sloth, Gluttony and Lechery raised by Lucifer as a spectacle to amuse Dr Faustus.

Spirits in the shapes of Alexander The Great and of his beauteous Paramour, raised by Dr Faustus before the Emperor.

The Spirit of Helen of Troy, "the paragon of Excellence", raised by Dr Faustus for his scholar friends; later Faustus' paramour.

Chorus who serves as Prologue and Epilogue, and occasionally as Commentator upon the action.

Balliol and Belcher, devils raised by wagner.

Scholars, Devils and other Attendants.

Setting : Germany and Rome in the early 16th century.

3.4.5 Analytical Summary

Chorus : We are not interested in telling you how the Romans matched themselves against the Carthaginians near Lake Thrasymere in Central Italy in 3rd century B.C, nor about the amusement of Love nor the pomp and glory of daring deeds but only the representation of the good or bad fortunes of Faustus. He was born of low parents and went to Wittenberg; he studied theology and acquired the degree of Doctor of Divinity. His chief delight was to argue matters of religion. He became self-conceited and so proud of his knowledge that he flew beyond his reach until the wax melted and he fell. He lost himself in the study of the abominable black art. He loved magic more than his own salvation. He sits in his study.

Scene i — Faustus, learned doctor of the University of Wittenberg, sits brooding among his books, trying to decide upon a field of specialization. Although he has taken his degree in divinity, he has been attracted to other studies like the logic of Aristotle. But then, as he can reason well, he has no further use of logic. As for medicine he has studied the famous Roman physician, Galen. This has ensured his excellent health and his fame as a doctor who has saved many cities from the plague and consequently many patients from dangerous diseases. He is learned in Justinian law and in Jerome's Vulgate. He has mastered all of the four faculties of the universities. Ye the finds all-human learning hollow and unsatisfying when compared to the black art and the metaphysics of magicians. Accordingly he sends his servant Wagner with an invitation to Valdes and Cornelius. In spite of the warning of the Good Angel to read the Scriptures, Dr Faustus follows the tempatations of his Evil Angel and hopes to be the lord and commander of all the elements. His friends Valdes and Cornelius promise to begin instruction immediately. He thinks that as a result of his study on magic he could get whatever he wants – gold, pearl or delicacies of food. To him all other studies except magic are futile.

Scene ii — Two of his (Faustus's) scholar friends are informed by Wagner that the Master Doctor was dining with Valdes and Cornelius. The two scholars are shocked that Faustus has fallen into the snare of black magicians. Now they know that nothing can redeem him.

Scene iii Later that night, in the gloomy shadow of a grove, Faustus draws a magic circle and begins his incantations. He succeds in raising a devil, Mephistophilis, servant of Lucifer. Mephistophilis is so ugly that Faustus almost orders him to go and return in the garb of a Franciscan friar. After he departs, Fausus rejoices that his incantations have shown their power and Faustus is now the prince of Sorcerers. According to Mephistophilis conjuring has been the only cause of his appearance. Devils come in the hope of gaining a glorious soul whenever they hear a man abjuring the scriptures and the Trinity and pray to the Prince of Hell. Faustus demands pariticulars of Lucifer from Mephistophilis. Mephistophilis informs Faustus that Lucifer was once an angel very dear to God. His overweening pride made God expel him from heaven along with his followers. He suffers so intensely in his exile that wherever he is, it is hell for him. In this mood Mephistophilis asks Faustus to give up sorcery,

"O, Faustus, leave these frivolous demands,

Whick strike a terror to my fainting soul"

At the end of the interview, Faustus sends word to Lucifer that he is willing to surrender up his soul on condition that he be spared for 24 years, be permitted to live in all voluptuousness, and have Mephistophilis as a constant attendant upon him. Faustus dreams,

"Had I as many souls as there be stars,

I'd give them all for Mephistophilis.

By him I'll be great emperor of the world,

And make a bridge through the moving air…."

Scene iv

Wagner, who can successfully imitate his master Faustus, tries to bind the clown to him for seven years, raising two devils, Balliol and Blcher, to clinch the bargain. The clown declares that he will kill any devil that may come near him Wagner wants the clown to address him respectfully and the clown agrees to serve Wagner out of fear. Actually this is a parody of the preceeding scene.

Act II Scene I

In his study, Faustus is arguing within himself whether he ought to go ahead with his plan to surrender his soul to the devil or whatever he should repent and beg for mercy from God. The Good and the Evil Angels contend for Faustus's soul. Faustus is convinced that God cannot love him. Faustus blurts out,

"The god thou servest is thine own appetite,

Wherein fix'd the love of Beelzebub:

To him I'll build an altar and a church,

And offer lukewarm blood of new born babes".

When Mephistophilis arrives, Faustus draws up a deed of gift of his soul with his own blood according to the mandate of Lucifer. If Faustus signed the document in blood, he can become as great as Lucifer

and Mephistophilis will give him more than what Faustus as a human being can think of asking. Faustus stabs his arm and Faustus offers his soul to the Devil. But a written document is insisted on. As he writes, his blood congeals rather than be used for this horrid purpose; he asks

"What might the staying of my blood portend?
Is it unwilling I should write this bill?
Why streams it not, that I may write afresh!"

and Mephistohilis must fetch a chafer of coals to dissolve it again. To seal the bargain, devils bring crowns and rich apparel to Dr Faustus, and even a wife, whom he rejects as too foul.

Act II Scnene ii

After the deed is done, there is a great conflict in the mind of Dr Faustus. He is desperate,

"When I behold the Heavens, then I repent,
And curse the wicked Mephistophilis,
Because thou hast deprived me of those joys".

(i) Faustus questions Mephistophilis about Hell and Heaven. Mephistophilis replies correctly but he gives no answer to the question as to who made the world. Mephistophilis declines to answer. The God Angel asks him to think of God who made the world and assures him that it is never too late to repent. After a while Faustus calls upon Jesus to save his soul. This provokes Lucifer, Beelzebub and Mephistophilis to appear before Faustus. In a fit of fury born of despair, Faustus blurts out that he will burn the Scriptures, kill clergymen and demolish churches. Lucifer promises rewards. Lucifer and Beelzebub call up a pageant of the seven Deadly sins – Pride, Covetousness, Wrath, Envy, Gluttony, Sloth, and Lechery. Lucifer assures Faustus that similar enbtertainments to give joy are plenty in Hell. As he leaves, Lucifer promises to satsify Faustus' longing to see Hell and gives him a book from which he can learn to turn himself into any shape he likes. Thus the powers of Evil overcome Faustus's regrets.

Act II Scene iii

The clown Robin manages to take away one of the magic books and tells a fellow worker Dick to attend to the horses. Dick sneers that Robin cannot understand a word in that book.

Act III

The Chorus narrates that Dr Faustus travelled all over the skies in a burning chariot. He is now gone to prove cosmography, and will first arrive at Rome to see the Pope and the manner of his court and take some part of holy Peter's feast.

Act III Scene i

Faustus has come to Rome and with Mephistophilis are in the Palace of the Pope. They will be using the Pope's private rooms and eat the best items of food from his dinning table. Faustus wishes to look at the monuments of Rome. Mephistophilis advises him to see the Pope first,

"I know you would fain see the Pope,
And take some part of holy Peter's feast,

Where thou shalt see a troop of bald-pate friars,

Whose summum bonum (chief delight and pleasure) is in belly-cheer".

Faustus and Mephistophilis see a procession led by Cardinals and Bishops. Finally come the Pope and kins Raymond of Hungary with Bruno, the usurping Pope, led in chains before them. Faustus and Mephistophilis, invisible, play clownish tricks in the Pople's palace, snatching dishes and cups at banquet, and flinging fireworks among the friars who try to exorcise the evil spirits.

Act III Scenes ii and iii and iv

Robin the Ostler with one of Faustus's conjuring books promises his man Rafe that he will do wonders, steals a silver goblet from a vintner. As he is afraid of the appearnce of Mephistophilis he returns the stolen goblet. For the disturbance they have caused, Robin is transformed into an ape and Rafe into a dog.

At home Faustus finds that he is a household name for wonders everywhere. Emperor Charles V of Germany requests Faustus to give a demonstration of his art. Charles asks to be shown Alexander the Great and his mistress. Alexander the Great appears and Charles sees also Alexander's mistress. Benvolio is sceptical of Faustus's powers and as a punishment Faustus invests horns to his head. On the emperor's request the horns from Benovolio's head are removed and Faustus is offered command over Germany.

Benvolio, Martino, Fredrick and some soldiers plan vengeance on Faustus. Faustus punishes Benvolio Martino and Fredrick in a grove with the help of Mephistophilis.

In Wittenberg Faustus sells his horse to a dealer for forty dollars instructuing him not to ride the animal into the water.

The horse courser leads the horse into the water and finds that the horse has turned into a bunch of hay.

For the delectation of the Duke of Vonholt and his court Dr Faustus in January brings a dish of fresh grapes from India by his magic.

Faustus's years of power have slipped by and his disintegration is complete. He knows that his fatal end is drawing close. But, in spite of approaching death, he continues to feast and to carouse with the students as of old. To satisfy their curiosity and to grace their feast, he even raises from the dead Helen of Troy, the most beautiful woman of antiquity.

A virtuous old Man begs Faustus to repent his loathsome life and seek the mercy of his Saviour. Faustus is about to recant but Mephistophilis acts quickly. The fiend drives Faustus to despair, offers him a dagger that he may take his life, and at last arrests his soul for disobedience to his sovereign lord. Faustus panics again, and in despair calls back fair Helen to be his paramour so that her sweet embraces may extinguish clean those thoughts that do dissuade (him) from his vow.

His hour approaches; Faustus rejects the kind offices of his trusted friends; it is too late; alone, he hears the clock strike eleven; then the half hour, and at the stroke of twelve, in thunder and lightning, devils carry Dr Faustus off to Hell.

3.4.6 Is Dr. Faustus A Symbol of the Renaissance Superman?

Introduction

We should remember that Marlowe wrote "Dr Faustus" mainly for the stage and as such we ought not to confuse Marlowe the man and Marlowe, the playwright. Biography of Marlowe may not have anything to do with the play. Whatever Marlowe was himself, there is no more obvious Christian document in all Elizabethan drama that 'Dr Faustus'. For earthly learning, earthly power, earthly satisfaction Faustus goes down to horrible and everlasting perdition. Apart from our views of Heaven or Hell we should realize that Faustus is a wretched creature, who, for lower values gives up higher values. The devil and Hell are omnipresent, potent, and terrfying realities. These are the values which govern the play.

Pride Goeth Before Fall

We must trust the poet's ex cathedra (infallible judgement) description of his protagonist – a man, swollen with pride in his attainments, comes to a deserved end because he has preferred forbidden pursuits to be "his chiefest bliss". At the very beginning of Faustus's temptation, the Good Angel says,

"O Faustus, lay that damned book aside,

And gaze not on it, lest it tempt thy soul".

But Faustus hearknes to the Bad Angel. Before the Good Angel enters, Faustus gloats,

"O, what a world of profit and delight,

Of power, of honour, and omnipotence"

(I : 54 – 55.)

Faustus determines to himself that he will not only get knowledge and power: his mind dwells longingly on satisfaction of material appetite. The spirits will bring him gold, 'Orient pearl', 'pleasant fruits', 'princely delicates', 'silk' ……(I: 83 – 92)

Vainglorious And Ego-Centric

Not only has Faustus intellectual pride to an odious degree, but he is also avid for more vain glory (I: 113 – 9). He is wholly ego-centric. To himself, he is either the greatest of men or the greatest of abject sinners. He underrates his opponents and relishes his inflated sense of his own abilities. He wallows in a delusion of self-importance (I iii: 31 – 3). He agrees to worship Beelzebub (I iii 61 – 5).

"This word "damnation" terrifies not me,

For I confound Hell in Elysium:

My ghost be with the old philosophers!".

Mephistophilis foreshadows Faustus's fall in Lucifer's, and that insolence and pride (compare "better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven") are the instigators in both cases (I iii 67 – 84). The foolhardy Faustus, having been warned by the Devil himself, reprimands the latter for cowardliness. He boasts, (I iii 85 – 88)

"What, is great Mephistophilis so passionate

For being deprived of the joys of Heaven?

Learn thou of Faustus manly fortitude,
And scorn those joys thou never shalt possess".

According to Leo Kirschbaum, such a self-deluded, fooolishly boastful Faustus can never be described a superman.

Satisfaction of Senses

We should read carefully what Faustus wants in return for selling his soul to the devil, (I iii 92 – 9)

"Say, he surrenders up to him his soul
So he will spare him four-and-twenty years
Letting him live in all voluptuousness;
Having thee ever to attend on me,
To give me whatsoever I shall ask,
To tell me whatsoever I demand
To slay mine enemies, and to aid my friends,
And always be obedient to my will".

Utter satisfaction of the will and utter satisfaction of the senses are what Faustus desires. And how he prates (I iii 104 – 105)

"Had I as many souls as there be stars,
I'd give them all for Mephistophilis".

Ad midnight of the same day, his emotional and intellectural instability is fully revealed. He veers between God and the Devil. At first he is conscience-stricken. But in a moment he is once more the user of egocentric hyperbole (II i 1 – 14)

"Now, Faustus, must
Thou needs be damn'd. Canst thou not be sav'd?
What boots it, then, to think on God or heaven?
Away with such vain fancies, and despair;
Despair in God, and trust in Beelzebub:
Now go not backward; Faustus, be resolute:
Why waver'st thou? O, something soundeth in mine air,
'Abjure this magic, turn to God again!'
Ay, and Faustus will turn to God again,
Why, he loves thee not;
The God thou serv'st is thine own appetite,
Wherein is fix'd the love of Beelzebub:

To him I'll build an altar and a church
And offer lukewarm blood of new-born babes".

Uncontrolled Appetite

We must understand that Faustus's conclusion as to the improbability of God's mercy is the mark of a diseased ego – a lack of humility. We must particularly remark Faustus's self-recognition of his driving passion: "The God thou Serv'st is thine own appetite".

This struggle between Faustus's uncontrolled appetite and the powers of Heaven continues (II i 15 – 26). Towards the close, Faustus says,

"Wealth, why, the signiory of Embden shall be mine,
When Mephistophilis shall stand by me,
What power can hurt me? Faustus, thou art safe:
Cast no more doubts".

He thus deludes himself; But again he is warned by the emissary of Hell what awaits him if he sells his soul to the Devil (II i 38 – 44).

Faustus : Stay Mephistophilis, and tell me what good will my soul do thy lord?

Mephilsophilis : Enlarge his kingdom.

Faustus has free will, free choice, ability to affirm or deny God if he so wishes; that he cannot blame any one but himself for his act and its consequences. When his blood congeals he says, (II i 66 – 69)

"Why streams it not, that I may write afresh
Faustus gives to thee his soul: Oh, there it stay'd!".

Marlowe's powers of compressed dramatic irony are tremendous. As soon as Faustus has signed, he says CONSUMMATUM EST (II i 74) the last words of Christ on earth according to St. John (Gospel of St John Chapter 19 verse 30). What twisted mind! And what blasphemy! Jesus died that Faustus's soul might live; Faustus flings away this priceles gift for a mess of earthly pottage (He asks himself why he should not give away his soul. After all, it is his soul and no one can try to persuade him out of his decision. Though he gets some momentary doublts, he proceeds to clinch the transaction. In order to make the blood flow again, Mephistophilis has to heat it with a chafer of fire).

Denial of God

When God warns, "Homo fuge" (which in Latin means 'O man, run away), on his arm, he affirms the God whom he has just denied and gets into a turmoil of conflicting impulses (II i 77 – 81).

"Homo fuge ! whither should I fly?
If unto God, he'll throw me down to hell.
My senses are deceived: here's nothing writ:-
O yes, I see it plain even here is writ,
Homo fuge! Yet shall not Faustus fly".

Hence Faustus consciously and deliberately sets his will against God's. Mephistophilis offers Faustus sensual satisfaction in order to distract his mind from spiritual concern which might lead to repentance.

Basic Pattern

This pattern is a basic one in the play and an understanding of it will eventaully enable us to interpret truly the Helen of Troy apostrophe. Whenever there is danger that Fuaustus will turn to God's mercy, the powers of Hell will deaden their victim's conscience by providing him with some great satisfaction of the senses. In the same scene, Faustus receives a true description of his condtiion, but cheaply flaunts his disbelief (II i 128 – 38).

Faustus : "I think hell's a fable

Mephistophilis : Ay, think so, till experience change they mind.

Faustus : Why, dost thou think that Faustus shall be damn'd?

Mephistophilis : Ay, of necessity, for her's the scroll

In which thou hast given thy soul to Lucifer".

And here again, Marlowe shows the constitution of Faustus's mind. As soon as Mephistophilis has stated that hell with its tortures and damnation do exist, Faustus asks for his customary anodyne, (II i 139 – 56)

"But, leaving this, let me have a wife,

The fairest maid in Germany, for I

Am wanton and lascivious

And cannot live without a wife".

Fausuts shall have his appetite satisfied by women as beautiful "as was bright Lucifer before his fall". We can never compare Macbeth with Faustus because Macbeth is tremendous in his spiritual agony. The Devil gets Faustus out of his melancholy by providing him with some satisfaction of the senses – the show of the seven Deadly Sins – and in this we note again Marlowe's dramatic irony,

"That sight will be as pleasant to me,

As Paradise was to Adam, the first day of his creation".

And after the show, the deluded magician in unconscious irony says, "O, how this sight doth delight my soul". In Act III scene i Faustus states his motivating passion,

…….. "let me be cloy'd

with all things that delight the heart of man.

My four-and-twenty years of liberty

I'll spend in pleasure and in dalliance"

In the horse-courser scene too, Marlowe shows Faustus still tormented – but still capable of rapid self-delusion

Thy fatal time draws to af final end,

Despair doth drive distrust into my thoughts,

Confound these passions with a quiet sleep.

Tush! Christ did call the thief upon the Cross;

Then rest thee, Faustus, quiet in conceit."

When the last Act is reached we see Wagner who is struck by the inconsistency of his master's character. The puzzled servant says,

"…….if death were nigh
He would not frolic thus. He's is now at supper
With the scholars, where there's such belly-cheer
As Wagner in his life ne'er saw the like"

Incorrigible Hedonist

Thus, through the mouth of another character, Marlowe shows us Faustus as still the incorrigible hedonist. The Scholars wish him to show them Helen of Troy. Mephistophilis brings in the peerles dame, and the scholars are ravished. The Old Man enters and movingly begs Faustus to give up his wicked life. We find that Faustus is still a man, capable of repentance and if he does not change his wicked ways, his nature will become incapable of condition. Faustus utterly despairs and is about to kill himself with a dagger. Faustus misses the full meaning of the Old Man's words. The Old Man tells him that 'precious grace' waits only upon prayer for mercy. Faustus asks to be left alone to ponder his sins. As soon as the Old Man leaves, Faustus is in the toils,

"Accursed Faustus, where is mercy now?
I do repent; and yet I do despair:
Hell strives with grace for conquest in my breast:
What shall I do to shun the snares of death?

Hell strives against Heaven: despair against repentance. But as soon as Mephistophilis arrests him for disobedience, commands him to deny god, threatens him with physical pain, the weak-willed voluptuary caves in. He repents that he has offended Lucifer and brutally begs Mephistophilis to torture the Old Man. Leo Kirschbaum asks the significant question here, "Is this the Superman whom devotees of the Renaissance paint?".

The Blatant Egotist

Faustus request the moly which will deaden his spiritual apprehension

"One thing, good servant, let me crave of thee,
To glut the longing of my heart's desire, —
That I may have unto my paramour
That heavenly Helen which I saw of late,
Whose sweet embraces may extinguish clean
Those thoughts that do dissuade me from my vow,
And keep my oath I made to Lucifer"

Helen appears. Fausutus delivers the famous apostrophe, "was this the face that launched a thousand ships and burnt the topless towers of Ilium" and Faustus leaves the stage with her. For the sake of

bodily pleasure, Faustus has given up the last possibility of redemption and embraced Hell. The second sholar has asked him to repent, "God's mercies are infinite and Faustus replies, "But Faustus's offence can ne'er be pardoned: the serpent that tempted Eve may be saved, but not Faustus"…. The quaking Faustus is still the blatant egotist. In the midst of his self-approach, his basic vanity leaps forth, "and what wonders I have done, all Germany can witness, yea, all the world".

Conclusion

Faustus, too late, begs for time to repent and in his agony cries out "O lente,….". Faustus himself points out the danger in Helen's beauty. It caused the great Trojan war and his request, therefore, "sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss", is, of course, blasphemous. It is sure to rob him of immortal bliss. At one stage he says, "Her lips suck forth my soul" and at another, as he once more kisses her,

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

And all is dross that is not Helena"

we wonder what an ironic confusion of values there is.

3.4.7. The Moral Tragedy Of Dr Faustus

In discussing the moral tragedy of Dr Faustus, a medical degree holder, we are made to recollect the holy words of the Bible which runs thus, "What doth it profit a man if he were to gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul!". With us, the play is the thing. There is a principleof selection in Marlowe's treatment of the Faustus legend. There is also an interpretative interest in Marlowe's handling of witchcraft. Supernatural manifestations are external to man; they are partly suggested as objective realizations of psychological conflict. Let us try to find out a consistency in his attitutde to his theme throughtout the play to form a sufficient foundation for the patent magnificence of the end.

As a Morality Play

The 1616 text is the nearer to what Marlowe wrote, and it retains more fully the Morality play features which distinguish Fausutus. Marlowe's drama was never concerned primarily with character. The appalling situation – a man who is cut off from all contact with humanity, dragged to Hell for eternity and seeing visions of Heaven as he goes – depends on the Morality of the play. It is in construction a Morality play. Dr Greg wants us to remember theat it is no tragedy but it concentrates on the aspect of Morality. Look at these lines of the prologue

"Till, swollen with the cunning of a self-conceit,

His waxen wings did mount above his reach,

And melting, heavens conspired his overthrow".

The fate of the presumptuous Icarus, the Christian moral of humility and denial of self in the presence of God. On that plane the play continues. He is visited by the Good and Bad Angel; he is warned finally by a pious and saintly Old Man and the appropriate comment is in the epilogue,

"Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight….
Faustus is gone: regard his hellish fall,"…….

Renaissance Superman

Critics however think of Dr Faustus as a kind of Renaisance Superman condemned to tragic failure; a man who expresses superbly a longing for knowledge, beauty, wealth and power. Faustus examines all the established lines of human knowledge, and finds them all inadequate, too limited; the aim he sets himself is achievement of the supreme desire of Man,

"Oh, what a world of profit and delight,
of Power, of honour, of omnipotence
Is promised to the studious artizan!"

and these he pursues – he sees the astronomical system in its entirety and still at the end he pursues perfect physical beauty in Helen.

Nobility to Depravity

Kirschbaum and Greg see a gradual deterioration of his character from noble-mindedness to depravity and they suggest that it is there the tragedy lies. In pursuing physical pleasures Faustus neglects spiritual values. Nicholas Brooke, however, differs from this view. In the very first scene Faustus repeats his aims,

"Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please,
Resolve me of all ambiguities,"

There is no mixture of serious thought and cheap iconoclasm in his well-known rejection of the sciences. Faustus asks for Helen and not philosohpy; it is pleasure he is after with Homer, Alexander and Oenone

"Whilst I am here on earth let me be cloyed
With all things that delight the heart of man"
III i 59 – 60

Morality Inverted

The pleasures Faustus wants are made clear to the mind and the imagination. He mingles strange philosophy with the secrets of all foreign kings. What the human desires, it desires. We may have reasons to believe that Marlowe never intended to write a sound Christian play. Marlowe chose deliberately to use the Morality form. During 1591/1592 when Marlowe was writing, old morality plays were still performed. His play moved a long way from puppet-manipulation of abstractions. He invoked the treatement of magic as a means for the individual to surmount the restrictions of social morality. He was deliberately reviving the morality tradition and this accounts for the existence of farcical scenes.

Act I scene ii reveals Wagner as a mocking comic teasing the scholars by withholding and next conveying the news that his master is dining with the magicians. In the next scene Faustus reveals his full consciousness of the fact, as he performs these rites of conjuration. He is always afraid not of the

inevitable end of his twenty four years but of some immediate failure, the result of irresolution; of the threat the Bad Angel makes in Act II scene ii, "If thou repent, devils will tear thee in pieces". He not only gets power for twenty-four years at the cost of external damnation; but he also gains his power at the cost of perpetual danger.

Hell And Heaven

Mephistophilis is treated as a voluntary agent and he defines hell,

"Why this is hell, nor am I out of it

Thinkest thou that I, who saw the face of God

And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,

Am not tormented with ten thousand hells

In being deprived of everlasting bliss?"

Faustus is not subjected to any simple "temptation" of the ordinary Morality kind…. He is in danger of persecution at the beginning from nothing but his own sense of frustration. Faustus chooses voluntarily Hell instead of Heaven. Hence Faustus inverted the Morality structure: the course of Faustus's resolution is to damn himself. Marlowe believed that man has certain overriding desires whose realization is denied by any form of servitude.

Nature Of Man

Marlowe discusses the nature of Man in relation to the God that made him in his own image, with an urge to be like his master, omnipotent. Lucifer was expelled for precisely the attitude Faustus is now adopting. A successful Faustus cannot bear to have his magnificence dimmed by a rival.

Meaning Of Hell

Faustus is the great-souled man; he who excels in all wordly "goods", wealth, dignity and popularity. Secondly he will tolerate no rival within his sphere of influence who might dim his glory. God and Lucifer are treated as rival magnificoes and Fausuts himself is aiming at that state. Marlowe invenrts the Morality pattern of rewards in Heaven and punishment in Hell; it is a wholly different ethos, an idea of humble service which Faustus rejects as unworthy of his nature. Nicholas Brooke comments that Hell is used in a number of senses in the play. Of these the most important are (1) the Hell that Faustus seeks which represents to him the free range of his nature to be and (2) the more familiar Hell of the Middle Ages, of unspeakable devils, tortures and indignity, which serves to represent Faustus's fear of failure.

The Wheel's Full Circle

Acts III and IV may lack tragic splendour but the devil's agent provides Faustus with all he wants, namely, knowledge, power, and wealth. The story of Faustus's fame on earth has to be told, but its telling presents a dramatic problem that Marlowe has failed to solve. The chorus before Act III tells us of Faustus's journey through the air, his discovery of all the secrets of astronomy; he now turns to cosmorgaphy. Act IV returns to Germany to present Faustus as renowned for knowledge and power as he wished. With the opening of Act V the wheel has gone full circle.

God's Mercy

Faustus is back at Wittenberg with his students, and as the twenty four years draw to their end, the full drama reasserts itself. With the entry of the Old Man, despair returns and Faustus's tragic dilemma takes on an extra dimension. The Old Man asserts a Christian criticism of Faustus's behaviour. When Faustus is conscious of his own failure, in panic, he turns to the Old Man's offer of mercy, of resignation to a power greater than himself.

Dilemma

Fausuts is now torn between despair equals repentance and despair equals acknowledgement of Hell triumphant. And for the last time, Faustus revolts, expressly renews his bond with Lucifer; Faustus's sin has been carried to the point at which he must make a final choice between Heaven and Hell, and he makes it deliberately for Hell as the Old Man clearly states. We see his final speech not just as an emotional predicament, but as his ultimate moral tragedy. Mephistophilis sums up Faustus's position. Faustus states again the simple idea of physical punishment,

"Oft have I thought to have done so; but
The devil threatened to tear me in
Pieces if I named God, to fetch me body
And soul if I once gave ear to
Divinity; and now 'tis too late".

V ii 69 – 72

The scholars leave and Mephistophilis has his last degrading words hinting that after all it was temptation to which Faustus succumbed,

"Twas I, that when thou wert I the way to Heaven,
Damned up thy passage; when thou took'st the book
To view the scriptures, then I turned the leaves
And led thine eye".

V ii 91 – 94.

Man as Conceived by Marlowe

Faustus remains silent, the Angels pronounce his doom. Faustus is not the simple Morality figure caught between Heaven and Hell; his last struggle is still between Heaven, his Hell, and his awareness of his own failure to reach either. In the end it is extinction, not mercy, that Faustus craves,

"O soul, be changed to little water drops
And fall into the ocean, ne'er be found"

V ii 183 – 184

Faustus has become fully conscious of Heaven as well; it stands for a way of life he has rejected as unworthy of him. Faustus is the greatest of Marlowe's aspiring heroes in that his consciousness and his achievement are greater than Tamburlaine's. Faustus is Marlowe's imaginative conception of Man.

Conclusion

"The dramatic core of "Faustus's is man's place in the universe. In this play ideas of individual freedom or subjection are presented in direct conflict. The stature of Dr FAUSTUS is always greater, though its organisation cruder: and the greatness lies in the consistency of Marlowe's attention to a greater matter; to a moral, and not merely an individual tragedy".

3.4.8. The Mighty Line Of Marlowe

Christopher Marlowe was a little under thirty when he died. We voice here the words of the CHORUS in the drama and our own,

Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,

And burn'd in Apollo's laurel bough.

Marlowe revolutionized drama and gave the English speaking world plays of an astounding nature. Daryton speaks of him thus, "Neat Marlowe, bathed in the Thespian springs…….. his raptures were all air and fire, which made his verses clear.

Ben Jonson characterised Marlowe's blank verse as his mighty line. According to Dr O.P.Saxena blank verse is any verse which has a regular metre but no rhyme. The most commonly used metre of blank verse is iambic penta metre. The chief quality of the blank verse is that it approximates to natural speech. Marlowe uses the overflow blank verse in which sense flows from one line into the other and is more flexible. Marlowe used run-on lines which did not end with a pause; for example

Settle thy studies, Faustus, and begin

To sound the depth of that thou wilt profess —-

He saved the blank verse from the monotonous effect which Surrey, Sackville and Norton had in the use of their own Blank verse. Faustus counts his last hour by the striking of the clock. His torment produces those unforgettable lines in which he pleads with time to stand still and he cries,

"O, I'll leap up to my God? Who pulls me down?

See, see where Christ's blood streams in firmament

One drop would save my soul-half a drop: ah my Christ".

Swinburne has this to say on Marlowe's use of blank verse, "Of English blank verse, one of the few highest forms of verbal harmony or poetic expression, the genius of Marlowe was one of the absolute and divine creator. By mere dint of original and god-like instinct he discovered and called into life the hardest and highest form of English verse, the instrument since found possible for one tragic or epic poetry. Before him there was neither genuine blank verse nor a genuine tragedy".

The genius of Marlowe, who wanted a fit channel of utterance, turned instinctively to blank verse of the Senecan school, each line ended with a strong accented syllable and stood by itself separated by a pause from the preceding and following verse. He altered the structure of the metre, varied the pauses, and produced an entirely novel rhythm of surpassing flexibility and power.

Though not the first to use blank verse in English drama, he was the first to exploit its possibilities and make it supreme. His verse is notable for its burning energy, its splendour of diction, its sensuous

richness, its variety of pace, and its reponsiveness to the demands of varying emotions. "Full of bold primary colours, his poetry is crammed with imagery from the classics, from astronomy and from geography, an imagery 'barbaric in its wealth and splendour. Its resonance and power led Ben Jonson to coint the phrase "Marlowe's mighty line".

"We give below a typical example of Marlowe's mighty line as we have in the superb ending of Dr Faustus, when Faustus realizes the near approach of his departure to Hell

Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of Heaven,
That time may cease, and midnight never come;
Fair Nature's eye, rise, rise again, and make
Perpetual day; or let this hour be but
A year, a month, a week, a natural day,
That Faustus may repent and save his soul!
O lente, lente, currite, noctis equi!
(Slowly, slowly, run, ye the night)
The stars move still, time runs, the clockwill strike,
The devil will come, and Faustus must be damn'd.
O, I'll leap up to my God – Who pulls me down? –
See, see; where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!
One drop would save my soul, half a drop: ah, my Christ! –
Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ!
Yet will I call on him : O, spare me, Lucifer! –
Where is it now? 'tis gone: and see, where God
Stretcheth out his arm, and bends his ireful brows!
Mountains and hills, come, come, and fall on me,
And hide me from the heavy wrath of God!

3.4.9. Technical Terms

(a) His waxen wings – (Prologue)

In Greek mythology, Icarus was the son of Daedalus, an architect. King Minos of Crete inprisoned Daedalus and the latter made wings of feathers for himself and his son Icarus. They were attached to the shoulders of the father and the son by means of wax. They flew out from Crete. Daedalus safely reached Sicily. But Icarus, ignoring his father's warning, flew too high. Hence his wings melted and he fell into the sea and died. Faustus is compared to Icarus.

(b) Act I scene i 128 – 131 — Argosies – merchant ships.

Golden fleece – gold. Reference is to a miraculous winged ram with golden fleece in Greek mythology. The fleece was hung on a sacred oak guarded by a dragon. A great hero Jason successfully gained the golden fleece.

(c) I iii 59 – 60 Elysium – The ancient Greeks and the Romans did not believe in the immortality of the soul. Some noble heroes, according to them, were sent to Elysium which was either a part of Hades (beneath the earth) or a differnet region.

(d) II i 153 – 156 — As chaste as Penelope

Penelope was the wife of Ulysses. She waited for him loyally till he returned 20 years afterwards. She had numerous suitors As wise as Saba for wisdom, the Queen of Sheba (Saba). She was a contemporary of Solomon – She was famed for wisdom.

Lucifer or Satan before his fall has been compared to the morning star for beauty and brightness.

(e) Act III i 13 – 15

Maro's golden tomb – Virgil whose three Roman names were Publius Virgilius Maro. Near Naples Faustus saw the tomb of Virgil. Near it was a tunnel running to about 2250 feet.

(f) IV v 25 - 26

As Faustus's end is approaching, he remembers that Jesus, while on the cross, saved a thief who was also crucified – refer the gospel of St. Luke in the New Testament of the Bible Chapter 22. Jesus assured the repentant thief that he would be in Paradise along with Him the very same day.

3.4.10 Sample Questions

1. Consider Dr. FAUSTUS as a Renaissance superman.
2. Write a note on the Temptation of Faustus
3. Consider 'Dr FAUSTUS' as a morality play.
4. "The principal weakness of this play is the lack of an organic plot" – Discuss
5. Dr FAUSTUS as a moral tragedy.
6. Write a note on the structure / pattern of the play
7. Marlowe's Mighty line –comment on Marlowe's poetry and style.
8. Examine Dr FAUSTUS as an allegory.
9. Consider 'Dr FAUSTUS' as a tragedy.

3.4.11 Suggested Reading

1. The Mediaeval Stage – E.K.Chambers.
2. English Miracle Plays – A.W.Pollard.
3. An Introductory Survey of Mediaeval Stage – John Spears.
4. English Drama – R.P.Rossiter.
5. An Article – Some English Plays and Players – A.F. Leach.
6. Middle English Reader – Cook.

Prof. S.N. Kulandaisamy

Lesson – 5

The Comedy of Humours

Contents:

3.5.1 Objectives:

i. to provide the student with a definition of the Comedy of Humours and
ii. its employment by Ben Jonson
iii. to discuss its limitations

3.5.2. Background:

A classicist by training, Jonson borrowed his models from Roman Comedy. What he borrowed, he adapted it to the local English context in a manner that was made to look, natural. His scenic setting is London and his characters, English.

The strength of Jonson's theory consists in his practice of it. The theory of Humours with which Jonson is credited is no abstraction descended from the mediaeval medical theories, but a down-to-earth and practical framework to reflect the tendency of human beings to adhere to an attitude, doggedly.

Jonson wanted to bring to the English theatre his understanding of the function of comedy, as he felt that comedy was given a secondary place, but it deserved better. Comedy was no Cinderella to be confined or regulated to the kitchen, but like the Cinderella of the later half of the story, as attractive and purposeful as its sister, tragedy.

As Gregory Smith opines Jonson's claim rests on his recognition of comedy as an independent literary form. To the theory of Humours, he added the concept of decorum. Jonson does not give us a clear-cut definition or exposition of his theory of Humours till Every Man out of His Humour and The Case is Alter'd.

Like a true classicist, Jonson is worried about the contemporary practice of throwing reality to the winds and substituting it with fanciful frames instead. Jonson is also unhappy that his contemporaries

have not drawn the line between comedy and farce, properly. Jonson insisted that his concern was to employ 'deeds and language, such as men do use'.

Jonson was a satirist by inclination and classical comedy, which was satirical in its intent, suited his interest, to the best. Jonson gave a new direction to comedy as he challenged the age-old habit of speaking of comedy in contrast to tragedy. Jonson took the necessary hints for such an attitude, it appears, from Heinsius to the effect that both tragedy and comedy, delight and teach. The Renaissance critics have worked out a similar premise, namely, while tragedy effects its function through pity and fear, comedy does the same by satirizing human meanness and folly. 'The one deals with things greater and rarer, the other with lesser matters, familiar in general experience; the one works with the emotion and with incidents produced by their clashing with each other and with Fate, the other with the contrasts in character and with incidents or 'intrigue'…(Gregory Smith).

The word 'humour' was in use by the time Jonson thought of giving it a definite shape as a theory, but it was being rather loosely employed. It remained for Jonson, to elevate it to the level of dramatic theory. The notion derived its origin as well as inspiration from a classification in medieval medicine. By way of comparison, one may think of the medical origin of the term 'Katharsis' used by Aristotle, in a definition of tragedy as a literary from.

The mediaeval classification of humours for a medical purpose was attributed to Galen and other physicians of the middle ages. They maintained that the human body has four fluids. The balance of these fluids in the body ensured a healthy life, both physical and mental. A slight influence of the fluids would result in a related deviation in human behaviour, approximately proportional to the quantity or degree of imbalance. Mediaeval medicine believed in imbalance of humours being cured or corrected by their being driven to an excess, resembling somewhat the methods adopted in the practice of Homeopathy.

According to the mediaeval medical theory, there are four fluids in every human body. They are choler, bile, phlegm and blood. Men were said to have four 'complexions' or attitudes or temperaments. Choler, which was characterized as hot and dry was said to be responsible for choleric or angry temperament, in case of its being a dominant quantity in the human body. When the cold and dry bile predominates, human beings tend to be melancholic. When the cold and moist phlegm predominates, people become phlegmatic,-dull and sluggish. If the hot and moist and combination of blood predominates, characters become sanguine,- cheerful and optimistic. The complexion or temperament of an individual was said to be determined by a combination of all the four humours in a specific proportion. After putting his theory into practice in Everyman In His Humour and The Case is Alter'd, Ben Jonson goes on to give a clear definition and elaborate explanation of his theory in Everyman out of His Humour. Humour, according to Jonson, is a substance which can be defined as a quality of air or water. In itself, it holds what Jonson describes them as moisture and 'Fluxure'.

Why, humour as't it ens we thus define it,
To be a quality of air, or water,
And in itself holds these two properties
Moisture and fluxure:…

Like water that flows, or air that flows away from a musical instrument like a horn or trumpet, humour is said to have a flowing quality.

… as for demonstration,
pour water on this floor, 't will wet and run:
likewise the air, forced through a horn or trumpet,
flows instantly away, and leaves behind
A kind of dew; and hence we do conclude
That what so'er hath fluxure and humidity
As wanting power to contain itself,
Is humour.

In every human body, says Jonson, Choler, Melancholy, phlegan and blood flow continually and receive the name,'- humour'.

So in every human body
The Choler, melancholy, Phlegm, and blood,
By reason that they flow continuously
In some one part, and are not continent,
Receive the name of humours.

Thus when one peculiar quality possesses a man is such a fashion that it makes him run or behave in a particular way or fashion, he may be said to be under the dominant influence of a particular humour.

Now thus far
It may, by metaphor, apply itself,
Unto the general disposition.

As when some one peculiar quality
Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw
All his affects, his spirits, and his powers,
In their confluctions, all to run one way,
This may be truly said to be a humour.

Other kinds of absurd affectations can not be described as humours.

The term has been used by the Italian critics of the Renaissance, but by the time of Jonson, the term started being used rather loosely, to describe any deviation from normal behaviour. Even after Jonson came out with his theory, and his rigorous practice of it, contemporary playwrights like Chapman continued to make use of it, in a loose sense.

3.5.3 Its Employment by Jonson:

The employment of the theory of humours by Jonson is more figurative than literal in that it is used to expose the excesses of one human being which work against the interests of the others, rather than being a mere menace to oneself. The psychological aberrations of an individual generate ripples in the society around him and make the lives of those around him, miserable.

Avarice is one such 'humour'. It is used as the guiding trait of individuals in The Alchemist as well as Volpone. Greed is the 'humour' that drives the whole of London with all the cross sections of its society to the (self-advertised) alchemist's den. Jonson takes as his setting the London society in the grip of fear caused by the onset of plague during the years 1610-12. Such was the devastation caused by plague or 'Black Death' as it was called that the owners of houses used to flee from their houses. One such house owner was a man called Lovewit. Afraid of the onset of plague, Lovewit leaves his house to the care of his trusted servant, Jeremy the Butler,and leaves London, to return only when the plague ceases its fury. Jeremy, described by Jonson as the smooth faced butler now left to himself, shows his true colours. He is also human and not free from the temptation of greed. He wants to exploit the absence of his master, to his advantage and makes a heinous plan of making money and merriment. He chooses two accomplices, a man and a woman, Subtle and Dol common. Picked up from the dregs of society and being the lowliest in means, they dance to the tunes of Jeremy, who now assumes the name of Face. They form into an 'indenture tripartite' (a three party agreement'), fool the people of London by advertising Subtle as an alchemist and offering the physical charms of Dol Common, a whore, to the customers, with Face as the promoter-in-charge.

Alchemy had in those days, the two-fold doctrine of the philosopher's stone and the elixir, the former being the principle employed to convert base metals into gold, and the latter, people of sixty to sixteen. This deadly combination, offering a dual temptation, brought the young and the old, the master and the servant, politician as well as the churchman, trader and the buyer alike to the doorstep of the alchemist. The most dangerous among these accursed customers is a man called Sir Epicure Mammon who wants to derive the maximum benefit from the dual benedictions promised by alchemy. His name is self-explanatory. As a votary of Mammon, he wants to amass wealth almost like his tragic counterpart in Marlowe, namely, Barabas the Jew. His visions of lechery and concupiscence are very much like the glorious visions of his tragic brother, Faustus of Marlowe. Even churchmen, like Ananias and Tribulation wholesome inspired more by greed than by a sense of altruism or love of the church, rush to the alchemist with lame excuses for their desire of gold. All these people are fooled to the top of their bent, till the arrival of Lovewit, the master of the house. Face becomes the smooth-faced Butler Jeremy, once again, drives away Subtle and Dol common from the place, and wins over his wit-loving master by offering him, the hand of a beautiful woman, whose company would, according to him, make Love-wit, his master, 'seven years younger'.

Volpone, or The Fox is yet another play like The Alchemist. Cupidity or greed is once again, the guiding factor and the driving force of dramatic action, here as well. Volpone, an old gentleman of Venice, has no heirs. The huge wealth he has therefore, becomes the centre of attraction to greedy customers. The visitors to his house grow by geometric progression. Mosco, his assistant, helps volpone, to fool them all. Voltore, a lawyer, Corbaccio, a miser; Corvino, a wealthy merchant, and Lady would-be are among this huge list. Mosca feeds all these visitors with promises, they are all

'promise-cramned' if one may 'borrow an expression from Hamlet. Mosca sets one customer against the other, cunningly and they become the victims of their own greed.

To the theme of greed is added an yet more nagging trait, jealousy. Jealousy is another 'humour' or trait that is dealt with by Jonson, elaborately even in the character of Kitley in Every Man In His Humour. But the jealous Corvino, who keeps a watch of his wife, all the time, is fooled as much by Mosca's promptings as by his own greater greed for Volpone's wealth and is willing to send his wife to Volpone. Volpone and Mosca however are punished along with other scoundrels, as a result of Volpone's overdoings. Volpone's wealth is confiscated by the State; Mosca is impriosoned for life; Voltore is banished; Corbaccio is asked to hand over his estate to his son; and Corvino loses his wife, having been asked to send her back to her parents, along with her dowry, trebled.

Epicoene or The Silent Woman is a typical Jonsonian study of humours. Here is a character Morose who cannot endure any kind of noise. He chooses a street so narrow at both ends that 'it will receive no coaches, nor 'carts'. He dismisses an assistant for 'having a pair of new shoes that creaked'. What is more, he has a room with double walls and treble ceilings to avoid sounds of any kind.

Morose, an ill-tempered and old bachelor who avoids noise to a degree unbearable to the others, wants to teach a lesson to his nephew, Sir Dauphine Eugenie, (his legal heir), by disinheriting him, as he suspects that the latter and his friends ridicule him for his aversion to noise. So Morose desires to marry and beget a heir.

Even the Servant in the house of Morose, appropriately named 'Mute' is trained to communicate by signs without speaking. Truewit, a friend of Sir Dauphine, wants to prevent the proposed marriage of Morose. Epicoene, ' a silent gentle woman' is proposed in marriage to Morose. Morose, unmoved by the advice of Truewit, goes ahead with the proposal. Only after his marriage, he realizes how talkative Epicoene, is, instead of being the silent beauty he mistake her to be, and added to her voluble tongue, he has the additional menace of visitors pouring into greet him and his wife, making the house noisy, all the time. A disgusted Morose is forced to take the help of his nephew and Truewit to bring a lawyer who would advise him properly about divorce proceedings against Epicoene. Even the plea of Morose that he lacks manliness, fails to procure the much-desired divorce for him. At last Morose' nephew proposes that as long as Morose lives, he shall give her, five hundred pounds a year and his property to her, after his death. Everyone is however thrilled when Sir Dauphine reveals Epicoene to be not a woman at all, but a boy dressed and trained to fool Morose.

Once again in The Bartholomew Fair we find the 'humours' of at least of three important characters making a deep impression on the course of the play. The individual traits of these characters, which do not alter throughout the play, amply illustrate Jonson's theory of humours at a figurative level. The author chooses zeal-of-the-land-Busy to poke his scorn at the puritans. Busy is a religious bigot, exhibiting excess of religious zeal outwardly, but making his stand flexible when it suits him. Johnson wants us to understand that this is merely a show without substance. When John Littlewit and his wife want to visit the Bartholomew Fair to eat the roast pig being sold by Ursula, he tries his best to seek a pretext for him and his family to visit the fair and also to enable them to eat the roast pig as they desire. He says they would go to the fair, and eat the roast pig with a 'reformed' mouth and argues that they would do so to prove that 'we may be religious in the midst of the profane; so it be eaten with a

reformed month, with sobriety and humbleness, not gorged in with gluttony or greediness,..' The whole Littlewit family are ready to go to the Fair and they take Busy along with them, who pretends to demonstrate his hatred of Judaism by a public eating of the roast pig.

We know that the puritans were responsible for the closure of the theatres for a considerable period and writers like Ben Jonson and Shakespeare had to go without work, as a result of this. Shakespeare takes his revenge against the puritans through the character of Malvolis in The Twelfth Night and Ben Jonson through Busy in The Bartholomew Fair .

After the farce of eating the roast pig, Busy rushes to interrupt a puppet show. His arguments against the show have violence without strength and vociferousness without logic. In this he is presented as being one with the puritans whose unreasonable arguments seemed to be borrowed by Busy, also. Lantern Leatherhead refutes the objection that on the stage men dress like women, by demonstrating that the puppets in reatily, are sexless.

Overdo is another misguided Justice of peace who wants to personally investigate the excesses at the Bartholomew Fair, but forgets that if he goes there himself and that too in a disguise, it does not occur to him that he himself might become a victim, which in fact be becomes. Doing one's duty is admirable, but overdoing is condemnable. It is the latter practice he takes to, and that is his 'humour'. Only at the end, he realizes that he is only a human being, with all the frailties of a man, 'I too am Adam flesh and blood'.

Trouble-All is yet another extreme example. His 'humour' it is to trouble all and sundry. He was an officer under Justice Overdo. Having gone mad, he could do nothing except on a warrant from Justice Overdo. He would not drink, eat or even change his shirt without a warrant from his former master, Justice Overdo. He troubles everyone with the question as to by whose warrant they perform the things that they do, making not only his life, but the lives of others he encounters, miserable.

In Every Man out of His Humour Jonson allows his characters to express their traits or humours to an excess with a view to allow them to purge themselves of these traits through what may be described as a comic Katharsis, analogous to Katharsis (or purgation of emotions) in classical tragedies.

Jonson explains his theory of humours, elaborately in the Introduction to Every Man out of His Humour:

> Why, humour, as't is ens we thus define it,
> To be quality of air, or water,
> And in itself holds these two properties,
> Moisture and flexure; …
> … … … … …
> … … .. and hence do we include,
> that whatso'ever hath fluxure and humidity,
> As wanting power to contain itself,

Is humour… … ….
… … Now thus far
It may, by metaphor, apply itself,
Unto the general disposition:
As when some one peculiar quality
Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw.

All his affects, his spirits, and his powers,
In their confluctions, all to run one way.
This may be truly said to be a humour.

Every Man In His Humour which offers a wide variety of characters is another excellent example of Jonson's use of 'humours' (A detailed discussion on this play will be taken up in the lesson 10.2.)

3.5.4 Summary:

Jonson was a classicist by training. Hence he preferred the satiric mode in his comedies. His satire is based on realism. Jonson has observed samples of humanity only to notice their follies. He is interested in depicting these follies in his comedies. Every character in his plays stands for an excess of one trait or the other. Jonson thus exposes what appear to him the characteristic follies of people around him. To make such a presentation effective and purposeful, he chooses samples from the contemporary London society. He exposes the get-rich-quick attitude of his contemporaries through references to alchemy, satirises the excesses of Puritanism through Bartholomew Fair , and pokes fun and scorn at the new vices of London society of his time, namely, drinking and smoking, ' the foam of the one, and the fumes of the other' which in his view, were corrupting London society. He chooses a medium, namely, the comedy of Humours, an idea which he borrows from a mediaeval medical theory, but in practice, he adapts it and transforms it to suit his purpose as no one else could have done. The theory he develops restrains him from presenting an evolution in character, and confines the characters to a single track.

However Jonson was a great influence on great novelists like Charles Dickens. The 'Flat' characters of Dickens owe their being to Jonson's theory and practice.

3.5.5 Key words/Technical terms/ Allusions:

- ⇑ ens : substance
- ⇑ fluxure : the quality or ability or tendency of a substance to flow
- ⇑ humour : a fluid (but Jonson uses it in a metaphorical sense, as he himself clearly states in his introduction to Every Man Out of His Humour

⇑ Heinsius : An ancient Greek thinker

⇑ Plautus and Terence : Well known writers of Roman comedy, whose themes and characters were borrowed by many English writers in general and the Elizabethans in particular, including Ben Jonson.

3.5.6 Sample Questions

1. What is a 'humour'? How does Jonson employ humours in his comedies?
2. How did Jonson employ the comedy of humours to effect realism and satire?
3. State briefly the limitations of the comedy of Humours.

3.5.7 Suggested Reading

1. Sphere History of Literature ; English Drama to 1710, ed. Christopher Ricks (Sphere books, London, Reprint 1987).
2. Alexander Leggatt, Ben Jonson : His Vision And His Art (Methuen, London, Reprint 1981).
3. Karl J. Holzknecht, Outlines of Tudor and Stuart Plays (University Paperback, Methuen, London, Reprint, 1963).
4. Ben Jonson, Volpone, or The Fox, ed. John W. creaser (Hodder And Stoughton, London, 1978).

- Prof. T.Viswanadha Rao

Lesson - 6

Ben Jonson's Every Man in His Humour

Contents

3.6.1 Objectives:

i. To provide the student with a brief background of Jonson in relation to his period and also a brief critical summary of the text.
ii. To discuss the play in the light of Jonson's theory of humours.
iii. To acquaint the student with the significance of the names of many characters in Jonson.
iv. To focus attention on some important characters of the play.

3.6.2 Background- the Writer and the Period

Elizabethan Age in which Ben Jonson was born was known for romantic drama as Shakespeare and all other contemporaries of Ben preferred to break away from the classical traditions of the past, with regard to drama. It is here that Jonson deserves to be remembered as he was determined to follow the masters of Graeco-Roman antiquity and to mould the English theatre in the light of classical norms and dicta. 'Shakespeare follows with docility the course of the stream; Jonson flings his vast bulk against it'. (Legouis and Cazamian).

In terms of literary history, Jonson may be treated as a greater example than Shakespeare. This is so because Jonson did not resign himself to the public taste, rather he would design it according to certain moral criteria in addition to literary criteria. What appeared to him unacceptable was rejected by him outright and he would not approve something simply because common people accepted it or applauded it. He wished to set a trend and create a taste for the pubic to follow rather than follow the taste of the public. Jonson was a realist, a satirist and a moralist, all rolled into one. In this mission, his great learning was his aid.

Jonson presented a reliable picture of Elizabethan society with all its manners and customs to the minutest details and showed the sordid realities of life as it was lived in Elizabethan times and did not romanticize it. However, Jonson sported with the follies and not with the crimes of humanity. His satire was of the gentle Horatian kind rather than the bitter, biting and venomous satire of Juvenal. Plautus, Terence and even Aristophanes might have served as his models, but his characters are all rooted in the English soil.

He says he is against, 'Tales, tempests and such like drolleries' and pokes fun at 'Servant monsters' (like Caliban in Shakespeare's The Tempest). He claims that he prefers to speak about real men and women and not monsters. But the overemphasis on one specific trait in the characters of his creation to the exclusion of the others, fails to account for the presence of other traits in the character of individuals which would also serve to form a full-fledged personality. The treatment of love which forms a basis of many Elizabethan comedies is almost conspicuous by its absence in Jonson.

However, credit must be given to Jonson for bringing and establishing comedy on par with tragedy in English drama. In fact even in the classical drama of ancient Greece and Rome, tragedy was given a primary place and comedy was relegated to a secondary place. The Cinderella of comedy was transformed by Jonson if not into an angel of light, at least into an equally acceptable and respectable literary form. This is the single and singular contribution of Jonson to the theatre.

The flat, unevolving characters of Dickens are directly descended from Ben Jonson's characters based on his theory of humours. What Jonson borrowed from the classical comedy was adapted to contemporary concerns. London and not Rome or Athens, was the scene of Jonson's dramatic action. Jonson had also recognized comedy as independent a literary form as tragedy. Jonson successfully put an end to the practice of speaking of comedy in contrast to tragedy as it was the practice of many Italian critics of the Renaissance.

Comedy, according to Jonson, deals with the follies and not with the crimes of individuals. Both tragedy and comedy offer a kind of corrective to the behaviour of individuals with a view to show them a better way of living. Even a farce could evoke laugher. Hence true comedy had to do something better. Jonson felt it necessary to redefine the idea of humour and he discovered the source in medical theories of the Middle Ages.

One must note that though Jonson was an ardent classicist, he did not blindly borrow his models from the Greeks or Romans. The comedy of humours in practice could become a success only in the hands of a great master like Jonson, as it had many limitations. Characters can become mechanical or robot-like when they are confined to a single trait, a danger which the theory of Humours, attracted as in practice it amounted to characters being cast in a specific mould, almost a pre-framed mould. The evolution in character which is often found in the plays of other writers, and which helps to reflect a steady growth in the characters, cannot be expected in a comedy of Humours, as the characters are committed to a particular trait from which they have no escape. The characters of Jonson therefore, are 'flat' characters (if one were to borrow E.M. Forster's classification of characters in a novel as 'round' and 'flat' based on their ability to evolve or inability to grow), exhibiting no organic growth of evolution, steadily or otherwise. In a such a system, there is always the danger of the reader or the audience being tired or bored. In the hands of a lesser writer than Jonson, such characters should have become merely contemptible puppets.

3.6.3 The Writer – His Life and Works:

'O rare Ben Jonson' was how Jonson was saluted by the epitaph-writer of Jonson. William Drummond of Hawthornden, describes him as 'a great lover and praiser of himself, a contemner and scorner of others; given rather to lose a friend' than a jest;…He is passionately kind and angry;..' Thus Jonson as an individual was a man of strong temperament and a fighter, literally and figuratively. Ben Jonson was born in 1572, in West minster. Being a posthumous son, he was broght up by his mother and his step father, a brick layer. Jonson's enemies were to make fun of him later, by telling him to go back to his brick laying; giving up his writing, -'divers think fit he should return to his old trade of brick laying again.' One is reminded of what Keats was told by an editor of a journal, who opposed him, namely, that he should go back to his pills, being an apothecary. He studied in the West minster school under the able guidance of William Camden. But probably for financial reasons, he was taken out of school and was made to join the brick laying. He was a soldier, and participated in the war in flanders. He was married in 1594. He was an actor for some time, played the role of Hieronymo in The Spanish Tragedy. The Isle of Dogs which he completed in 1597, landed him in jail, for 'seditious and slanderous matter', but as no substantial evidence could be found, he was released.

Ben Jonson began his career with Every Man in His Humour. The play was produced in the curtain theatre in 1598 by the Lord Chamberlin's men. Shakespeare was reported to have been one of the actors in this performance. Soon, he had a quarrel with Gabriel Spencer, whom he killed in a duel. He had the luck of not being hanged for the crime, as there was an old law in England at that time which protected the highly educated from capital punishment, if they committed a crime for the first time. But Jonson was branded on the thumb. While in prison, Jonson was converted into a Roman Catholic and he did not return to the Anglican church till the very end of his life. Like Marlowe, Jonson was also rumoured to be a spy of the government. In 1599, Jonson came out with his Every Man out of His Humour in which he elaborately dealt with the theory of humours which he set out to employ in all his dramas.

The war of the theatres of 1599-1601 saw Jonson as one of the main champions. Sejanus, a tragedy on a Roman theme, failed on the stage (1603).

Jonson now looked to the writing of Masques, Court entertainments, to eke out his livelihood. He was certainly a great writer of Masques. He collaborated with Inigo Jones, a great artist and a spectacular designer. Jonson presents him as Lantern Leatherhead in Bartholomew Fair. Once again in 1604, Jonson ran into a controversy with Eastward Ho! In collaboration with Marston and Chapman. They were accused of satirising James-I and imprisoned for a while. Volpone, Epicoene, and The Alchemist followed in a quick succession.

In 1616, his plays came out in a definitive edition, - a Folio edition. In recognition of his services to the realm of letters, Jonson was rewarded with a pension. The Staple of News published in 1623 is regarded as the last play being worthy of recognition among his last plays.

During his sickness as a paralytic, he wrote The New Inn, The Magnetic Lady, and Tale of a Tub. He breathed his last in 1637.

3.6.4 Analysis of the Text

Jonson begins his drama by prefixing it with a prologue. Some may turn into poets, to eke out their livelihood, but neither art nor nature may improve their competence. Jonson says he will not stoop down like some of them. He would not condone the evil customs of his age, even if it were to delight the audience. The poets as well as the audience must scrupulously avoid such deviations and aberrations.

Jonson particularly hates unrealistic and unnatural events. Drama should not present in a minute what requires many years for its fulfillment. A child in cradle clothes should not be represented as growing into full manhood, leading to old age, in a trice. High-sounding words and rusty swords should not be employed to create artificial effects. The audience would rather be pleased with realistic plays unlike the ones in which devices like a throne coming down from above, to please the young boys; or cannon-ball rolled on the floor to create an impression of thunder; or drums used to announce a storm.

Jonson therefore prefers realistic deeds of ordinary life coupled with language used in day-do-day transactions. Comedy, according to Jonson, should concern itself with the follies of men and not with their crimes. A comedy requires men and not monsters, as its characters.

ACT I, Scene i

It is a fine morning. Old Knowell, a gentle man, bids his servant Brainworm to wake up his young master. Left to himself, Knowell observes that his son is a scholar with academic reputation in the universities. He recollects his own youth when he was also a dreamer like his son, dreaming on poetry which, according to him, is an idle, fruitless and unprofitable art which he mistook it for a mistress of all knowledge when he was young. But time qualified his opinion.

While old Knowell is thus engaged in his ruminations, Master Stephen arrives there to visit his friend Edward Knowell, the son of Old Knowell. He asks for a book on hawking or hunting, from Old Knowell. Knowell is not happy, but Stephen tells him that hawking and hunting are more studied than Greek and Latin. Old Knowell sticks to his opinion that hawking and hunting are not only a waste of money, but also of time as well. Stephen then asks Knowell as to what better pursuits he can indulge in to while away time, if not usefully employ it. Stephen thereupon asks Old Knowell as to what best he should do to keep himself engaged and Old Knowell comes out with his opinion in a long speech which somewhat resembles Polonius's advice to Laertes.

Old Knowell asks Stephen to be wise, and practice how to thrive, by not squandering money on frivolous objects of fancy. One should not mix with all kinds of society. One should join when invited to join a society which suits his rank and dignity. Otherwise, one may lose his reputation, cheaply. One should be careful in exhibiting bravery only in such places and in such a fashion that his reputation would be kept up. Otherwise his misplaced bravery may land him in trouble. One must cut his coat according to the cloth available with him, 'contain yourself; / Not, that your sail be bigger than your boat:/ But moderate your expenses now, at first,…'

Old Knowell also warns Stephen not to live merely on his family reputation, as it is merely borrowed and not one's own.

A servant who comes in with a message is insulted by Stephen, without any provocation. An angry Knowell asks Stephen to leave the place.

The servant desires to deliver a letter to Master Edward Knowell. The letter is from Master Wellbred, whose sister is married to Master Kitley. Old Knowell receives the letter, claiming himself to be Edward Knowell. The letter, read by Old Knowelll, exposes the myth of Wellbred's civility, advertised by Edward Knowell, to his father. Old Knowell is disillusioned that his son should keep company to such unworthy friends. He describes Wellbred as a profane and dissolute wretch. Affection, he concludes, makes every one a fool, and in particular, a father. Knowell instructs Brainworm to deliver the letter to his son, without letting him know that it was opened by him.

Left to himself, Old Knowell expresses his desire not to restrain his son, as such a restraint may be counter productive, and hence one is often won more by love, than fear.

ACT I, Scene ii

Brainworm unwittingly reveals to Master Edward Knowell the fact that his father had opened the letter and read it. Now Edward Knowell reads the letter and laughs at the contents. He is convinced as to why his father is angry with the contents of the letter. After reading the letter, Edward Knowell leaves the place, along with Stephen.

ACT I, Scene iii

Matthew goes to Cob's house to meet Bobadil. Cob is a delightful personality and traces his lineage from Herring, the king of Fish. Matthew is surprised to learn from Cob that Bobadil lodges in his house, as a guest. He is unable to believe that Bobadil can stay in such a base and obscure place. Bobadil is in love with Mistress Bridget, sister of Master Kitley. He visits their house daily and sometimes he goes on reciting verses, 'Poyetry' as cob calls them. Cob dislikes him for his verses as well as his habit of smoking tobacco. Besides, Bodadil has borrowed forty shillings from his wife.

ACT I, Scene iv

Bobadil tells Matthew that the night before, he had been invited to supper by Master Wellbred and others. He asks Matthew not to reveal his address to anyone, his reason being that he dislikes being too popular, but in reality Bobadil is a snob who does not want to be discovered in such a humble lodging. Bobadil boasts that he values privacy above all else. Matthew has Kyd's Spanish Tragedy with him. Bobadil admires the work and wishes that others may also write like Kyd. Matthew starts reciting the popular lines from Kyd, like for instance, 'oh eyes, no eyes, but fountains fraught with tears!'/ 'o life, no life, but lively from of death' etc.

Then Matthew starts reading from lines composed by himself. The discussion passes on to Matthew's mention of Master Wellbred's elder brother Downright who threatens to 'bastinado' Matthew.

The word 'bastinado' changes the mood of Bobadil. He takes up an elaborate discussion of the various kinds of thrusts and defences in martial arts with some pretended practical demonstration. Bobadil promises Matthew to teach him the art of self-defence.

ACT I, Scene v

Bobadil tries to demonstrate to Matthew a thrust in martial arts which goes by the name of 'Passado'. Bobadil invites Matthew to a private place where they can successfully continue their practice. He tells Matthew that he can stop even a bullet with his art. He proposes that they go to the house of Master wellbred, to meet Downright.

Act II, Scene i

We are now in Kitley's house. Kitley has a word of praise for Cash (in his absence), to Downright. Cash was brought up by Kitley and now he becomes a faithful assistant of Kitley. Kitley now speaks of his apprehensions about Welbred, to Downright. He is worried that Welbred who was once a gentleman had of late fallen into bad company, and has in fact reduced his house to a tavern for wanton and lust ful pursuits with his 'wild associates' who 'swear, leap, drink, dance, and revel night by night' causing great concern. Downright seconds Kitley's opinion but asks him as to why he doesn't discuss the matter directly with Wellbred. Kitley expresses his fear that his advice may not be taken in the right spirit. Besides, he and his associates may join in finding fault with Kitley, himself. He is also afraid that he may be accused of jealousy as he has a fair wife and a sister who is a maiden, in his house. His brother may accuse him of making a pretext to throw him out of the house. Bobadil and Matthew who go there just at that moment, inquire about Wellbred only to know that he is not there. Downright who wants to answer his brother's visitors, is called, a 'scavenger' by Bobadil and Matthew leaves the place. An angry Downright vows to take revenge against Bobadil and his associates. Kitley tires to pacify him by asking him to follow 'the soft persuading way' to win over people, rather than 'enforcing the consent'. Kitley, a jealous husband, suspects Wellbred and his associates and decides to keep an eye on them, before they can transgress the limits of courtesy and decorum.

Dame Kitley who comes in suspects that Kitley has a fever, and after she leaves the place after a kind word or two, Kitley grows even more jealous. The fever from which he suffers, he says, is jealousy. He compares jealousy to a plague which infects the brain. It starts at first by working on one's imagination and then goes on to wreck one' reason. An unsuspecting mind becomes a victim of this infection, unnoticedly. However, Kitley checks himself and wants to get rid of his fears:

Well, I will once more strive,
In spite, of this black cloud, myself to be,
And shake the fever that thus shakes me.

Act II, Scene ii

Brainworm, a creature of Old Knowell, takes on the disguise of a maimed soldier to follow Master Knowell and Stephen. Brainworm begs a penny or two from them under the pretext that he is out of means, and that they appear to be kind gentlemen. On being asked by Edward Knowell as to

where he served, he answers he served in many places including Bohemia, Hungary, Dalmatia, Poland and many other places. Noticing a sword that Brainworm carries, Stephen wants to buy it from him. Edward Knowell tells him not to purchase the sword, but Stephen insists.

Act II, Scene iii

Old Knowell is still haunted by the letter addressed to his son, and is deeply disturbed about the contents of that letter. The change of manners and morals, pains him. He reflects about an earlier generation when he himself was young and when no one dared to question the authority of the elderly people. He bemoans that all such values are now forgotten, 'youth, from their fear,/ And age, from that which bred it, good example.' Children seem to be taught discourtesy, bawdy words and songs from their infancy. The corruption of the young, springs directly from the corruption of their elders, as the elders themselves are now corrupted. What is more, in order to cover their own deviant ways, they try to teach the same kind of manners to their children, without even a little sense of shame. In fact, they spoil the children in more ways than one. Old Knowell congratulates himself and pats himself on the back that he is not one of them, as he has not taught his son to move with women of loose character nor ways of cheating others nor even the evil practice of amassing money by hook or by crook. He was not a glutton either and did not teach his son to eat extravagantly, to end up in ill-health.

Presently, Brainworm who enters the scene, begs alms of his master. So perfect is Brainworm in his disguise that his master hardly identifies him. As Brainworm continues in his vein, Old Knowell is irritated and admonishes him with a long speech. Knowell expresses wonder at Brainworm's appeals and chides him for being degenerate and base. If he were a man, he should not stoop to beg, says Knowell. Brainworm should be ashamed to beg as he can make use of his healthy limbs to seek some employment and live by 'honest labour'. It is unfortunate that men like him lead a life of sloth, like beetles on dung. Brainworm calls himself 'Fitzsword' and expresses his willingness to work, if only an offer of employment, comes his way. Knowell asks Brainworm to follow him, while the latter laughs inwardly at his master's inability to identify him. He secretly resolves to abuse his master in such a fashion that he will never again respect any soldier.

Act III, Scene i

Edward Knowell meets Wellbred to tell him that the latter's letter has been wrongly delivered into the hands of his father. He introduces Bobadil, Matthew, and Stephen to Wellbred. Stephen claims to be afflicted with melancholy and the fashionable Matthew, like a true Elizabethan, claims that he also suffers from the same humour and when in a fit of melancholy, he says, he would write many sonnets. Bobadil indulges in false boasts of his martial exploits, most Falstaff-like. He has the audacity to claim that his sword or rapier is as good as the mythical Morglay, Excalibur, and Durindana. Bobadil discredits the rapier Stephen has purchased from Brainworm. All of a sudden, Brainworm arrives there. Confronted by Stephen, he confesses that the rapier is not a Toledo. Brainworm takes Master Knowell aside only to tell him that he is followed by his father.

Act III, Scene ii

Once again we come across jealous Kitley who refuses to leave the house even for an hour or two for business transactions. He is afraid that two hours can be a long time for his wife to be false. He

indulges in stupid reasoning:

Who will not judge him worthy to be robb'd
That sets his door wide open to a thief …
… … … … … …
you must be then kept up, else, and well watch'd.
… … … … … …
… … … He that lends
His wife, if she be fair, or time or place,
Compels her to be false. I will not go!

But he realizes that he has to go, to obtain important bonds. He goes, asking him to bring him word if Wellbred or his associates happen to visit his house, in his absence.

Wellbred comes in with Edward Knowell, Brainworm, Matthew, Bodail and Stephen. Bobadil advocates what he believes to be the virtues of tobacco, to Knowell and others. Cob has a dig at Bobadil and others who advocate tobacco, by calling it 'roguish tobacco', a poison and concludes, 'Why, it will stifle them all in the end,…' Matthew however describes it as 'divine tobacco'.

Act III, Scene iii

A jealous Kitley is told that many strangers visited his house in his absence. Kitley quickly concludes that he has been cuckolded as his wife proves faithless. Cob goes to justice Clement with a complaint about Bobadil and his associates, as Bobadil has beaten him. The reason is Cob objected to their smoking of tobacco. But the judge, instead of punishing Bobadil, asks Cob to be taken to jail, as he has abused what Clement describes it (tobacco) as a herb, 'received in the courts of princes, the chambers of nobles, the bowers of sweet ladies, the cabins of soldiers!' Clement then goes on to advice Knowell that he should allow his son to have his way and learn through experience, rather than restrain him.

Act IV, Scene i

Dame Kitley is irritated with the jealous nature of her husband. Wellbred and his associates start reading some poems. Downright dislikes this and threatens them. Kitley arrives to put an end to the quarrel. But when Dame Kitley praises Master Knowell of all the visitors, Kitley becomes jealous, once again.

Act IV, Scene ii

Cob returns, to tell Tib of his humiliation at the hands of Bobadil.

Act IV, Scene iii

Wellbred is happy to learn that Edward Knowell loves his sister Bridget.

Act IV, Scene iv

Brainworm (in his disguise) tells knowell that Edward Knowell knows all that he himself knows. Knowell is angry with Brainworm for revealing it, but he does not know that he is talking to no other than Brainworm.

Act IV, Scene v

Bobadil continues to add boast to boast, as Edward Knowell listens to him, in wonder. Bobadil comes out with a plan to fight whole armies, by challenging twenty of them at a time, and finish them score by score. An angry Down right rushes to the spot and beats Bobadil. A frightened Matthew runs away.

Act IV, Scene vi

Wellbred rightly remarks that jealousy is a poison which Kitley has taken. Brainworm now takes on another disguise, the disguise of Justice Clement's assistant. Kitley at last opens his mind to Cash and asks him to watch Dame Kitley, in his absence. Dame Kitely, accompanied by Cash, goes to Cob's house, on the advice of Wellbred, who puts a doubt in the mind of the Dame, about Kitley. But no sooner than they leave, Kitely comes in.

Act IV, Scene vii

Matthew and Bobadil mistake the disguised Brainworm for the Justice's man and complain against Downright.

Both Dame Kitely and Kitely meet at Cob's house, only to accuse each other. Brainworm disguises himself as a sergeant and arrests Stephen.

Act V, Scene i

All the characters assemble at Justice Clement's house, and the misunderstandings are cleared. Edward Knowell and Bridget are blessed by Justice Clement and all's well that ends well.

3.6.5 A Brief critical evaluation of the literary text and the writer's work:

Such was the reputation of Ben Jonson during the seventeenth century, that after his death more than fifty poems were written in his commemoration, in four years. He was described as 'our poet first in merit, as in love.' He was the progenitor of the 'Tribe of Ben'. Wycherley, Congreve and Shadwell were all profoundly influenced by him. Novelists like Fielding and Dickens were full of praise for Jonson. From the time of Dr. Samuel Jonson however, his reputation was on the decline. Alexander Pope dismissed his worth as trash and Colerdige treated his work like an extinct species, more honoured for its rarity. Eliot speaks of 'a conspiracy of approval' about Jonson's work, a work which was to be read by 'historians and antiquaries'. David Garrick felt that ' a satirical history' of Jonson's age was a must for those who desired to understand him.

Jonson's plays have a local colour. They are full of the social conventions of the age he lived in. This may not prevent his characters from a sense of universality, as after all, they are essentially human. But the language associated with the specific customs of the age does present some difficulties to the reader. Jonson himself remarks that he loves ' pun and .. language' which is 'plain', but the expression associated with customs peculiar to the age, do pose difficulties for readers of later times'.

Jonson's comedies present a graphic picture of the London of his times. But an accusation that is often levelled against his comedies is that they are deficient in proper feminine interest. He is no good at presenting the women, with grace, nor are they given many dialogues. In spite of all this, Jonson is certainly rated to be one of the greatest dramatists that England ever produced.

Every Man In His Humour was staged at first in 1598 and was well received by the audiences. Shakespeare was supposed to have acted the role of old Knowell. On the stage, the play continued its success. In 1752, Garrick, it is reported, acted the role of Kitley. Charles Dickens, we are told, played the role of Bobadil.

Like the other plays of Jonson, Every Man In His Humour made use of the theory of Humours, which he himself developed. But contrary to the popular belief that is often held, namely, that his vision had been limited and restrained as a result, it may be argued that in practice, Jonson was no strict adherent to any theory, including his own. Martin Seymour Smith opines that 'the achievement of his plays transcended theoretical considerations.'

Jonson was a classicist and like a true classicist he employed comedy for social satire. The aberrations of individuals attracted him more than anything else, as a favourite topic for his comedies. Jonson wanted however to sport with human follies, not with crimes.

vi.I. Kitley and the chief humour:

The chief 'humour' of the play is jealousy and Kitley represents the extreme limit of this humour in the play. He is afraid that his brother Wellbred and his wild associates may ruin the peace and decorum of the house. He tells Downright that he fights shy to admonish them for fear that he may be branded as jealous. The reason he gives is that he has a fair wife, and a virgin sister in his house. Ironically however, Kitley is indeed jealous. To allow these people to visit his house frequently, bemoans Kitley, is only to 'lend scorn and envy opportunity/ To stab my reputation and good name'.

Kitley is afraid that no woman can be chaste for long in places in which wild associates like those of Wellbred continue to make a resort:

> When mutual appetite doth meet to treat,
> And spirits of one kind and quality
> Come once to parley in the pride of blood,
> It is no slow conspiracy that follows.

Kitley therefore concludes he should stay at house for long spells, to prevent any untoward incidents taking place. He thinks only his physical presence can prevent them from mischief:

My presence shall be as an iron bar,
- 'twixt the conspiring motions of desire:

Like a slave being checked by a glance from the master's eye, the wild associates of Wellbred can be checked by his presence.

Kitely struggles to control his jealousy, unfortunately in vain. In what looks like a serio-comic soliloquy, he debates to himself that lust is like a plague, a contagion that spreads from judgement to memory, infecting the brain, and that from there, it spreads to every sensitive part of the body. He laments:

Ah! But what misery is it to know this!
or, knowing it, to want the mind's erection
In such extremes? Well, I will once more strive,
In spite of this black cloud, myself to be,
And shake the fever off that thus shakes me.

Such is the suspicion in the mind of Kitley that he does not wish to go out of the house even on business transactions, - ' I will not go. Business, go by for once', he says . No one should give scope to the others, by offering them an indirect temptation, he argues:

Who will not judge him worth to be robb'd,
That sets his doors wide open to a thief;
And shows the felon where his treasure lies?

After all this deliberation, Kitely reaches the inevitable conclusion that confirms the acute degree of his jealousy:

He that lends
His wife, if she be fair, or time or place,
Compels her to be false.

Kitely tells Cash, his assistant in business and financial matters, that his brain appears to him like an hour-glass wherein his thoughts run like sands, filling up time. At first he wants to take Cash into confidence, but abandons the plan halfway, as he is worried and concludes that no one can be trusted in such delicate matters.

When young Knowell is praised by his wife and sister, Kitley thinks his suspicions confirmed and concludes that he may be his wife's lover, after all. But when Wellbred assures Dame Kitely that

Cob's wife is not to be trusted with her character, she goes to Cob's house to verify the truth or otherwise.

In a comic confusion, Kitley goes to Cob's house to check whether his wife and his sister had gone there, as he suspects their integrity and hastily concludes that the wild gallants that visited Cob's house in his absence might have been in their company. All the comic entanglements are cleared, thanks to the intervention of Justice Clement and all's well that ends well as Kitely, like the others in the play, stands corrected.

10.2.vi. II. Bobadil

Bobadil is a boastful character like Falstaff. His prototype is the Miles Gloriosus of Plautus, the Roman dramatist. His imagination however is of a higher order. His fantasy of countering whole armies score by score is a piece of imaginative vision that deserves comic applause. His skill as a soldier is confined to his words and his demonstrations of various thrusts of the dagger which he speaks of have more a theoretical value than practical application in his case. He pretends some dignity even when he is exposed as a fake. He lacks the courage to act when required, but there is a touch of pathos in the yawning gulf between his boasts and the style of living into which he is forced as a result of lack of means to lead a better life.

A false sense of dignity compels him to hide his real address as he lives under a rather humble roof. He pretends that he does not give his address to others, as his popularity may draw crowds and that he hates the consequent advertisement.

Like several other characters in Ben Jonson, and in particular, a character like Subtle in The Alchemist, Bobadil makes use of technical phraseology associated with the martial arts current in his time. Trying to impress the young Matthew who visits him, he speaks about Jeromimo de Caranza, an author of the theory of duels, and lectures to him on various kind of thrusts, with the sword, to impress him with his knowledge. He talks at length about 'stoccata' (a thrust), 'passada' ('a thrust, we are told, which a swords man attempts with one foot, forward) Punto, reverso, imbroccata, and montanto. He reminds one of subtle in The Alchemist who wants to fool his customers by jargon associated with alchemy and astrology of Jonson's time. To Edward Knowell, he speaks about the mythical magic swords of a historic past, - Morglay, Excalibur, and Durindana, to impress him with his knowledge of the history of swords and swordsmanship. His art is merely confined to his words, as we realize the truth of it when Downright beats him, easily.

Another funny feature about Bobadil is his love of smoking and tobacco. Jonson hated drinking and smoking, -'the foam of the one and the fumes of the other' corrupting London Society. He therefore chooses Bobadil as the butt of ridicule and makes him praise tobacco. Bobadil swears to Stephen and others, about the so-called virtue of tobacco by describing it as 'divine'-' only thus, much, by Hercules, I do hold it, and will affirm it, before any prince in Europe, to be the most sovereign, and precious weed, that ever the earth tendered to the use of man'.

But we pity Bobadil when we realize that he does all this, only keep his body and soul together as when after a long and impressive lecture to Matthew in Act I, Scene iv, he is reduced to accept two shillings from matthew with a sense of resignation, -'…but come. We will have a bunch of radish, and

salt, to taste our wine; and pipe of tobacco, to close the orifice of the stomach…', a poor compromise indeed for a man of Bobadil's high-sounding utterances. We are told that Bobadil was a Spanish name. Like Falstaff, his superior brother, Bobadil is also a highly original creation of Ben Jonson. He is no routine bully or braggart of the ancient comedy. Arthur Sales draws our attention to the fact that the boasters of the Greek comedy are wealthy, arrogant, and given to vices. Bobadil, on the other hand, is a poorman, and has no vices. Besides, here is a man who satisfies himself with a common man's food, unlike his bigger brothers of ancient comedy.

10.2.vi.iii. Names in Jonson's Play:

Yet another important thing to be noticed in the plays of Ben Jonson is the names he gives to characters with a purpose. The names are revelatory of their character and are self-explanatory.

The name of Kitley is traced by Arthus Sales to 'kittle' meaning 'ticklish', or 'touchy'. Martin Seymour Smith refers to the verb 'Kittle' as indicating 'to stir, with feeling or motion, usually pleasurable'. He goes on to conclude that Kitley is a Voyeur, as psychologists would describe such a person. Kno'well is thus named because he knows well the habits of his son, but trying to know them too well, lands him in trouble. Brainworm, true to his name, has a worm in his brain and he will not allow even his master to rest content. Downright, as his name indicates is utterly undiplomatic and blunt. Cob's name is self-explanatory, as in Jonson's time, water-bearers, selling water in 'tankards' were named 'cobs'. Justice Clement is a merciful man, exhibiting 'clemency' or mercy.

Similarly, in The Alchemist, the names of subtle, Face, and Dol Common are self-explanatory in their connotations. Subtle is the name of a pseudo-philosopher who poses himself to be an alchemist, astrologer and philosopher, all rolled into one. His behaviour and his jargon as well are very subtle, - man of subtle ways, indeed. Jeremy the Butler assumes the name of 'Face' as the smooth-faced butler now changes into a rogue with another face, placing himself in the role of an accomplice to Subtle and Dol Common, to fool the people of the town with a get-rich-quick desire. Dol Common is thus called, because she is a whore, a woman common to all. Lovewit, the master of the house is thus called because he is a true lover of wit and forgives Jeremy, his servant, in spite of all that he dons in the master's absence, as he is thrilled by the skill with which the rogue fools all and sundry. The best of the names in The Alchemist is however the name of Sir Epicure Mammon, as his name implies the dangerous combination of hedonism and gluttony. Sir Epicure is thus called because his desire for fulfillment of lust is out of all proportion to the ability of ordinary human beings. He wants to take the help of 'elixir', one of the principles of alchemy, to make himself so strong that he may have sexual pleasure with many women. He thus proves himself a true Bohemian, a hedonist deserving the name of 'Sir Epicure'. As for the second part of his name, 'mammon', it must be said that he wants to amass infinite wealth like his tragic counterpart in Marlowe, the Jew of Malta, Barabas. He wants to fulfil this desire with the help of the 'philosopher's stone' that the alchemist subtle, he thinks, can make use of, to his advantage. Mammon, we know, is one of the host of fallen angels in Paradise Lost whom Milton describes as having his eyes directed to the gilded pavement of heaven, rather than to its spiritual glory.

In Bartholomew Fair, a religious bigot is rightly named zeal-of-the-land-Busy, as he is always busy with fanatic religious zeal. It is no secret that Jonson hated the Puritans, as they were responsible for the closure of the theatres for a long time. A woman character, Dame purecraft, is also aptly named thus as She is crafty,- purely crafty, and nothing else. The Justice in the play is described as overdo as he exceeds his calling.

3.6.6 Summary:

Jonson was a satirist who believed in focusing on the follies of people. The emerging vices of his time were drinking and smoking, 'the foam of the one, and the fumes of the other, corrupting London society'. Jonson has also a dig at the Puritans as they were responsible for the closure of theatres for a rather long while. The other vice which is universal is human greed which Jonson makes a subject for scathing satire in The Alchemist .

Jonson has built a whole theory of comedy of humours, borrowing his clue from the mediaeval medical theory of humours in the body. Jonson who elaborates the theory in Every Man out of His humour, uses it figuratively to point to a specific trait or attitude or disposition in an individual or individuals. But as Martin Seymour Smith has rightly pointed out, his plays transcend theoretical considerations.

Jealousy is the chief Humour of the play. Kitley is the chosen representative of this green-eyed monstrosity. Know'ell is one of those characters who know too much and too well and expect others to fall in line, with disastrous consequences. Brainworm has a worm in his brain and sometimes he successfully injects the worm into the brains of others as well, disturbing their places, as well. We have Bobadil with his harmless boasts, trying to enliven the comic scenario. Justice Clement, although capable of being delightfully idiosyncratic at times, proves to be the right person to clear the complications in the play, and all's well that ends well.

3.6.7 Key Words/Technical terms:

⇑ Humour : a fluid, in medical terminology of the Middle ages, but used by Jonson to mean any affectation, mood or disposition of an individual which influences and drives the individual in his actions. But for such a behaviour, no definite reason can be assigned.

⇑ Hawking and hunting : a craze of Jonson's day among youth, there being many books on these subjects. One such was a book called The Gentleman's Academie, published in 1486.

⇑ Physnomy : A word used by Edward Knowell in Act I, Scene ii. It was used as a short form in Jonson's day for 'Physiognomy'.

⇑ Poyetry : 'Poetry' wrongly spelt thus by Cob.

⇑ The houses of the brain : Kitley uses the expression in the sense of an anatomical divison of the brain, in to three ventricles described as 'houses' with the front ventricle representing imagination, the middle, standing for reason, and the ventricle at the back, standing for memory.

⇑ The mad Thespian girls : The Nine Muses are thus described by Wellbred in Act III, Scene i.

⇑ Morglay, Excalibur, Durindana : famous swords mentioned in romances, sometimes endowed With magical powers

⇑ Punto, reverso, Imbroccata, montanto : the various thrusts and strokes with a sword or dagger, technically described.

3.6.8 Sample Questions:

1. Illustrate Jonson's theory of Humours in practice, taking Every Man In His Humour as a representative sample.
2. Write a note on one of the following characters:
   (1). Bobadil. (2) Kitley

3.6.9 Suggested Reading:

1. Ben Jonson's Everyman in His Humour, ed. Martin Seymour Smith (Ernest Benn Ltd., London, Reprint, 1979).
2. Ben Jonson's Everyman in His Humour, ed. Arthur Sale (Oxford University Press, Delhi, First Indian Impression, 1977).
3. Alexander Leggatt, Ben Jonson : His Vision And His Art (Methuen, London, 1981).
4. Karl J. Holzknechat, Outlines of Tudor and Stuart Plays (1497- 1642) (University Paperbacks, Methuen, London, Reprint 1963).

- Prof. T.Viswanadha Rao

Lesson - 7

Webster: 'The White Devil'

Contents

3.7.1 Objectives:

i. To provide the student with a background in terms of literary history, placing the writer in a proper perspective.
ii. To focus on the Writer's vision and philosophy of life and the artistic or literary devices he uses to achieve this purpose.
iii. To offer a critical analysis of the prescribed text, taking its various thematic and structural problems or aspects into consideration.
iv. To acquaint the student with problems relating to the text, along with some possible solutions.

3.7.2 Background – The writer and the period

'An Italianate Englishman is the devil incarnate' is how Thomas Nashe characterizes the influence of Renaissance Italy on England. The influence of Italy is paradoxical in the sense that while great scholars have made Italy the seat and even the leader of learning in Renaissance times, it was also responsible for court intrigues, corruption, poison, murders and the like in Europe. The statement of the university wit, Thomas Nashe, should be read in this light.

It is not for nothing that Webster chooses Italian settings and even stories based on Italian chronicles for his dramas. The already vicious scene of Italy was further ruined as a result of Machiavelli's teachings meant for princes and those in power. Through The Prince, the Italian political thinker has advocated a strong-arm tactics in matters of governance. He firmly believed that a ruler ought to be more feared them loved. Such was his influence on Elizabethan Drama that Marlowe

introduces Machiavelli as a character, to speak the prologue of The Jew of Malta, full of opportunistic conspiracies.

The audience in the times of Webster delighted in the appearance of supernatural agencies. They loved open sensationalism exhibited on the stage. They did not hesitate to witness ghastly murders and disguises in the theatre. The concept of revenge which evoked a lot of controversy among the Elizabethan intellectuals, did not trouble the mind or conscience of the average theatre – goer. The latter preferred to see the theme of revenge with all its ramifications, enacted on the stage, and applauded it when it was presented. An eminent intellectual like Francis Bacon does not approve of revenge. He describes it as a kind of wild justice and cautions the law of the land to restrain people from taking recourse to it. Making it a theme for The Spanish Tragedy, Kyd observes, 'Vindicta mihi- vengeance is mine, sayeth the lord', thus cautioning men from indulging in the forbidden practice. Kyd makes his play a complex mosaic of revenge and justice running so closely that the thin line of demarcation challenges even the most observant reader. Thus revenge served as a sauce to the Elizabethan wit.

The taste of the audience was another remarkable feature that shaped the Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. 'For those of us who live to please, must please to live' is the golden guideline of the dramatist of these times. The writer invariably catered to the demand of the audience. From Kyd and Shakespeare down to Webster, the long line of dramatists have willingly yielded to the demand of the audience, for ghosts to be introduced into their plays. What is more, these ghosts were extremely popular with the audience.

The seething corruption of Italy did not exempt even the great seats of learning,- the universities in Italy of that time. In The White Devil, Flamineo, a university graduate, indirectly hints that his connections with a senior Professor of the university was responsible for a Degree being conferred upon him and this speaks volumes of the corruption that crept into the vitals of the Italian universities in Webster's time.

It is against such a background that we ought to read all of Webster's plays and in particular, The White Devil.

3.7.3. Life and Works:

The date and circumstances of Webster's birth are not properly recorded. (A date between 1570 and 1580 is said to be likely). Like many great writers of his time, Webster was also a well-known collaborator, a joint author of many plays. Dekker, Heywood, Middleton, and Webster were said to have collaborated in differing combinations in the composition of many plays. With Dekker, he wrote Westward HO and Nothward Ho. Dekker refers to Webster as his 'worthy friend'. Even Appius and Virginia, first published in 1654 and attributed to Webster, was later discovered to be a collaboration and Heywood was suspected to be the chief collaborator.

The reputation of Webster rests mainly on two great plays, - The White Devil and The Duchess of Malfi The White Devil was enacted in the winter ('so dull a time of winter' as Webster himself describes it) of 1612 by the queen's men at the Red Bull Theatre. Both in Elizabethan and Jacobean

times, it was a tradition for playwrights to create characters suitable to the physical appearance and personality of some living actors. One such was an actor called Richard Perkins in Webster's time. He is praised by Webster himself and enacted the role of Flamineo in The White Devil and the role of Barabas in Marlowe's The Jew of Malta . Two years later than The White Devil The Duchess of Malfi was played by the king's men at the Black friars and the Globe theatre. It was published in 1623. After 1616, The Devil's Law case, a tragic-comedy , was played by the queen's men. It was an experimental play, with the essential elements of a tragic-comedy and was inspired by the example of Beaumont and Fletcher.

Once again, Webster tried collaboration and this time, in 1624, it resulted in Appius and Virginia. Some critics are of the view that it was written in collaboration with Ford, Rowley and Dekker, while other critics attribute it solely to Webster. In collaboration with Rowley and Heywood, Webster, was said to have co-authored A Cure for a cuckold.

The date of Webster's death, like his date of birth, is not clearly recorded and it is conjectured that he died somewhere in the sixteen thirties.

3.7.4 Analysis of the text

In a prologue to The White Devil, Webster condemns the practice of people who inquire not for good books, but for new books. To the criticism levelled against him that he had been a long time in writing the tragedy, Webster narrates the story of Alcestides and Euripides. Alcestides who writes three hundred verses in three days asks Euripides as to why he spent three days for writing three verses. Euripides gives a fitting reply, namely, that his three verses will be remembered for three ages while the three hundred verses of Alcestides might not be remembered even for three days.

Webster goes on to praise Chapman, Johnson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Shakespeare, Dekker and Heywood for their monumental endeavours.

Act I, Scene I

The play opens with a reference to the banishment of Duke Lodovico. The banished Lodovico calls courtly reward and punishment, disproportionate and alludes to the fickleness of fortune, comparing fortune to a whore. Needy people may appear Wolfish and hungry, but the prosperous who do not appear to be dangerous are in reality more dangerous than the needy and the poor, according to him.

Lodovico's enemies are of princely rank. They were once his followers but they have now turned against him. Those who were once hosted by him with sumptuous dinners, now laughed at his misery. Antonelli, a friend of Lodovico, remarks that Lodovico has committed some bloody murders in Rome. Lodovico describes them as minor ones,-'flea-bitings' as he describes them. He is angry that great men like Bracciano escape punishment. Bracciano who entertains an extra-marital relationship with Vittoria, could seek a pardon for him, says Lodovico, if only Vittoria intervenes. Antonelli tries to console him to be brave, as adversity is the best test of virtue. An unconvinced Lodovico, vows to take revenge, on his return. Great men, reflects Lodovico, are ungrateful like the rascals who sell sheep to be cut into pieces, after they shear their fleeces.

Act I, Scene ii

Bracciano the Duke, visits the house of Camillo. The Duke is accompanied by Flamineo, brother to Vittoria. Flamineo is ready to act as a pander, a go-between in the affair which Bracciano proposes to indulge in, with Vittoria. He informs Bracciano that he has already consented Zanche the Moor, Vittoria's servant, in this regard. He remarks that women appear to be shy, but they are only diplomatic, trying to whet or increase the appetite of men, by their pretension. Bracciano however, expresses some doubts about her husband. Thereupon Flamineo makes some wild remarks upon Camillo, and in particular, about his virility as a man. Flamineo compares Camillo to a gilder who loses his virility and even sanity, as a result of his exposure to mercury vapours, as mercury was used in those days, as a medicine to cure patients affliclted with venereal diseases, who used to lose outwardly their hair, and inwardly, their viritity, as result of medicines used to cure their diseases. The medicines used to combine a potent poison (Arsenic) which made people shed their hairs. Camillo has a weak back, he says, and has no manliness at all, the indirect suggestion or insinuation being that Vittoria is forced to seek a man other than Camillo, to fulfil her bodily desires. Flamineo however, warns Bracciano that he should not expose his eagerness to fulfil his desire for Vittoria, as such a relationship looks like a cage in a garden. Birds outside wish to get into the cage as desperately as birds within the cage, like to get out of it.

Presently he notices the arrival of Camillo, whom he describes to Bracciano, as an ass in his footcloth. Camillo speaks of a quarrel between him and his wife, Vittoria and expresses his fears about the intentions of Bracciano. At first Flamineo asks him to lock up his wife, but advices him later, not to restrain her, as only then she will be chaste. He accuses Camillo indirectly, of jealousy. Soon when Vittoria arrives there, Flamines defends his sister. While he speaks to her about Bracciano, Camillo himself asks to be locked up in his room for that night so that the desire of Vittoria for him may be increased by his denial. Flamineo is only too happy as it suits his plan to fulfil the desire of Bracciano for Vittoria. But Cornelia, the mother of Flamineo and Vittoria, sees through their game. A clever and lustful Vittoria tells Bracciano that she had a dream. In the dream, she says, she is challenged by Camillo, her husband, and Isabella, the Duchess, wife to Bracciano and that she trembled in fear. But all of sudden, a whirlwind came to her rescue and struck both Camillo and Isabella, dead. Flamineo realizes that she indirectly suggests to Bracciano to get rid of both Camillo and Isabellla.

Suddenly Cornelia comes in and confronts Flamineo by asking him,

'What? Because we are poor,
Shall we be vicious?'

Flamineo answers her that she had suffered all his life and he is no longer ready to endure any suffering. Having joined the university, he had to serve like a servant, some senior professor of the university, for his sustenance as well as for getting a Degree. He says he is not bothered about shame or blushing as these would only hinder his advancement. He wishes that he were born to an ordinary Courtesan, rather than to Cornelia. Cornelia leaves the place, cursing herself.

Flamineo, who comes to know of the visit of Isabella the Duchess, to the court, is unhappy, that it may hinder his evil designs. Those who are engaged to mischief, he opines, must seek the crooked ways like rivers trying to reach the ocean, or like the winding ways of a winter's snake, as all acts of vile and evil diplomacy are 'winding and indirect.'

Act- II Scene i

Isabella tries to convince Francisco, her brother, that she may be able to win over Bracciano, her husband. An unconvinced Francisco asks her to leave the place so that he may negotiate a reconciliation, if possible, between her and Bracciano. Cardinal Monticelso, on behalf of Francisco, tries to dissuade Bracciano from deviant behaviour. He says Bracciano is a man of learning and is an able administrator. So it may be better if he sticks to his duties. Francisco however, is brutally frank and accuses Vittoria of being Bracciano's whore. The arrival of Giovanni, the young prince, puts a stop to the fierce argument between Bracciano and Francisco. Francisco admires Giovannis' wit, as 'a good habit makes a child a man, /where as a bad one makes a man a beast'.

Meanwhile Isabella who comes in, tries to patch up with Bracciano, in vain. Bracciano rejects her, once and for all. Francisco who comes there, is told by Isabella that she will never again be a wife to Bracciano. She wants to leave for Padua. Bracciano and Flamineo go away along with a certain Doctor Julio who they want to help them in poisoning Isabella, by going to Padua.

Monticelso speaks of the danger to the Italian coast from pirates and he tells that he is going on a joint commission with Duke Francisco to end the menance. The banished count Lodovico is also rumoured to be one of the pirates. Lodovico has also a mind to get his banishment, repealed, says Monticeslso to Francisco.

Once again Monticelso and Francsco start discussing the issue of Bracciano and Vittoria and Francisco is sure that they will perish together, ' like mistletoe on sere elms spent by weather,/ let him cleave to her and both rot together'.

Act II, Scene ii

A conspiratorial Bracciano arrives along with a conjurer, to know from the latter, possible devices for the double murder of Camillo and Isabella. The conjurer, through a dumb show, suggests that the portrait of Bracciano in the house of Isabella (which Isabella has the habit of kissing daily) may be poisoned to get rid of her. In another dumb show, Camillo and Flamineo are made to vault on a vaulting horse and while Camillo is vaulting, Flamineo is shown as breaking his neck, by writhing it, and then folding him under the horse, calling for help. Marcello, Monticelso and Francisco who arrive on the scene, are unable to arrive at a conclusion as to how it all happened.

Act III Scene i

Francisco and Monticelso discuss the arrangements made for Vittoria's trial. Meanwhile Flamineo enters into a heated argument with Marcello, the substance of which is that there is no use serving any master, faithfully, if one wants to amass wealth and power, quickly.

ACT III Scene ii

This is an important scene, described as 'the Arraignment of Vittoria', contaning the trial of Vittoria.

Monticelso tries to forbid Bracciano from making himself available at the proceedings against Vittoria, but the latter insists on his presence.

Vittoria objects to the Lawyer stating his proceedings in Latin, on the ground that common people among the assembly who do not know Latin, will not be able to understand the proceedings. The English in which the lawyer tries to address the audience, proves worse and Francisco requests the lawyer to go away. Monticelso the Cardinal, places himself in the role of a lawyer, in spite of Vittoria's objection that an Hon'ble Cardinal is not supposed to cast himself in the role of a lawyer. He calls her a whore and compares her to the vicious, rotten and mythical apples of Sodom and Gomorrah which turn to ashes the moment they are touched.

Vittoria objects to her being called a whore, 'Ha? Whore – what's that?' She questions. Monticelso gives a long speech, intending to define a 'whore'. Whores are, according to him, sweatmeats which rot the eater; in man's nostrils, poisoned perfumes. They are decieving alchemy, and ship wrecks in calm weather. They are cold Russian winters. They are frigid and barren and appear as though nature had no season of spring. They are the true material fire of hell, They are like flattering bells which have all one tune, / At weddings and at funerals;…'They are like dead bodies used by Doctors for Anatomy classes. They are also like counterfeit coins. Even those who are against Vittoria, see too much bitterness in the remarks of the Cardinal.

After this, Vittoria is accused of conniving to murder her husband. She answers that she prefers to be beheaded rather than to bow down to each and every man, to save her life. The English Ambassador, present at the trial, admires her audacity, - her brave spirit. When Bracciano is asked as to why he lodged in the house of Vittoria on the night of Camillo's murder, he says he was there to help Camillo to settle his debts and goes away, after speaking arrogantly to Monticelso. After he leaves, Monticelso looks at Vittoria and says mockingly to her, 'your Champion's gone', only to receive a retort from Vittoria, 'The wolf may prey the better'. Francisco says that there is no proof, but only suspicion of Vittoria having murdered Camillo.

Monticelso concludes the proceedings by sentencing Vittoria to be confined to a house of convertites, ' a house of penitent whores'. Vittoria leaves the place bravely, with no sense of remorse. She says that she will make her mind a better place than the Pope's palace. Adversity proves the worth of individuals,-' through darkness diamonds spread their richest light'- so saying, she leaves the place, bravely. She is accompanied by Zanche the Moor, who is branded as an accomplice in her crimes.

Young Giovanni who goes there, realizes that his mother Isabella, is dead. A sorrowful Francisco asks the young boy to be taken away, and he himself leaves the place, soon.

Act III Scene iii

Flamineo pretends to have gone mad. Lodovico the banished Duke who arrives there, thinks of following Flamineo to know the truth about him. Flamineo, on the other hand, is surprised how the banished Lodovico could move so openly and freely. Meanwhile Antonelli arrives there with the news that the Pope on his death bed has granted Lodovico, a pardon.

Act IV, Scene I

Francisco pretends not to bother about Bracciano, to the surprise of Monticelso and asks him to show the book in which Monticelso had recorded the names of a number of criminals. Franscisco waits for the right moment to strike at his enemies. He wonders how a cardinal like Monticelso could keep such a long record of criminals and remarks that when religious men lose their sanctity, they draw swords and are responsible for wars.

Franscisco however, comes back to his main concern, namely, revenge for his murdered sister. For a moment, the ghost of Isabella appears before his eyes and as he seriously resolves to take revenge, the ghost disappears. He now says he is in love with Vittoria and drafts a love letter to Vittoria and sends it through a servant, to her. His thoughts now turn to Lodovico whom he wants to enlist him to his side, by bribery.

Act IV, Scene ii

Franscisco, who does not want to confront Bracciano directly, desires to create a rift among his enemies. He sends a servant with a letter to be delivered into the hands of the Matron of the House of converties, to be delivered in turn, to Vittoria in such a manner that it may provoke suspicion upon her. As expected, Flamineo intercepts the letter. Bracciano, who reads the letter, suspects that Vittoria is in league with Francisco. Bracciano and Flamineo confront each other on issues pertaining to the letter. The former accuses Vittoria, but she denies his charges and goes to the extent of accusing Bracciano that he had been solely responsible for the infamy and ruin of her house as he has ruined many women, earlier. She says she will return all the gifts he gave her. She knows she has sinned and she could go weeping to heaven:

I had a limb corrupted to an ulcer,
But I have cut it off and now I'll go
Weeping to heaven on crutches.

Flamineo accuses Bracciano of being foolish to have imagined that the Duke of Florence would love her. Finally, Flamineo patches up the quarrel.

Flamineo who knows that the Pope is dead and that the city is temporarily though, in a state of confusion, advices Bracciano to run away with Vittoria by disguising her as a page, to Padua. Bracciano agrees and says that he would take away young Giovanni along with him. He asks Flamineo to follow him to Padua, along with the members of his family and promises to promote him to a better station in life. Flamineo narrates a tale which is rightly interpreted by Bracciano as a story about his not having rewarded Flamineo, properly. Flamineo however is very quick in changing the interpretation, in favour of Bracciano and in an aside, speaks out his mind:

It may appear to some ridiculous
Thus to talk knave and mad man;

and some times
come in with a dried sentence,
stuffed with sage.
But this allows my varying of shapes,
Knaves do grow great by being great
men's apes.

Act –IV, Scene iii

The cardinals are now busy with the election of the new pope. Cardinal Monticelso is elected as the new pope. He becomes Pope Paul, the Fourth. A servant rushes in immediately, to announce the escape of Vittoria with Bracciano and Giovanni. Monticelso excommunicates both Bracciano and Vittoria. He turns now to Lodovico and asks him as to why Francisco has a favourable disposition towards him.

Lodovico says he is a penitent sinner and he wishes to confess before Monticelso, Lodovico was in love with Isabella and he wants therefore to avenge her death. Monticelso tells him to give up his murderous intentions, as they will make him a more miserable creature, and leaves the place.

Francisco sends Lodovico, a thousand ducats, who realises that he is to be a tool for murdering Vittoria, and reflects:

There's but three Furies found in spacious hell,
But in a great man's breast three thousand dwell.

Act-V, Scene I

Francisco disguises himself as Mulinassar the Moor and is accompanied by Lodovico, Antonelli and Gasparo, all in disguise. They go to Bracciano under the pretext of sending him in the event of a war between him and the Duke of Florence. Francisco's followers disguise themselves as Capuchins, a strict order of Christianity. Bracciano who desires to marry Vittoria in public, requests Mulinassar and his followers to grace the occasion.

Bracciano requests Mulinassar to entertain him by his participation in a fencing match, a sword-fight for which arrangements are made. Meanwhile Zanche the Moor pretends to be in love with Flamineo. Irritated with the behaviour of Zanche, both Cornelia and Marcello, beat her. Flamineo is not happy with their treatment of Zanche.

Soon, the inconstant Zanche is attracted by Francisco and swears love to him and expresses her desire to marry him. Francisco is tempted to make use of her to know the secret circumstances of the death of Isabella and Camillo, more authentically.

ACT V, Scene ii

Flamineo kills Marcello his brother, as he is afraid his brother's virtuous characracter may prove to be a great enemy to his villainous deeds.

Lodovico sprinkles Bracciano's beaver with a poison.

ACT V, Scene iii

Bracciano wearing the poisoned helmet, dies very soon. Lodovico and Gasparo whisper curses in the ears of Bracciano. Lodovico strangles him to death. Even Flamineo does not speak well of Bracciano, after his death, in spite of Francisco requesting him to speak well of the Duke.

Zanche who comes in, reveals to Francisco, the truth about the murder of Camillo and Isabella.

ACT V, Scene iv

Flamineo, who notices Cornelia his mother in sorrow, seems to be himself in sorrow for once, and confesses to the audience that he led an evil life and all along he was aware of a troubled conscience that pricked him,-' we think caged birds sing, when indeed they cry'.

Bracciano's ghost appears before Flamineo, throws earth upon him, shows him a skull and vanishes. Flamineo is deeply disturbed by all the events.

ACT V, Scene v

Lodovico restrains Francisco from engaging himself any further in their murderous intentions, by taking it solely upon himself, to execute the plans, come what may.

ACT V, Scene vi

Flamineo proposes to Vittoria and Zanche that they should all die together, shooting themselves with the pistols he has brought along with him. Vittoria and Zanche shoot Flamineo, and tread upon him. Thinking that he is about to die, they curse him, but Flamineo rises only to tell them that the pistols had no bullets and it was only a test to know whether they really loved him.

Just at this moment, Lodovico and Gasparo, disguised as Capuchins, arrive there, and throw their disguises, off. They kill both Flamineo and Vittoria, but Vittoria dies, bravely, with a moral on her lips;

O happy they that never saw the court
Nor ever knew great men but by report.

Prince Giovanni arrives there and orders that Lodovico be arrested. Webster makes Giovanni, utter the moral of the story:

Let guilty men remember their black deeds
Do lean on crutches, made of slender reeds.

3.7.5. A Brief critical evaluation of the literary text and the Writer's work:

i. Its structure:

Like Milton who was 'long choosing and beginning late', Webster also took a long time in writing The White Devil. He wanted to perfect it to the best of his ability. Like many writers of his age, Webster did not imitate the classical tragedians. The romantic drama which exercised great freedom and flexibility was the model which Webster admired.

Webster's play combines the elements of a chronicle play with the mediaeval conception of tragedy as the rise and fall of human fortunes. His plays deal with the necessity for marital fidelity and fidelity to a set of values, consistently pursued as that alone provides a hall mark of character.

Webster's plays are no 'gothic aggregations' as they have been criticized, but are carefully planned. They are not merely horrors piled up on horrors, as the label implies, but rather a deep study of the very roots of evil in this world. Even the cruelest of Webster's characters are touched by a moral remorse, a sense of guilt, troubling their conscience, in particular, in the later half of their careers. The characters sin, knowingly, partly compelled by circumstances and partly as a result of their wrong commitment to an immoral life which they follow mechanically, for material gain, although they realize the irreversible doom that awaits them, if not here, at least in the world above.

The structure of The White Devil has been described as having 'ramshackle looseness' as it presents horror after horror, without a single or simple objective of revenge. John Russell Brown rightly points out that there is not a single revenge towards which the action of the play is directed, but there are a number of individuals, each seeking his own revenge, thus making the play, loose in its contents. Also as he points out, there are more commentators than one for the satire in the play.

The supernatural machinery of the play is strengthened with abnormal modes of psychology, madness being the chosen mode in The White Devil. Distractions real or pretended are employed to produce the desired affect. Cornelia is the only one in whom the effect of the moral depravity of Flamineo and Vittoria and the butchering of the innocent Marcello produces the terrible effect of madness. Flamineo sees the Ghost of Isabella and leaves the place only when he is able to collect courage to ask her to go away. Bracciano's Ghost appears to be a far more substantial thing, as it throws earth upon Flamineo and shows him a skull.As M.C. Bradbook points out, Webster uses the ghost for a momentary, effect of terror or pathos, and is not bothered about its concerted effect in relation to the play as a whole.

Yet another device that is popularly employed in the drama of these times is the dumb-show. There is a dumb show in Shakespeare's Hamlet and there is one in The White Devil, too. In Shakespeare, the dumb show is used as a part of psychological test to confirm the guilt of Claudius. Thus it concerns itself with the situation after the death of old Hamlet. In The White Devil it is used as a subtle device

by a conjurer to suggest as to how both Isabella and Camillo can be done away with. It is therefore a more down-to-earth affair.

As for the technique of the Jacobean dramatists; it may be said, as Una Ellis Fermor observed, that they are more concerned with a comment on events or people and their relations, rather than a sequence of events, and that he was interested in presenting a series of fascinating situations rather than creating a unified experience.

Coming to Webster, we notice that Webster has some of these deficiencies, but he is a great master in writing opening scenes. His expositions vary from play to play to suit their varying needs or moods, as in The White Devil and The Duchess of Malfi. The explosive utterance of the word 'banished' sets the ball, rolling. The mood and tone of the play is amply indicated by the use of this single word. On the other hand, The Duches of Malfi starts rather slowly with a long speech, on the art of governance.

The charge of loose structure that has often been leveled against The White Devil can be leveled against the portrayal of his characters in another form, namely, they are not shown in a consistent mould. Even important characters are not presented continuously so that they can be evaluated by the audience. The only defence for such a fragmentary portrayal is the one offered by Flamineo that such a variation allows of his varying shapes, in tune with his knavery.

ii Webster's Vision:

Webster represents the transition from the Elizabethan to the Jacobean setting. The Elizabethan drama is characterized by a reflection of the vitality of a prosperous society. But the danger of defeat and disappointment, resulting from over-ambition is more intensely studied in the Jocobean drama. The death of Elizabeth, and with it, the death of administrative stability have been noticed by the people of the time. The initial problems faced by James-I on his accession to the throne created a world of instability in the people of the time and a consequent sense of desperation made death, and not life (as in Elizabethan drama) the rallying point of the Jacobean dramatists. It is this feeling of uncertainty that we find in Webster. The lofty philosophical and spiritual concerns of the Elizabethan drama are replaced in the Jacobean drama by a more secular, down-to-earth, way-of-the-world vision of life. The imaginative and ideal vision of life projected in the Elizabethan world came to be replaced in the Jacobean drama, with the realistic and satirical vision of a corrupt society.

The change of vision in the Jacobean drama was a result of the social and political changes. Machiavelli's cold and calculating political thinking appealed more to the Jacobeans than to the Elizabethans although the seeds of uncertainty were sown as early as in Marlowe's work. Marlowe was the only exception among the Elizabethans who gave great importance to the concepts of Machiavelli in projecting shades of political villainy for the capture of power at any cost.

Webster wished to present virtue and vice, the temptations which might ruin the poor, and the greed, arrogance and high handedness of the wealthy, in power. The guilty are troubled by their own conscience, if not by anything else, a premise to which Webster arrives time and again.

Corruption in public life and what is more, the way it is perpetrated with impunity, forms a basis of Webster's moral argument for the necessity for certain values missing in public as well as

domestic life. At the level of an individual, Webster presents households being ruined by domestic disharmony which is presented as a direct result of the corruption in courts. The evils which beset the aristocracy of the Elizabethan and Jacobean England are nowhere better illustrated and described than in Webster.

Webster was accused of being a decadent, trying to write tragedies full of sensationalism for its own sake, without structural coherence in form, or moral coherence in theme. But all the characters of Webster accept a divine law and a moral order, irrespective of their actions and behaviour. There is an unmistakable recognition of evil on their part. F.L.Lucas admires the courage of Webster's characters, as there is no place for the cowardly, in this world. Webster was also accused of a macabre fascination for death. It is alleged that he saw the skull beneath the skin, and that the creatures of his imagination are placed in a dark night without light, creeping to their end.

As a tragedian, Webster is deeply concerned with a study of sin in the world and his characters become representatives of good and evil, virtue and vice. The characters of Webster, while not losing their individuality, do represent humanity at large or its cross-sections in terms of society. The tragedies of Webster, resemble the mediaeval narratives where rise and fall in the life are presented as a natural sequence in life. Webster borrowed hints from domestic drama, as well. The combination of elements on which he depended, made his drama a mixed one. Although Webster's dramas, like the others of his time, are free of the structure and norms of a classical drama, the idea of sin and punishment links them up with the ancient idea of the recognition of evil. There is a moral order and a divine law. Those who try to disturb the moral order are not spared in the end and what is more, the evil characters die with a confession on their lips and recognition of powers above. The criticism that Webster's plays were performances merely intended to generate or evoke horror and sensationalism for their own sake, can not be supported, as the evil characters in Webster, are fully aware that they are on the wrong track, although they put on a bold face and try to defend their actions on grounds which cannot be called, moral. The characters of Webster are characterized by courage of a high order, in the face of adversity. It is this courage that keeps the interest of the audience, alive. No great tragedy can ever accept or sustain the cowardly and the week as instead of evoking pity, they may at times, evoke contempt. Tragedy involves a heroic struggle, though in this struggle, the individuals may perish. The compulsions of life and temptations that throw people out of gear, force them to an evil course, but the essential dignity of the individual, remains recognizable. Long years of poverty throws Flamineo into the trap of temptations, the temptation to carve a better life if not of great prosperity, at least that of a reasonable status. He is not for the conventional picture like that of his mother whose virtue is invariably associated with poverty. Long years of poverty harden him into a cynic and he willingly encourages even his sister Vittoria to take to corrupt, vicious, and immoral practices, to taste material prosperity.

iii. The Title

The title, The White Devil, is fully justified for the play, for, there are many villainous characters in the play who deserve the name of a devil. Outwardly they appear to be good. They want to paint their crimes or wash their crimes in white. But they are black and a mere scratch on the surface can reveal them in true colours. Left to themselves, they reveal their dark intentions at first, but as the play progresses, they grow more and more remorseful in private, and a sense of guilt and repentance seems to trouble their conscience.

Like a leopard that cannot wash its spots, a devil also cannot become a creature of light. The evil characters of The White Devil are forced to put on an appearance and practice deceit so constantly that at one point they themselves seem to have grown sick of their false pretensions and appearances. They are driven to remorse and confession at the end of their journey on earth. It is not only the characters in the drama but also people at large do indulge in pretensions and deceit, daily to keep up their false glitter. Hence the characters in the drama offer a satire, in an observer's status, on a description and pretension so widely resorted to in daily life, by people of all walks of life, and in particular, by people in courts.

Thus, the banished Lodovico points to others who have escaped punishment, while he is banished. This is the world's deceit to which people fall a prey, daily. Flamineo tells Camillo that jealously, like jaundice, shows everything in wrong colours. Like a Kaleidoscope that creates multiple images out of a single image, jealousy corrupts an individual's conscience, and makes his vision, illusory.

iv. Flamineo:

At the outset of his career, Flamineo is ready to deny all advice from his mother, but at the end, he speaks of his conscience, troubling him and bemoans his evil life. In the early scenes of the play when his mother condemns him by asking him, 'What? Because we are poor,/ shall we be vicious?', Flamineo answers that his father died, after selling away all the landed property they had, but whatever remained was not enough even to give Flamineo the education he had to pursue. Thus Flamineo was forced to take all kinds of assistance from a Senior Fellow of the university, to obtain a Degree ('Conspiring with a beard made me a graduate', he says). He becomes cynical and is unable to stand any moral advice from any one, mother or brother. He goes to the extent of killing Marcello his brother, in a fit of rage, as he is unable to digest the moral advice offered by his brother. Only later when a distraught Cornelia song a sorrowful song full of remembrance of Marcello, her dead son, the heart of even a cynic like Flamineo melts and in what sounds like a confession, he observes:

… I have liv'd
Riotously ill, like some that live court;
And sometimes, when my face was full of smiles
Have felt the maze of conscience in my breast.

…
we think caged birds sing, when indeed they cry.

Later when Vittoria is about die, Flamineo says in a fit of agony:

No, at myself I will begin and end:
While we look up to heaven we confound
Knowledge with knowledge. O I am in a mist.

After Vittoria dies and when he knows he himself is about to die, Flamineo acknowledges his sin in the most pathetic terms:

My life was a black charnel: I have caught
An everlasting cold …
This busy trade of life appears most vain,
…
strike thunder and strike loud to my farewell.

With these words, Flamineo also dies.

v. Vittoria:

The other character to whom the label 'The White Devil' can be appropriately applied is Vittoria Corombona. It is for the hand of Vittoria that Bracciano kills his wife Isabella and her husband Camillo. At the outset, Vittoria is a haughty woman, unmindful of conventional morals. Her wedlock with the unmanly Camillo and her hunger for an aristocratic life drive her to an immoral course of life from which she is unable to retract. She is encouraged by her brother Flamineo in her immoral affinity with Bracciano. But one thing that eminently attracts our attention in her character is her bravery. She strongly criticizes the lawyer in the scene of her arraignment and after his departure, when Cardinal Monticelso wants to take up the role of the lawyer, she objects to him on the ground that it is not proper for a reverend cardinal to take on the role of an advocate. The English ambassador is moved by her daring, and admires her,- 'She has a brave spirit', he says. When she is about to be led to the house of convertives, she does not lose her courage and says that her mind shall make the house of convertives a better place than the holy Pope's palace. She remarks bravely, 'through darkness diamonds spread their richest light'.

In the later half of the play, Vittoria accuses Flamineo of encouraging her to follow the evil path which she pursued. In a fit of recognition of her sins, she cries:

I had a limb corrupted to an ulcer.
But I've cut it off; and now, I'll go
Weeping to heaven on crutches.

However even in her death, she retains her bravery and when Lodovico goes to murder her and points out that she is trembling in fear, she refutes him with her brave words:

O thou art deceiv'd, I am too true a woman;
Conceit can never kill me: I'll tell thee what, -
I will not in my death shed one base tear,
Or if look pale, for want of blood, not fear.

When she is hit with a sword, she cries not in agony, but in realization:

O my greatest sin lay in my blood.
Now my blood pays for't.

When a realized Flamineo hastens to call her a noble sister, and says he loves her,- ' I love thee now', she confeses, 'my soul, like to a ship in a black storm,/ is driven I know not whither'.

The words that she utters just before her death are indeed memorable as they can serve as the

moral of the play in one sense, the courts in Italy deserve to be avoided, and that morals become the first victim in high places;

O happy they that never saw the court,
Nor ever knew great men but by report.

vi. Revenge:

Webster's play can be placed in the revenge tradition which starts in English drama from the day Kyd wrote The Spanish Tragedy . All these writers are however inspired by their acknowledged master Seneca who in ancient Rome was renowned for 'blood and thunder' tragedies as they were popularly described. Seneca who was responsible for the five-Act structure in Elizabethan drama, was also the inspiration behind the supernatural machinery and the multiple murders enacted on the stage during the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods.

While Bacon's condemnation of revenge as a kind of wild justice represents the point of an Elizabethan intellectual, common people delighted in murders and revenge, thus making it the stock-in-trade of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. In his The Spanish Tragedy, Kyd presents us with a complex concept of revenge which he projects it as another form of justice. Old Hieronymo whose son has been murdered by people in power, knocks at the gates of conventional justice, in vain. Only then he is forced to take to revenge. Revenge and justice are thus very intimately interwoven in the play. The play has however the crude horror of murders being enacted on the stage. Later, we have Shakespeare's Hamlet. In spite of Hamlet being a tragedy of inaction, full of psychological motives, it is also full of deaths, littering the stage.

Marlowe, Chapman and Tourneur are no exception to the strong impact of revenge as a guiding force for many of their plays. Like Kyd, Marlowe is also a predecessor of Shakespeare and his The Jew of Malta is a good example of revenge tragedy, where the victimizer becomes the victim, at last. The Jew Barabas wants to play the Turk against the Christian and the Christian against the Turk, to his advantage, but the truth being known, Barabas is made to fall into his own trap.

In the process of revenge, the revenger himself is also consumed, many a time. In almost every revenge tragedy, we see the avenger also being destroyed. Hieromymo who becomes an instrument of revenge in Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy does not escape death. Prince Hamlet who has the satisfaction of eliminating his father's murderers, is himself eliminated in the process. It is no wonder therefore that Kyd observes that taking revenge, or punishing the killers, is the work of God.

While critics like John Russell Brown argue that there are a number of avengers or revengers and that there are a number of revenge themes being treated in The White Devil, we should not forget the fact that there is certainly a single and central theme of revenge into which all these basically converge. It is the revenge of Francisco for his sister Isabella, who has been brutally murdered to fulfil the desires of Bracciano and his paramounr, Vittoria Corombona. The banished Lodovico hates the discrimination as it appears to him and vows revenge. He finds an accomplice in Francisco to fulfil

his revenge against Bracciano. Thus Lodovico and Francisco have a common enemy in Bracciano.

Webster's greatness consists in his lofty poetry. He has been hailed as a true poet, and described by Legouis and Cazamian, as 'the author of some of the most beautiful songs of the renascence'. What would have been a melodrama full of violence and bombast in the hands of a minor writer, becomes a great tragedy in the hands of Webster.

Webster allows his characters to suffer from the pangs of their own conscience, a punishment greater than the one they encounter physically at the end of the play. He was accused of 'ramshackle looseness of structure and hideous cacophonies' and was even described as ' a bedlam broke loose' but he made use of this looseness positively for a great variety of presentation. One cannot forget that The White Devil closes on a lofty note.

vii. Its Background:

The White Devil has a historical background. The play is based on real incidents of the later half of the sixteenth century. Vittoria Accoramboni was born in a small town in Italy in 1557. Born in a large family, she could not afford a luxurious life. Her parents Claudius and Tarquinia were very poor. Vittoria was a charming girl and at a young age she was married to Francisco Peretti (Camillo of the play,), a nephew of Cardinal Montalto (Monticelso of the play). A few years later she met the Duke of Bracciano. He had a wife, Isabella and when he came to know that she had a lover, she got her murdered. Attracted by Vittoria's beauty, he married her secretly. Gregory XIII,the then Pope, did not approve of their marriage and ordered their separation. For some time, Vittoria was imprisoned, but when she was released, Bracciano married her again.

Pope Gregory XIII died in 1585. Bracciano married Vittoria a third time, this time in public. Unfortunately for them, Cardinal Montalto became the new Pope, - Sixtus V. Bracciano ran away with Vittoria to Padua. He had to go further, for reasons of health, but he died soon. Vittoria was well provided, but Isabella's relatives, trying to protect young Virginio (Giovanni of the play) wanted the wealth to be shared. On her refusal, she was murdered by Lodovico (a kinsman of Bracciano) and his men.

The play is based on these historical facts.

3.7.6 Key words/ Technical Terms (by way of illustration):

⇑ White Devil : An evil character who is transformed at the end by repentance.

⇑ Revenge : A passion which consumes both the victim and the victimizer

⇑ Banished : A word which opens the play, to create an image of

Sensationalism. If the student can look into The White Devil edited by F.L.Lucas, he can have the benefit of a long comment on this word, opening the play.

⇑ Conspiring with a beard : This expression of Flamineo (Act I, scene ii) has a two-fold meaning:

a) Flamineo has grown into full manhood as a result of his long stay in the University, unable to qualify for the Degree, or

b) he had to prevail upon a senior Fellow of the university ('a beard' figuratively indicating this) to help him in obtaining the Degree, by his recommendations, and not by his merit.

⇑ Arraignment : A trial, in this case, the trial of Vittoria.

3.7.7 Summary:

Webster was a great tragedian of the Jacobean age. He was a true representative of the transition from the Elizabethan age to the Jacobean times. The Italy of the contemporary times was a hotbed of political and social corruption. The evil consequences deeply moved Webster to offer a satire and he made tragedy his tool. Webster also took care to cater to the tastes of the audience and provided them with Ghosts, murders, and other sensational elements to please them.

The story of The White Devil is based on real incidents that took place during the late Sixteenth century. Flamineo and Vittoria, born to poor parents, become Victims to the temptations of wealth and power but they had to sacrifice virtue for convenience, in the process. Flamineo becomes a go-between, a pander, and Vittoria, ' a whore' to fulfil their ambition, but they are troubled by conscience and the inner promptings make them repent at the end, when they are physically overpowered and psychologically broken.

Influenced by Seneca and Machiavelli, the writers of the time wrote melodramatically on themes of revenge. Revenge is a kind of wild justice and hence the victim and the victimizer go the same way, to the inevitable tragic end.

The tragic vision of Webster is thus deeply influenced by his moral concerns. His plays are accused of being loose in structure, but they offer a wide variety and flexibility, as a result. This gives his plays the fame that they justly acquired over the years. His characters like Vittoria and Flamineo in The White Devil and Bosola in The Duchess of Malfi endear themselves to the readers as they are lifelike.

Tempted by power and wealth, Vittoria and Flamineo join hands to get rid of Isabella and Camillo, the wife of Bracciano and the husband of Vittoria. Francisco, the brother of Isabella, takes revenge, helped by Lodovico, a Kinsman of Bracciano, banished from the kingdom. The story ends in repentance of the chief villains of the piece.

3.7.8 Sample Questions

1. Write a note on Webster's tragic vision.
2. Consider The White Devil as revenge tragedy.
3. Briefly account for the appropriateness of the title, The White Devil.
4. How does Flamineo represent the degenerate moral values of a corrupt age?

   What, in your view, are the strengths and weaknesses of Webster as an artist?

3.7.9 Suggested Reading

1. John Webster, The White Devil , ed. John Russell Brown (Methuen, London, 1965).
2. Una Ellis Fermor, The Jacobean Drama: An Interpretation (Methuen, London, paperback 1965).
3. M.C. Bradbrook, Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy (Vikas Publishing House Ltd, New Delhi, Cup-Vikas students' Edition, 1979).

- Prof. T. Viswanadha Rao

Lesson - 8

Restoration Drama

Contents

3.8.1 Objectives:

i. To define 'Restoration' and 'Restoration Drama'.
ii. To illustrate the themes and concerns of the Restoration Comedy.
iii. To acquaint the student with some of the major authors of Restoration Comedy.

3.8.2. Background- the writers and the Period

The word 'Restoration' was applied in British History to the restoration of monarchy, with the accession to the throne, of Charles-II. The term, as it is applied to drama, however, ranges widely from 1660 to 1737. Thus although no great contribution to drama can be attributed to the year 1660, the term is said to hold good, as the decline in morals reflected in the court of the monarch from 1660, forms a backdrop for the drama of the period. Restoration Drama has been underrated for long, although in the twentieth Century, it seemed to have acquired a certain respectability at the hands of critics.

If we follow the strict classification of 'Restoration' as belonging to the reign of Charles-II (1660-1685), we may have to face the dangerous inconvenience of not being able to include great writers like Congreve, Vanbrugh and Farquhar. This is unacceptable and hence we have to accept a definition of Restoration Drama to include a later period also, stretching variously to 1700, 1707 or even 1737, depending upon the perspective one prefers.

During the 1670's we have remarkable plays by Etherge, Wycherley, and even Dryden. While Restoration Drama is accepted as a trend best represented by Congreve's The Way of the World, such a view seems to be very much limited in scope, including only a handful of plays. A serious disadvantage that Restoration Drama suffered from, was its excessive dependence on the court and the monarch for its survival. Every trouble at the royal court was a disaster to the future of the theatre.

Besides, like the drama of every period, Restoration Drama also had to cater to the tastes of the audience. Many critics are of the view that the Restoration audiences were an immoral lot. But in reality, many Restoration comedies were serious satires directed against people of fashionable society and their snobbery and the fact that they were witnessed with gusto, might prove otherwise.

One thing was certain. It was undoubted Royal patronage offered to the great masters of the Restoration Drama like Wycherly and Dryden. The king maintained a high degree of personal contact with intellectuals like the great writers of his time and encouraged them to write. But the dramatists were criticized for writing for a select audience and not for the masses. What was worse, - the Restoration period had no comprehensive or well-concerted theory of comedy, to offer, 'men are to be laughed out of their vices in comedy', said William Congreve, while others held that comedy should recommend virtue and discourage vice.

Restoration Drama absorbed into itself many influences- French, Italian and Spanish, besides being deeply affected by the social background of the period under consideration. The Spanish influence was felt, according to Allardyce Nicoll, in what came to be described as 'Intrigue plays', an example often cited being Sir Samuel Tuke's The Adventures of Five Hours.

Restoration Drama was also characterized by an equality of sexes. A battle of wits between men and women was one of the distinguishing features of Restoration comedy. Etherege's well known play, The Man of Mode presents the instances of such an encounter between two characters, - Dorimant and Harriet. Yet another influence was that of Ben Jonson. The perennial conflict between people belonging to different social classes, employed by Jonson, is also employed by the Restoration Comedy.

3.8.3 The Writers- Their Lives and Works:

Congreve, Etherege, Farquhar, Wycherley and Vanburgh may justly be regarded as the five major representative comic writers of the Restoration period.

William Congreve (1670-1729) was born in Yorkshire on 10th February 1670. As his family shifted to Ireland in 1674, he was educated at Kilkenny during his school days and had his college education at Trinity College, Dublin. He had an affair with Henrientta, the Duchess of Marlborough. A daughter was born to them.

He was the Manager of Linconln's Inn theatre for nearly six years from 1697-1705. His best play, The Way of the World (1700) did not meet with great success. A discouraged Congreve, gave up writing for the theatre, for a long time. In the autumn of his life, he worked as a government servant. He breathed his last in 1729.

Congreve wrote a number of poems besides plays. In Cognita; or Love and Duty Reconciled, a novel by Congreve, was the first reputed work of Congreve. It is a story of lovers riddled with mistaken identities. It is eminently readable. Congreve's first comedy was The Old Batchelor, a comedy in a lighter vein. The Double Dealer (1694) contrasts sharply with its predecessor, by being a serious play.

In trying to expose the vicious people, it acquires a serious tone, not in keeping with the comic spirit. It turns out to be a bitter satire. Love for Love (1695) had all the qualities of a typical comedy of manners. The generation gap and the city life coming into conflict with its rural counter part form the solid basis of the play's framework. The Mourning Bride (1697) was a heroic play, a literary form in vogue in Charles-II's time. The play is violent and is clothed in affected language.

Congreve wrote an essay on dramatic theory in 1695, keeping the practice and practitioners of comedy in view. It offered a subtle distinction between wit and humour. Meanwhile, Jeremy Collier attacked the English drama for what appeared to him, the immorality and profaneness of the English stage. Congreve was left with no opinion but to offer a rejoinder to the vehement arguments of Collier. He wrote a very balanced reply to Collier and it is known to people, as Amendments of Mr. Collier's False and Imperfect citations.

The greatest play of Congreve, The Way of the World, followed. The play is known for its wit and refined speeches. The play has a complex plot with twists at every turn and therefore, it proves to be a great entertainer. It s first performance on the stage was not well received. A disgusted Congreve stopped writing for the stage, thereafter.

Sir George Etherge was born in 1635. He served on many diplomatic assignments, culminating in the post of an Ambassador for about fire years. He obtained knighthood in 1685 and died in 1691. Not many details are known about his life.

Etherege is by no means a prolific writer, but his influence as writer was remarkable and some describe him as the father of the comedy of manners. His Man of the Mode (1676) was looked upon by his successors, as a model to be emulated. The play is full of sparkling wit and refined idiom, and is a satire of the morals and manners of the contemporary society. The battle of wits between the sexes which is to be a central focus of the Restoration Comedy is seen at its best in his comedies. The heroines in the Etherege's comedies provide a perfect match in wit, to the heroes there in.

Etherege's first ever play was The Comical Revenge; or Love in a Tub (1664). The play entertains the audience with elaborate discussions on country love and humour. Love is described here as pure passion.

The next in order was She Would if She Could (1668). The play has four lovers, two heroes and two heroines. The play presents a contrast between conservative and uncompromising characters connected with the unchanging social scenario of the countryside and the others who adopt themselves to the changing social values without scarificing their essential dignity.

Wit based on intellect and refinement forms the basis of these dramas. It lends charm to the plays and keeps the interest of the audience, alive.

The Man of the Mode represents the artistic perfection of Etherege. It has a far more coherent plot in comparison to his earlier plays. The attention of readers or the audience is centered around and sustained by Harriet and Dorimant with the social scenario of the times as its backdrop.

George Farquhar was born in Northern Ireland in 1677. He was educated at the Trinity College, Dublin. He was also an actor. In 1697, he started writing for the stage. Later he served as an army officer. He died in 1707.

Farquhar is rated as one of the best writers of comedy from Ireland. He is ranked alongside Oliver Goldsmith and Oscar Wilde. Although he died young, he produced eight comedies. His comedies exhibit a kind of decorum, in keeping with the changing demands of the last decade of the seventeenth century. The playwright refuses to be restrained by the conventional limitations of the London society of his times. Farquhar's first play was Love and a Bottle, full of mistaken identities. Farquhar made use of his experiences as an army officer in his plays, The Recruiting Officer and The Beaux' Strategem. He pokes fun at the corruption in the army. These two plays, are by common consent, the best of Farquhar's contribution to comedy.

Yet another great writer of Restoration comedies, Vanbrugh, was born in 1664, in London. He had his schooling in England, but he also studied in France during 1683-85. He was suspected to be a British Secret Service Agent and was imprisoned in France for nearly four years. Coming out of prison, he joined the army. Knighthood was conferred on him in 1723. Vanbrugh died in 1726.

Vanbrugh has a number of plays to his credit, but two of his best plays are The Relapse and The Provk'd Wife. Vanbrugh, like the other dramatists of the Restoration period, was attacked for immorality in his plays. The specialty of Vanbrugh consisted in his originality.

William Wycherley, born in England in 1640, is one more among the conspicuous contributors to Restoration comedy. He was at the Queen's college, Oxford, was trained in Law, but for some reason, did not want to make it his profession. For sometime, he served in the army. Later he was a theatre manager and finally, a writer. He was patronized by Charles-II and was honoured with a pension sanctioned to him by James-II, and died in 1715.

Wycherley, who began his career as a poet, could never make a mark for himself as a poet. Alexander Pope, in his younger years, was a friend to Wycherley. Wycherley penned four plays in all, the last of them being The Plain-Dealer (1677). His plays are full of the greed for wealth and sex, as their chief concerns. He presents his age as it is, and this earned great reputation to him as a writer. However the characters in Wycherley have been dubbed as mere stereotypes.

3.8.4 A Brief Critical Analysis and Evaluation of some of the texts (by way of illustration of the Restoration Comedy):

Etherge's The Man of Mode is considered to be a pioneering work whose characters and style provide a model for later works. Bonamy Dobree, who is often cited as an authority on Restoration Drama, describes the plays of Etherege as pure works of art 'directed to no end but themselves' and hence they are not bothered about any moral values for their inspiration. A similar thing takes place in The Man of Mode. Plots run parallel to one another in this play, and they run so tangentialy as to make it more than one play, placed one, along side another. The only character who provides some kind of a centrality to the story is Dorimant who has an affair with both Love it and Bellinda, but who courts

Harriat, at the end!The story thus acquires the status of an old story with the usual sentimental stuff, - the transformation of a morally wayward character under the reforming touch of a nice woman's love. Dorimant's statement that he prefers solid wealth to a good woman, is worth quoting if only to reveal his essential character: He speaks to another character in the play, thus:

You wed a woman, I a good Estate.

Harriet and Dorimant are no hero and heroine in a romantic comedy and their so-called reformation has all the limitations of a Restoration comedy. Some critics have seen parallels to Dorimant in contemporary England, but it may be difficult to carry the comparison, too far. Other critics are content to see the play as purely comic, and dismiss the view of the play as being realistic. The play has been also criticized for the absence of morals, and the lack of moral purpose. Dorimant is, at best, a veritable lady-killer, typical of the Restoration comedy. The modern critics' attempt to read a serious meaning into the play is questionable, as The Man of the Mode is a satire in the lighter vein, and is penned more for entertainment than chastisement.

The Prologue to The Man of Mode or Sir Fopling Flutter: A Comedy, has some interesting observations. Etherege compares playwrighting to the subtle act of balancing on the rope. Even the slightest loss of balance, it need harldy be observed, breaks one' neck:

Like dances on the ropes poor poets fare
Most perish young, the rest in danger are; …

Etherege is also unhappy with his contemporaries who have borrowed their inspiration from France, from Moliere and others. He is scornful of their excessive dependence on the French, for inspiration. Preferring innovation to imitation, Etherege remarks:

Of foreign wares why should we fetch the scum
When we can be so richly served at home?

The playwright also wittily compares the follies of the audience to diseases that afflict people, and the dramatists therefore, according to him, should serve as the physicians:

'Tis by your follies that we players thrive,
as the physicians by diseases live;…

Farquhar, another great exponent of the Restoration comedy, is valued for his adaptability to the quickly changing scenario of the taste of the audiences of his time. The Beaux Stratagem is supposed to be representative of Farquhar's artistic achievement. A man called Archer tries to seduce one Mrs. Sullen, in vain. But a divorce is contrived between Mrs. Sullen and her husband, and the one-time seducer-to-be, namely, Archer now obtains her hand in marriage. The play is thus farcical and escapist. But one thing is to be noticed, namely, that the young men who try to trick the women in the story, initially, give up their evil intentions, and fall in love with them. The women, on their part also,

mistake them to be robbers initially, but they come to realize that they are mistaken. Thus the play thrives on comic misunderstandings, which are solved at the end.

In his prologue to The Beaux Strategem, Farquhar explains as to why he prefers a lighter vein, to satire. With factionalism in politics on the decline, he believes bitter satire need not be resorted to. When strife disturbs, or sloth corrupts an age, / keen satire is the business of the stage' is how Farquhar begins his prologue. It was alright, says the playwright, for Wycherley to have indulged in bitter satire in his The Plain-Dealer, when things were different and society was infested with crimes, but now, he feels, the scene has changed:

> But now, when faction sleeps, and sloth is fled;
> … … … … … … …
> The trumphs of fame, the notes of union sound;
> … … … …. …. …
> There scarce is room for Satire, all our lays
> Must be, or says of triumph, or of praise.

Farquhar is well aware that follies live as long as humanity survive. Hence he resolves to show such follies as have been never taken up before, to be ridiculed. This he does, he contends, as fools are there only to provide entertainment to sensible men:

> Follies to-night we show ne'er lashed before,
> Yet such as nature shows you every hour;
> Nor can the picture give a just offence,
> For fools are made for jests to man of sense.

Yet another significant thing, noticeable about the play, is the excellent wit of Francis Archer. When Thomas Aimwell argues with Archer that there is ' no crime upon earth but the want of money' (Act I, Scene ii), Archer replies with a witty callousness:

> And that's enough. Men must not be poor; idleness is the root
> Of all evil; the world's wide enough, let'em, bustle. Fortune has
> taken the weak under her protection, but men of sense are left to
> their industry.

Archer also believes that everyone should work hard to make one's fortunes. It is in men to make or mar themselves, as one's fortune depends on one's own ability, as he feels:

> Come, come, we are the men of intrinsic value who can strike
> our fortunes out of ourselves, whose worth is independent of accidents
> in life, or revolution in government. We have heads to get money and
> hearts to spend it.

Vanburgh is by no means a prolific writer of comedies. The Provok'd Wife is a good representation of his work as an artist. He was influenced more by the comedy of humours of Ben Jonson, rather than the contemporary comedy which was fast evolving into the so-called sentimental comedy of the later times. He is highly original in handling wit and manners.

Vanburgh made a serious study of marriage as an institution. The subject however becomes acceptable in his hands, as he is a very witty writer. His play, The Provok'd Wife is taken to be the most serious play on marital disharmony in the Restoration period. It is clothed in the most refined prose, unmatched by any other Restoration writer of comedies.

Sir John Brute is a typical husband of the Restoration comedy. He does not treat his wife well. Lady Brute, who is admired and loved by a gentleman called Constant is torn between Sir John and Contant, but her love of virtue forbids her from colleaguing with Constant. As in Jonsonian comedy, the names of Brute and Constant are self-explanatory. At a time when divorces were not granted easily, such situations were common, but Vanbrugh deals with the delicate issue in an equally delicate and befitting manner, which makes it the masterpiece it is.

On the other hand we have Wychherley, who does not give himself up to the kind of humaneness that Vanbrugh exhibits in dealing with delicate issues. He is known for his harsh pronouncements about contemporary society. In his works, sex is shown as being reduced by the people of his time, to a mere sport and a commercial convenience.

In a subtle prologue to his play, The Country-Wife, Wycherley makes the actors say that they are there to cater to the tastes of the audience, and are ready to sacrifice the poets on the stage, if the audience desire them to do so. Poets are like bullies that do not yield easily to the audience. So the actors promise to 'murder poets on our stage', if that is what the audience desire! All this amounts to saying that the poets or dramatists have to sacrifice their likes and dislikes, if need be, to cater to the tastes of the audience, for the success of their works:

> Poets, like cudgelled bullies, never do
> At first or second blow, submit to you,
>
> … .. …. …
> But we, the actors, humbly will submit,
> Now, at any time, to a full pit;
> Nay, often we anticipate your rage,
> And murder poets for you on our stage:…

Wycherley can be best represented by The Country-Wife. Critics have described it as a sex comedy. John Palmer has described the play as ' a whirlwind of inspired buffoonery'. The play has been widely discussed, but it has also been widely interpreted. No single interpretation of the text seems to agree with another. Such is the diversity of opinion that the play has been variously interpreted. That it is a satire is evident, but a satire against what?

Some have read it as a satire against lust, others have read it as a satire against the meanness of jealousy. Affectations are ridiculed. Three women and pinch wife, Sparkish and Jasper are thoroughly ridiculed.

Trying to categorize the characters into groups, critics have chosen to make it into groups of two men and woman. As Robert D. Hume puts it, ' In each instance a fool yields his woman to the other man. Thus Sir Jasper presses his wife on Horner; Pinch wife brings Margery to Horner; and Sparkish loses Alithea to Har court'. (Congreve's The Way of the World along with his contribution is discussed separately in Lesson 9.2)

3.8.5 Key words/Technical terms:

⇑ Restoration: In British history, the word was applied to the restoration of monarchy. The Restoration Drama however, does not necessarily synchronise with the reign of Charles-II. It has a wider span, extending almost from1660 to 1737.

⇑ Comedy of Manners: The Restoration comedy has also been thus described, as the degenerate morals and manners of the period were presented in the plays and were held up to ridicule.

⇑ Carolean, Caroline: Caroline or Carolean drama is a reference to the dramas produced during Charless-II's reign (1660- 1685), and hence the label is applied to the first phase of the Restoration Drama.

3.8.6 Sample Questions:

1. Mention two or three major writers of Restoration comedy and assess their contribution to Restoration comedy.
2. What are the major themes of Restoration comedy?
3. Write a brief note on two or three well-known comedies of the Restoration period.

3.8.7 Suggested Reading:

1. Restoration and 18th Century Drama, ed. James Vinson (Great writers Library: Macmillan Reference Books, London, 1980).
2. Robert D. Hume, The Development of English Drama In The Late Seventeenth Century (Clarendon press, Oxford, 1976).

- Prof. T. Viswanadha Rao

Lesson - 9

Congreve : The Way of the World

Contents:

3.9.1 Objectives:

i. To offer an estimate of Congreve as a playwright.
ii. To give a brief account of Wit in The Way of the World.
iii. To consider The Way of the World as a comedy of manners.

3.9.2 Background – The Writer and the Period

The comedies of Congreve were written during the Restoration period, which was well known for artificial morals and manners. The plays of the period were concerned with the morals and manners of the upper strata of society of that time. The anger of the critics against Restoration Comedy and its depraved morality is best represented by the scathing attack against Restoration comedy and Congreve, by Jeremy Collier. According to Collier, the Restoration comedy represents a fine gentleman as 'a fine whoring, swearing, smutty atheistical man' who 'burlesques the Bible, swears, and talks smut to the ladies,… fine only in… the abuse of religion.' Thus, Collier concludes, 'we see what a fine time lewd people have on the English stage.' Collier's anger is directed against the way such people are shown to be rewarded in the plays of the period, -'And at last, that the example may work the better, they generally make them rich and happy, and reward them with their own desires'. Congreve who earlier wrote An Essay concerning Humour in Comedy in 1695, offering a distinction between wit and humour and a defence of the eccentric behaviour of his country men, was now forced to answer the charges of immorality and profanity, leveled against Restoration stage, with his Amendments of Mr. Collier's False and imperfect conditions. In this reply, Congreve tried to defend his plays on the grounds that a satirical portrait of high society was justified, and that the ideas expressed by the characters in the plays cannot be attributed to the playwright, himself.

Another bitter critic of these plays, is Macaulay. He condemns in no uncertain terms, the adultery of the Restoration plays,-'During the fifty years which followed the Restoration, the whole body of the dramatists invariably represent adultery…' He also condemns the immoral tendencies of the age in

that a fine gentlemen is mistaken to be one for whom, as Macaulay brutally remarks, ' It is essential to his breeding and to his place in society that he should make love to the wives of his neighbours as that he should know French, or that he should have a sword by his side..' Macaulay is offended that the plays insult true morality and praise immorality. They seem to believe that comedy as a literary form, is free from all moral obligations,- 'In the name of art, as well as in the name of virtue, we protest against the principle that the world of pure comedy is one into which no moral enters', says Macaulay.

To critics like Charles Lamb, on the other hand (while he labels them as 'the Artificial Comedy of the Last Century'), these comedies present the breath of what he describes it as 'imaginary freedom', the imaginary freedom of a fairly land where ' 'pleasure is a duty, and the manners, perfect freedom! While lamb accepts that in Congreve as well as Wycherley, faultless characters are entirely excluded, he maintains that the result is happy. Lamb tries to defend the comedies on the ground that they are indifferent to conventional morality. In these plays, according to him, 'there is neither right nor wrong, - gratitude or its opposite, - claim or duty, paternity or sonship', as the 'whole is a passing pageant'. Even Thackeray admits that there doesn't seem to be a pretence of morals in Restoration comedies.

William Hazlitt reads the Restoration comedies as offering an escape into another world. He considers comedy as the best company one can choose, -'To read a good comedy is to keep the best company in the world, where the best things are said, and the most amusing happen.' Hazlitt therefore describes comedy as an ornament, ' a graceful ornament to the civil order, the Cornithian capital of polished society…' According to the critic, the dawn of Restoration comedy was represented by Etherege, to find its growth and perfection at the hands of four principal writers of the literary form,- Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh and Farquhar.

3.9.3 The Writer- his Life and Works:

1. <u>His Life</u>:

William Congreve was born in Bardsley, Yorkshire, in 1670. His parents moved to Ireland in 1674, his father having taken up the job of a land agent in Ireland. He had his schooling in Kilkenny. Later he studied at Trinity college, Dublin. The distinguished satirist, Swift, was his class mate. He went to Middle Temple, London, in 1691. But soon he gave up his pursuit of law in preference to literature.

With his <u>The Old Bachelor</u>, <u>The Double Dealer</u>, <u>Love for Love</u>, and <u>The Way of the World</u>, Congreve became a writer of comedies. He wrote a tragedy, <u>The Mourning Bride</u> (1697). In 1698, Jeremy Collier came out with his trenchant attack upon Restoration Comedy in general, and Congreve in particular. Congreve tried to answer there charges, but the cold response of the audience to <u>The Way of the World</u> prompted him to stop writing for the stage.

Thereafter, Congreve held many posts in the government and breathed his last in 1729, and was buried in Westminister Abbey.

2. His Works:

The first literary work for which Congreve is recognized is a novel called Incognita. Much in keeping with the title, the novel is full of mistaken identities and the ignorance of the lovers that the match which their parents contemplate for them, is no other than the one that they themselves desire.

Congreve is credited with four important comedies, The Old Bachelor(1693), The Double Dealer (1694), Love for Love (1695), and The Way of the World (1700). For his The Old Bachelor , the playwright borrows hints from the Roman Comedy of Plautus and Terence, the 'Humour' comedy of Ben Jonson and even Juvenal, the Roman satirist. The Old Bachelor of the play is Heartwell who pretends to be a woman-hater, but having fallen in love with Silivia, he is forced to marry her. Luckily for Heartwell, the marriage turns out to be a fake, a mere pretence to suit the convenience of a rogue called Belmour. The Double Dealer (1694) is a serious satire and Maskwell, the villain of the piece is true to his name. Congreve seems to be taking a clue from Ben Jonson in making the names of some of his characters, revelatory of their nature. Maskwell can disguise himself well, and put on any mask to suit him, well. The play is skillfully constructed but it has a gravity which is not in keeping with the spirit of comedy. Congreve wanted to expose the vicious. The comedy however, lacks the lightheartedness of the typical Restoration comedies. The way Lady Touchwood is exposed, has nothing comic about it. The only relieving features of the play are Lady Froth with her poetry, and pseudo-scholarship besides the comic absurdities of Sir Paul Playant, Mr. brisk and Lord Froth. Congreve tried to follow the classical unities in this drama. In his dedication to the play, the dramatist tells us that he designed the moral first, and then the fable. The concluding lines of the play may be taken as the moral:

> Let secret villainy from hence be warn'd;
> Howe're in private, mischiefs are conceiv'd,
> Torture and shame attend their open Birth,..

Love for Love (1695) is rightly appreciated as a pure comedy. It has a well-knit plot and is enlivened by humour and satire. The play seems to operate by the principle of contrasts, the conflict of generations and the clash between urban and rural ways playing a prominent role in dramatic action. Mrs. Frail, who wants to marry valentine, only for his wealth, is fooled into marrying Tattle, for whom she has nothing short of contempt. Valentine marries Angelica. Unlike many other plays of Congreve which deal with only the upper classes of society, this play deals with the middle class and the business community. John Barnard points out that the main plot of the story is based on Fletcher's Elder Brother and 'as in Massinger's A New Way to Pay Old Debts and Middleton's Tricks to Catch the Old One, the prodigal has become a constant lover before the play opens…' Valentine, a lover of Angelica, runs into debts to win her hand. When the debts grow out of Valentine's reach, he is forced to take recourse to deceit and pretends madness, as an ultimate ploy.

The Way of the World (1700) is a masterpiece. It is based on the theme of troubled legacy. But it has evoked a cold response from the audience. A disappointed Congreve gave up the profession of the play wright, as a result and took to government jobs, instead. (The play is discussed at length in 9.2.v and 9.2.vi).

3.9.4. Analysis of the text:

The Way of the World is dedicated to the Right Hon'ble Ralph, Earl of Montague. Ironically, while the play could not meet with the success desired by Congreve, the playwright himself says the opposite, namely, that it 'succeeded on the stage,…beyond my expectation.' The writer says that the label of the poet has been so devalued and diluted that all poets and writers are treated on same par, by people without any sense of discrimination,- 'for the prostituted name of the poet promiscuously levels all that bear it'.

Congreve admires Terence, the Roman writer of comedies as 'the most correct writer in the world'. He points out how Terence built his plays on the practice of Menander, the Greek dramatist. Menander, in turn, learnt his principles from his master, Theophrastus. Theophrastus was the immediate successor of Aristotle.

The playwright begins his play with a prologue in which he says poets are first made fools by nature, only to be abandoned by her later:

> Of those few fools, who with ill stars are cursed,
> Sure scribbling fools, called poets, fare the worst;
> For they're a sort of fools which Fortune makes,
> And after she has made 'em Fools, forsakes.

The playwright says that the audience may not expect any satire from the play, as he observes the whole town is refined and from such a town, it is difficult to expect any need for correction. Hence, he says, he prefers to confine himself merely to humour:

> Satire, he thinks, you ought not to expect;
> For so reformed a town, who dares correct?
> To please, this time, has been his sole pretence,
> He'll not instruct, lest it should give offence.

The theme of the play is the love between Mirabell and Millamant. Lady Wishfort tries to prevent the love and Mirabell tries his best to foil the old lady's plans. Finally, he succeeds.

Act-I

Fainall (son-in-law of Lady Wishfort) stops playing cards with Mirabell on the plea that the latter is indifferent to the game, and that 'the coldness of a losing gamester lessens the pleasure of the winner'. Fainall points out that Lady Wishfort has a passion for Mirabell. But Mirabell wants Millamant as his consort. During the conversation of Mirabell with Fainall, we discover that Millamant, the niece of Lady Wsihfort, requires the latter's approval of her choice of a husband, if she has to inherit her share from the old lady.

Fainall tells Mirabell of women meeting thrice a week to discuss the gossip of the town,-'to sit upon the murdered reputations of the week'. They have Witwoud and Petulant as the only male

members for these meetings, as a nominal representation for men. Mrs. Marword exposes the false pretence of Mirabell, namely, his pretence of love to Lady Wishfort, concealing his love for Millamant. As part of a plan to prevent Lady Wishfort from any move which might ruin Mirabell's claim to inheritance, Mirabell arranges a match between Waitwell and Foible.

The Conversation of Fainall and Mirabell now turns to Millamant. Fainall commends her wit, and points out that being a passionate lover, Mirabell ignores her faults. Mirabell answers, 'I like her with all her faults, nay, like her for her faults. Her follies are so natural, or so artful, that they become her,…' Meanwhile, news is brought that Sir Willful Witwoud, half-brother to Squire Witwoud and nephew to Lady Wish fort, is to visit her. The enemies of Mirabell plan to arrange a match for Sir Rowland, uncle of Mirabel who is unmarried so that when he has a son, Mirabell may be disinherited.

Act- II

Mrs. Marwood is a lusty dame. In spite of her illicit relationship with Fainall, she has an eye on Mirabell, to fulfil her insatiable passion. Fainall is no better than Mrs. Marwood, as he married a wealthy lady not for her love, but for her wealth. Mrs. Marwood and Fainall encourage Mirabell and Millament to marry.

Mirabell plans to fool Lady Wishfort. The plan is to make Waitwell, his servant, put on the disguise of Sir Rowland, to woo and win the hand of Lady Wishfort. Mirabell has to release Lady Wishfort from the servant's clutches on condition that Millamant gets her share.

Act -III

Foible, the woman servant of Lady Wishfort, encourages Lady Wishfort to marry Sir Rowland, as this would help her disinherit Millamant. Mrs. Fainall joins hands with Mirabell in his scheme. Mrs. Marwood advices Fainall to divorce his wife after obtaining his estate. She also proposes to reveal to Lady Wishfort, through an anonymous letter, the fraud being practised on her by Mirabell.

Act -IV

While Lady Wishfort receives Waitwell in the disguise of Sir Rowland, Mrs. Marwood's letter, warning her about the deception being practised on her, reaches her. Cold water is thus poured on the enthusiasm of Lady Wishfort, but the woman servant Foible tries to patch up, by calling the letter, another trick by the jealous Mirabell.

Act- V

Finall, who follows the advice of Mrs. Marwood, threatens to divorce his wife, who is no other than Lady Wishfort's daughter. Lady Wishfort is in deep trouble. She curses her fate, but she thinks she has no option but to resign herself to the inevitable.

At this moment, Millamant pretends to be willing to marry Sir Willful, as suggested by Lady Wishfort, rather than lose the inheritance of six thousand pounds, her share. The conspirators are thus discomfited.

However, a surprise comes in the form of a document made by Mrs. Fainall, much earlier, in which she has transferred her wealth to Mirabell, and the deed is unalterable. A grateful Lady Wishfort consents to the marriage between Millamant and Mirabell.

3.9.5 A Brief Critical evaluation of the Literary text and the Writers work

9.2. i Wit in <u>The Way of the World</u>:

The basis of Wit is intellect. It is an admixture of words being used brilliantly or ideas which delight or startle the reader by their innovative ability.

Wit in the Restoration comedy is based not on serious satire but a light hearted laugh at deviations of human morality or nature. The comparison that Fainall indulges in, namely, a losing gamester to an immoral woman is at once funny and serious in that it points to the loose morals of contemporary society,- 'I'd no more play with a man that slighted his ill fortune, than I'd make love to a woman who undervalued the loss of her reputation.'

When Fainall argues with Mirabell that Millamant is endowed with 'wit', Mirabell replies, 'she has beauty enough to make any man trust so; and complaisance enough not to contradict him who shall tell her so'.

In a discussion on Sir Wilful Witwoud, Fainall tells Mirabell, '…'t is for the honour of England, that all Europe should know we have block heads of all ages.', to be answered by Mirabell, ' I wonder there is not an act of parliament to save the credit of the nation, and prohibit the exportation of fools'.

Witwoud, a character in the play, comes out with a queer definition of a wit. He believes that a wit should not be sincere or constant, '… a wit should no more be sincere, than a woman constant; one argues a decay of parts, as t' other of beauty'.

When on one occasion, Mirabell protests to Witwoud that he seems to be very free with his friend's acquaintances, Witwoud replies, 'Aye, aye: friendship without freedom is as dull as love without enjoyment, or wine without tasting;…'

When Betty tells Petulant in Act-I that some ladies who are offended by his words, have left the place in a huff, he takes it easy. When Betty says to Petulant, 'They are gone, sir, in great anger', Petulant replies rather wittily and spontaneously, 'Enough, let'em trundle. Anger helps complexion, saves paint'.

The words of Mirabell with which Act-I closes are memorable for their wit:

> Where modesty's ill manners, 'tis but fit
> That impudence and malice pass for wit.

The lines are a befitting comment on the degenerate morals and manners of the contemporary society.

Every character in the play exercises his imagination to produce undeniably attractive wit. In a conversation with Mrs. Marwood (with which Act II opens)Mrs. Fainall remarks that men are always in the extreme, accepting or rejecting women, -'while they are lovers,…their jealousies are insupportable: and when they cease to love.. they look upon us with horror and distaste; they meet us like the ghosts of what we were, and as from such, fly from us'. Mrs. Marwood accepts her argument, but contends that love is an important aspect of life, in particular, a woman's:

> To pass our youth in dull indifference, to refuse the sweets of life because they once must leave us, is as preposterous as to wish to have been born old, because we one day must be old.

When Mrs. Fainall brings to the notice of Mirabell, the fact that Lady Wishfort wants to obtain a husband, by hook or by crook, Mirabell's answer sends the audience into uproarious and hearty peals of laughter. He says:

> Yes, I think the good lady would marry anything that resembled a man, though it were no more than what a butler could pinch out of a napkin.

When Mrs. Fainall tries to attribute such an attitude to female frailty, Mirabell theorizes, rather wittily:

> An old woman's appetite is depraved like that of a girl- 't is the green sickness of a second child hood; and like the faint offer of a later spring, serves but to usher in the fall; and withers in an affected bloom.

Millamant offers a befitting foil to Mirabell's wit. Thus when Mirabell tells Millamant that women cease to be beautiful in the absence of their lovers, she gives him a befitting reply. Mirabell argues that 'beauty is the lover's gift' and that the mirror cannot properly or adequately reflect a woman's beauty ('your glass is all a cheat', he says). Millamant replies;

> One no more owes one's beauty to a lover, than
> One's wit to an echo; they can but reflect what we look
> and say; vain empty things if we are silent or unseen, and
> want a being.

But when Millamant leaves the place, Mirabell says with a touch of contempt, like a woman-hater, 'A fellow that lives in a wind mill has not more whimsical dwelling than the heart of a man that is lodged in a woman.'

9.2. ii 'The Way of the World' as a Comedy of Manners:

While answering Jeremy Collier's charges against Restoration comedy in general and his comedies in particular, Congreve goes back to the definition of Aristotle's comedy as being a mimesis

or an imitation of 'the worst sort of people.. in respect to their Manners'. Allardyce Nicoll points out that in the period ranging from 1660 to 1700, there are several categories of comedy like Jonsonian, intrigue, Drydensque, farcical, sentimental and comedy of manners. The classification does not help much, when it comes to practical considerations. The truth is that these categories crisscross one another.

While Dryden prefers wit, Shadwell prefers humour. Boradly speaking, those who preferred wit, came to be associated with the comedy of Manners, while those who preferred humour to wit, associated themselves with the comedy of Humours. According to Dryden, humour is employed to make people laugh, wit to move people, to a nobler pleasure.

During the reign of Charles, a great debate centered around the nature of comedy and no consensus could be arrived at. However, the comedies had a young man winning the hand of a lady, in the background of routine opposition from his parents and his rivals, as well. The plays are said to be realistic, 'Displays you, as you are' as Wycherley claims in the prologue to The Provok'd Wife, it is the intention and the business of the stage, to present the follies of the age-' to hold to every man a faithful glass,/ And shew him of what species he's an Ass.'

A strange anamoly that is often brought to our notice is that the laws of the land (with regard to marriage) during the period of the Restoration Drama were rigorous both in theory and practice and therefore the kind of marriages that are shown in these comedies were unthinkable. The comedy of manners therefore presents a fanciful world of make-believe to shock the audience.

Congreve's The Way of the World is a comedy of manners. It approximates in the main, to the widely cited definition of Nicoll. While maintaining that the school of comedy of manners depends on an atmosphere which cannot be precisely analysed rather than on any outstanding features, Nicoll gives a succinct definition of the comedy of manners:

> In the main, we may say, the invariable elements of the Comedy of Manners are the presence of at least one pair of Witty lovers, the women as emancipated as the man, their dialogue free and graceful, an air of refined cynicism over the whole production, the plot of less consequence than the wit,an absence of crude realism, a total lack of any emotion whatsoever.

The comedy of Manners was associated with the fashionable life of the upper classes of society. The morals and manners presented in the plays are shallow and superficial. Love in these comedies seems to be merely a fashionable misnomer for lust, as only adultery receives adulation in this degenerate scheme of values.

The most important and distinguishing feature of the comedy of manners is its wit. Congreve's The Way of the World is full of wit. Every character in the play is shown as capable of exhibiting wit. In the Double Dealer of Congreve, the word 'Manners' is interpreted by Lady Froth as 'some distinguishing quality'. The comedy of manners differs from the comedy of humours in that the former is confined to a section of the society, where as the latter deals with all classes of society. As in

Congreve's The Way of the World, the comedy of humours deals with inborn eccentricities. The comedy of manners is imported from France, which was then as it is now, a fashion centre of Europe.

Thus even the best exemplars of the comedy of manners are restrained by a limited vision.

9.2.iii The Title:

The 'world' in the title of Congreve's play is more a reference to the fashionable and aristocratic world of the London city during the Restoration period, rather than to the wide world to which we are exposed daily. The world of Congreve's comedy is insular, a little world with its own joys and sorrows, with its own follies and foibles. The deeds and the talk that characters indulge in here are full of the witty remarks of the characters. The play is a comedy, and also a gentle satire on the snobbery of people who inhabit the little world of London. This little world closes the eyes on morality, as it is conventionally understood by the world in general. It is the surface reality that constitutes the staple diet of the characters here, and they are hardly bothered by the greater issues that tend to fill the panoramic vision called 'life'. Men deceive women and are reciprocated with the same courtesy. To talk of scoundrels, is their daily bread. They trick and are tricked in turn, and take it all in their stride. It is all in the game called life, for them.

Like a subtle game of card or a game of chess, life to them is move and counter move, trick and counter trick. To every trick, there is an equal and opposite trick, ready. Wit is matched with wit to a surprisingly accurate degree.

The story is centred around two lovers- Mirabell and Millamant. Mirabell wants to win the land of Millamant. All of Mirabell's intrigues are directed to this end. To please Lady Wishfort, an old lady and aunt of Millamant, whose age has failed to dampen her passions, he makes a dangerous pretence, - the pretence of love to her. Discovered in his shallow trick, he comes out with another.

Mirabell has illicit contacts with other women, but is rewarded with the hand of his beloved, Millamant, at the end! With all generosity, he gives an advice to married women, not to 'stain the bridal bed'. But who is it that stains the bridal bed in The Way of the World? It is Mirabell himself, who comes to our mind, the moment the question is asked. This is the irony of the play, the satire directed against the corrupted currents of the world of Restoration.

Mirabell has a worthy colleague in these matters. He is Fainall who has an affair with Mrs. Marwood. When this is discovered, Fainall is utterly unmoved and remarks, ''t is but the way of the world'. Even if a wife makes fool of the husband, he would take it easy, as part of the way of the world:

> And I, it seems, am a husband, a rank husband, and my wife a very errant,
> rank wife, - all in the way of the world.

When at the end of the play, the deed of Mrs. Fainall in favour of Mirabell, is employed as the last and ultimate weapon to save Lady Wishfort, he answers a stunned Fainall:

> Even so, sir, 't is the way of the world, sir, of the widows of the world. I suppose this deed may bear an elder date than what you have obtained from your lady.

Thus the title The Way of the World is justified for the play. As Brian Gibbons remarks, 'The Way of the World, is not an ironic title, it is reconciliatory…'

3.9.6 A Summary

The Restoration period was known for its artificial manners and morals, sanctioned by the aristocratic classes of the contemporary society. Jeremy Collier objected to the wanton immorality of the plays in general and Congreve's plays in particular. Congreve answered his charges in Amendments of Mr.Collier's False and Imperfect conditions, in which he argued that the ideas expressed by the characters cannot be attributed to the playwright, himself. While critics like Macaulay are bitter and against Restoration comedy, others like Lamb, tried to defend it as referring to an imaginary, fairy land where 'pleasure is a duty, and manners, perfect freedom'

Etherege made a beginning in Restoration comedy, followed by four important writers of the period,-Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh and Farquhar. Congreve had four noteworthy comedies to his credit. They are The Old Bachelor, The Double Dealer, Love for Love, and The Way of the World. The playwright was influenced by Ben Jonson and by Plautus and Terence of the Roman comedy.

The Way of the World which best represents Congreve's style, although it was not well received by the audience at first, is dedicated to the Right Hon'ble Ralph, Earl of Montague. Congreve states in his prologue to the play that pleasure and not satire, is his chief aim. The theme of the play is the love between Mirabelll and Millamant. An aunt of Millament, Lady Wishfort, plays the villain till the end, but the clever and witty Mirabell contrives to foil all her attempts, to finally win the hand of Millamant, saving Lady Wishfort also from what appears to be an inevitable ruin of her fortunes. All the characters in the play are known for their wit.

The way of the world is a comedy of manners. It fulfils all the requirements of this literary form, namely, a pair of witty lovers, the equality of the sexes, refined dialogues, and a fashionable freedom from conventional morality.

3.9.7 Key Words/Technical terms (by way of illustration, the Act numbers where they occur, being shown in parentheses):

Canonical hour (Act I)	: 8 a.m. to noon, the hours of legal marriages to be Celebrated in the church.
Bum-baily (Act I)	: a bailiff employed to arrest criminals.
Conventicle (Act I)	: a meeting of non-conformists.
Later Spring (Act II)	: someone who exhibits youthful passion in old age (Prince Hal describes Falstaff, thus in Shakespeare's Henry IV-I)

Mopus (Act III)	:	a stupid
Short view (Act III)	:	a reference to Jeremy Collier's attack on the immorality and the irreligiosity of the English Stage.
Mouth-glue	:	an oral promise.

3.9.8 Sample Questions

1. Write a note on The Way of the World as a comedy of manners.
2. Write a note on Wit in Congreve's The Way of the World.
3. Write a brief note on the title of the play.

3.9.9. Suggested Reading:

1. Restoration And 18th Century Drama, ed. James Vinson (Great Wrtiers of the English Language series, Macmillan, London, 1980).

2. Congreve's The Way of the World, ed. C.T.Thomas (Macmillan India, Madras, 1978).

3. Congreve's The Way of the World, ed. Brian Gibbons (New Mermaids edn., Ernest Benn Ltd., London, Second Impression, 1977).

4. Ronald D. Hume, The Development of English Drama In the Late Seventeenth Century (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1976).

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Lesson - 10

Metaphysical Poetry

Contents

3.10.1 Objectives

i. to define and distinguish the characteristics of Metaphysical Poetry

ii to place before the student the merits and limitations of Metaphysical poetry

3.10.2 Background – the writers the period

The label 'Metaphysical' came to be applied to the poetry of the first half of the seventeenth century. The world 'Metaphysical' here is not used in its lexical sense of all that pertains to the varied speculations of philosophy dealing with God and man. Thus the word, whatever be its origin, came to be applied by Dryden and Johnson to a school of poets and a style of poetry with its distinct mode. The origins of this poetry were deeply rooted in a desire for revolt against established traditions of courtly poetry and poetic conventions of the Renaissance, based on the works of writers and traditional modes, (one cannot but notice that) these writers have gone to the other extreme of an affected style based on intellect, learning and wit. The enormous amount of learning, the new geographical explorations, the commercial boom, the fierce religious controversies of the Age of Elizabeth which continued beyond the period of her reign have coloured and tinctured the imagination of the poets of the time. The unconventional response to this from major thinkers and writers like Donne, culminated in what we now read under the name of 'Metaphysical' poetry.

Like many movements in English poetry, the metaphysical poetry was also influenced by poetic movements, which were broadly European in their origin. The followers of Gongora in Spain and of Marini in Italy were the torch bearers in this case as the movements which went by their name, namely Gorgorsino and Marinismo had an indelible impact on the English metaphysical writers. Besides in Spain there was conceptismo and in Italy, Concettismo, both connected with Metaphysical poetry.

Discussions on Metaphysical poetry often start with the well-known observation of Dryden. In his essay on "The origin and progress of satire', Dryden speaks of Donne as having affected 'the Metaphysicals, not only in his satires, but in Amorous verses, where nature only should reign; and perplexes the minds of the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy, when he should engage their hearts and entertain them with softness of love.'

Later, Dr. Samuel Johnson made a thorough examination of the metaphysical mode in a brief, but memorable set of observations in his biography of Abraham Cowley, a friend. The remarks and observations of Johnson on the Metaphysicals were far from adulatory. Johnson's biting and bitter remarks on the Metaphysicals cannot be easily forgotten by any reader.

Johnson, while accepting that the Metaphysicals were scholars, condemns them precisely for this very reason, as he feels that their work is characterized by their desire to exhibit or show their learning. It is thought to be an unhealthy desire, as their efforts were all directed in this wrong direction. Johnson accuses the writers of having composed verses to suit the rules of prosody without ever bothering to make them agreeable to the ear, in other words their verses were by no means musical. They are simply wooden. Again, according to the critic, the metaphysical writers did not satisfy wooden. Again, according to the critic, the metaphysical writers did not satisfy themselves with ordinary or commonplace comparisons. 'Nature and art are ransacked for comparisons' in the poetry of the metaphysicals. Unfortunately however their efforts do not yield the desired results, as the readers do not seen to be impressed. 'The reader thinks his wisdom dearly bought', laments Johnson and instead of admiring the industry that has gone into the thoughts thus presented, wonders, 'by what perverseness of industry they were ever found.

The most important contribution of Johnson to an understanding of the Metaphysical poetry consists in his comments on the linking up of ideas in the poetry of the metaphysical writers. The attempt to find similarities in dissimilar objects forms the very essence, basis or foundation of Metaphysical poetry, according to Johnson. This is what he describes it as the 'discordia concors', the concord or agreement to be found in objects that present a discord or disagreement by refusing to be linked up. We all know that it is easier to link up or bring on to the same plat form, the like-minded. We also know how difficult it is to seek harmony where disharmony is the rule. But it is precisely this that the Metaphysicals excel in achieving. This however is not a result of conciliation or compromise. On the other hand, it is like the marriage or union of two totally opposed or unwilling parties. They are heterogeneous, as Johnson calls them. The Metaphysicals, trying to link up such dissimilar ideas, do not hesitate to apply force or violence. In this case of course, the violence is verbal. Thus, Johnson comes to observe, ' the most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together'.

Johnson considers the definition of wit by Pope ('that which has been often thought, but was never before so well expressed', and opines that the Metaphysicals do not exhibit wit in that sense. However, the critic does not approve of Pope's definition of wit and redefines wit in the case of Metaphysicals as ' a kind of discordia concors; a combination in things apparently unlike.

After making many such scathing remarks on the Metaphysicals, Johnson pays them a left-handed compliment as it were namely, that to write on their lines and pattern it was at least necessary, to be highly learned – 'to write on their plan, it was at least necessary to read and think. No man could be born a metaphysical poet, not assume the dignity of a writer, by descriptions copied from descriptions, by imitations borrowed from imitations, by traditional imagery, and hereditary similes, by readiness of rhyme, or volubility of syllables.'

Thus the criticism of Johnson had done a great damage to the image of Metaphysical writers. A full-fledged rehabilitation could come to them in the form of T.S. Eliot, years later.

Eliot points out that the term 'Metaphysical' has been used more than once, as a term of abuse. He also observes that it is very difficult to define Metaphysical poetry. Unlike Johnson, Eliot has a word of praise for the Metaphysicals, as he feels that their language is as a rule ' simple and pure'. But Johnson is a ' dangerous man to disagree with', besides being a 'shrewd and sensitive' critic.

Eliot classifies some major writers into intellectual poets and reflective poets. Thus for him, Tennyson and Browning are intellectual poets who have very little feeling. On the other hand we have metaphysical writers like Donne who may be described basically as reflective poets, buy not incapable of what the so-called intellectual poets could deliver. 'A thought to Donne was an experience' according to Eliot and it is this 'sensuous apprehension of thought' that we can find in Metaphysical writers like Donne who combine into a unified whole, the two poles of emotion and thought. Metaphysical writers like Donne are free from the dissociation of sensibility (the cleavage between emotion and thought) which has set in during the sensibility as emotion and thought, feeling and logic are fused and integrated in his poetry. Eliot says that it is difficult to find a metaphor, simile or a conceit common to the Metaphysical poets as a group

According to Eliot, 'Metaphysical implies the elaboration of a figure of speech to the 'furthest stage to which ingenuity can carry it. 'Eliot cites the comparison of the world to a chess board, by Cowley and comparison of a lovers to a pair of compasses by Donne, as illustrations for this.

Metaphysical poetry is also characterized by the use of the conceit. The word 'conceit' is used to cover a wide range K.K. Ruthven points out that ever since Chaucer, it was being used as a synonym of thought, concept, conception or idea. Shakespeare uses the word in the sense of an invention or device. Spelt once as 'conceipt', it was used to describe the nature and function of metaphor. The conceptismo in Spain and the Concettismo of Italy are said to be thus derived.

Conceits are of several kinds and even a broad classification spells their wide variety. There are Heraldic conceits, emblematic conceits, typological conceits and etymological conceits, to mention only some. In an illuminating study, K.K. Ruthven, quotes Duncan to the effect that Aristotle can be regarded as the father of the conceit. The conceit, which was used with great effect till the middle of the seventeenth century, lost its charm during its later half.

Metaphysical conceits are also said to be far-fetched as they are arrived at by stretching a metaphor or simile to its furthest possibility of comparison.

3.10.3 The Writers – Lives and Works

Richard Crashaw was born in London in A.D. 1613. He obtained his B.A. degree in 1634. He left for Paris in 1645 and later migrated to Italy. Crashaw became a Roman Catholic in 1645. He died in 1649.

Crashaw is basically a devotional poet. His style is affected and is often described as baroque, a style full of rhetoric. His devotional songs are full of mysticism but their language is not free from erotic images. The image of God as a lover is common to both Crashaw and Donne. Steps to the temple, published in 1645, is a major work by Crashaw. His devotional work Carmen deo Nostro was published, posthumously. He is commemorated in an elegy, by his friend Abraham Cowley.

George Herbert was a Welshman born in 1593. He had his schooling at West Minister School, London. He obtained his B.A. and M.A. from Trinity College, Cambridge. Later he worked in the Cambridge University. He became a Member of the Parliament. Herbert died in 1633. The Temple published in 1633, was his major work.

Just before his death, Herbert was reported to have sent The Temple to his friend Nicholas Ferrar with the suggestion that it might be printed if it was found to have the ability to console pour souls. Otherwise, the work, he suggests might as well be burnt.

Henry Vaughan was a Welshman, born in 1632. He matriculated from Jesus College, Oxford, but left without obtaining a degree there. Later he studies medicine, qualified himself and settled as a surgeon in 1645. He died in 1695.

His early work consisting mainly of love poems, is by no means impressive. His best work was Silex Scintillans which is characterized by man's sense of alienation from the divine and his sojourn n earth as a prisoner. Vaughan's work is said to be non-unifrom. Readers of Vaughan know him for his famous poem. 'The Retreate'.

For details on Donne, see Lesson 3,2.

There are others like Marvell and Cleveland cited along with the pioneers of Metaphysical poetry, but the affected style of Cleveland has come to be mockingly referred to as 'Clevelandism'.

3.10.2 Analysis of some texts

3.10.3 A brief critical evaluation of some literary texts and the Writers' work:

A writer like Donne is an adept in writing love poems. The love poems exhibit a great diversity but they can be broadly classified into poems celebrating the merely physical and those that celebrate the platonic, - the beauty of the soul. They also oscillate between constancy and inconstancy, both of which are celebrated by turns. Thus while poems like 'The Canonization' celebrate the lovers as

saints, poems like 'The Relic' present love as an aspect merel of the soul. 'The Triple Fool' and 'The Funeral' represent the agony of unrequited love. 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning' is a example of the agony of parting being cited as part of the game of love. Yet another aspect that catches the readers' attention is the connection between love and religion as it is established in Donne's poems. Religious ideas are superimposed or woven into the texture of Donne's love poems like 'The Canonization' with overtones of transcendental communion. Speaking about Donne's Songs and Sonnets, Christopher Ricks remarks that poems like 'The Canonization', 'The Anniversarie', 'The Good Morrow' propose 'a human relationship which can stand as the way of the world altogether, or even remedy in that one area, the inadequacies of our lives'. The religious poems of Donne, however, have a confessional tone, the penitence of a sinner, pleading for God's mercy. The conflict between the catholic and the protestant points of view infuses a tension in the poetry of Donne. Richard Gill rightly argues that in poems like 'The Canonization' and 'The Relic', it is difficult to decide whether Donne approves a catholic vision or understanding of the world or speaks like the protestant voice, 'discontented with communal beliefs.

On the other hand we have a poet like Herbert with his marked poem, 'The Temple'. In his monograph on George Herbert, Eliot rightly out that Herbert's reputation rests mainly on the collection of poems called The Temple. Eliot asks us to read the poem in its entirety as a random selection of poems from this collection fails to give us the insights necessary for our understanding of the writer. Comparing Donne with Herbert, Eliot remarks that while both are intellectual poets, in Donne, thought seems to be in control of feeling, while in Herbert, feeling seems to be in control of thought. Unlike Donne whose reputation, according to Eliot, rests on his love poetry, Herbert among the metaphysicals ' is the only one whose sole source of inspiration was religious faith'. Eliot goes so far as to say that Herbert's The Temple is 'a more important document than all of Done's religious poems taken together.' Besides, the work is technically perfect. Both Vaughan and Crashaw are profoundly influenced by Herbert in spite of the fact that they have an individually, all their own.

3.10.4 A Summary

The term 'Metaphysical' was applied to a school of poets who flourished during the first half of the seventeenth century. They revolted against established traditions of courtly poetry. They were inspired by examples borrowed from Spain and Italy. Johnson did not take to them kindly and passed several adverse comments on their poetry. These writers were characterized by intellectual acumen. Their wit found its expression through their far-fetched metaphors. Their style was full of conceits. The adverse remarks of Johnson were answered in later times by Eliot. Eliot praised the metaphysical writers for their ability to fuse thought and feeling into a unified whole.

Some critics tried to trace the origins of Metaphysical poetry, to Aristotle and his idea of similarity in dissimilars. Donne, Crashaw, Herbert, Vaughan, and Marvell are some of the great writers who tried to bring the Metaphysical mode into English poetry. Donne, described as 'the monarch of wit' is undoubtedly the leader of them all.

Love poetry and devotional poetry were to two chief aspects of the Metaphysical mode.

3.10.5 Technical terms/literary terms/keywords:

Metaphysical, Gobndorismo, Marinismo, conceit, Conceptismo, concettismo, baroque (all these expressions have been explained during the course of the lesson)

3.10.8 Sample Questions

1. Write a note on Metaphysical poetry.
2. What does the word Metaphysical connote in a discussion of poets who are described that label?
3. Trace the origins of Metaphysical poetry and describe its distinguishing or chief features.

3.10.9 Suggested Reading

1. Joan Bennet, Five Metaphysical Poets (Indian Edition, Radha Publishing House, Calcutta , 1988)
2. English Poetry And Prose (1540 – 1674), Ed., Christopher Ricks (Penguin Books, London, Reprint 1993)
3. The Renaissance Excluding Drama, Ed. James Vinson (Great Writers Students Library, Macmillan, London, 1969).

Prof. T. Viswanadha Rao

Lesson - 11

John Donne

Contents:

3.11.1 Objectives:

1. To provide a background of influences that shaped Donne the man and Donne the Poet.
2. To focus on the specific characteristics of Donne which tend to distinguish him from the others.
3. To provide an analysis of the poems prescribed for study along with a critical comment.

3.11.2 Background - The writer and the period.

Born an Elizabethan, Donne was recognized to be unique and original. Donne is often referred to as a modern writer. Ben Jonson rightly remarked of Donne that he was 'the first poet in the world in some things'. A reader, who first comes across the poetry of Donne without knowledge of his date of birth, will surely be surprised to be told that he is an Elizabethan. The nature of his intellectual inquiries forces the reader to see in him the tendencies of a slightly later period.

Donne was a Catholic by birth, but was converted into the Church of England, preferring advancement to adherence. Donne's poetry is characterized by the tension between some shades of Christianity which were in constant conflict during the Elizabethan period and which it was an uphill task for the queen to reconcile. Ever since Henry VIII established dominance over the authority of the Pope, England has a separate church organization, which came to be called the church of England or the Anglican church. The followers of the Church of England were bound by an oath of supremacy to the monarch. But as there were already a number of Catholics and Puritans in England who still preferred to have their own way in matters of religion, the queen had to tow a reconciliatory line. Thus while the church of England was the official church, a nominal and outward acceptance of its authority was considered sufficient. The queen however saw a threat to her administration in fanatic Catholics and Puritans who were ready to question the sanctity of the Church of England, openly. She was forced to deal with such elements, sometimes with a heavy hand. All this was the result of a troubled religious legacy that the queen bequeathed from her predecessors, and it was not of her own making.

A sentence of excommunication by the Pope in 1570 against Queen Elizabeth, worsened the situation- as fervent Catholics had to decide in favour of the Queen or the Pope. In and around 1580, things went from bad to worse as the Pope was reported as having instigated Catholics to kill Queen Elizabeth for promoting the cause of Catholicism. The queen therefore was left with no option but to retaliate with all her might and persecute the hardened lot among the Catholics who were unwilling to be loyal to the throne. The Puritans on the other hand wished to wipe away even the least traces of ritual in the church which bore any resemblance to catholic practices. The Queen had to deal with these fanatic puritans also.

All this has relevance to Donne's life and his poetry, as his ancestors were Catholics and Donne was torn between his religious inheritance and the practical compulsions of having had to bow down to the throne, by accepting the official religion of the state, the church of England. His poetry, we are told by critics and scholars, reflects this tension, rather prominently.

In matters of knowledge, the Elizabethan age was in a ferment. The old ideas sought to be discarded or revised. Geographical explorations coupled with a love of scientific discoveries inspired men of the Elizabethan times.

He could make a claim to good poetic lineage as John Heywood was his maternal grandfather. He was a scholar acquainted with the work of great writers like Dante and Rabelais, mostly in the original. Ovid, the Roman writer, with his Amores or love poems in Latin, was another remarkably great influence on Donne. Many of Ovid's Latin poems were exercises for pleasure, meant to delight the reader, rather than being a serious representation of real life situations. They are descriptive and Donne's poems resemble these exercises. He was not convinced with the immoral practices of his contemporaries and it is in this background that his satires may be better understood. The poetry of Donne bears ample testimony to the religious crisis which became an inevitable part of his life. As it was impossible to remain a staunch catholic without being persecuted, the poet was left with no choice but to the converted into the Anglican church, and this led him into a spiritual crisis. A disgusted Donne appeals to be people to be truly religious, be they catholic or Protestant. Donne was against fanaticism and was visibly disturbed by the fanatics among Catholics who vehemently argued that a good catholic cannot be a loyal English man. Donne's poetry is deeply influenced by the times in which he lived. It shows us 'the grain of the times as no formal chronicler could, by its immediate enactment, of a mind exuberantly caught up in the life of streets, courts, chambers'- (Christopher Ricks).

Like many writers of his age, Donne was also a scholar, acquainted with and employing the European tradition. Thus he was acquainted with a great deal of Spanish writing chief among which mention may be made of the works of Gongora, de Montemay or, and Luis de Granade. Donne's poetry was certainly the product of a European fashion of his time. Gongora, Marini, Lylyand many others set a fashion in poetry in the whole of Europe. Donne admitted and followed the fashion. England was next only to Spain, France, and Italy. The English were the followers, not the leaders of the movement. Like many writers before him, Donne made use of natural speech rhythms and also, varieties of style employed by some of his predecessors in particular, Spenser and Wyatt. Spenser's

was the decorative style and Wyatt's, a rigid style. Spenser's approach is more academic and scholarly than Donne's. Donne, on the other hand, adopts a style suitable to the courts.

The love poetry of the Elizabethan times is represented, according to the C.S. Lewis, by Spenser and Shakespeare. 'This … consisted in the final transmission of courtly love or romance of adultery into an equally romantic love that looked to marriage as its natural conclusion.' Much of Donne's poetry falls between the two extremes of 'simple appetite; and 'virtuous love', as C.S. Lewis puts it.

Donne's poetry has also come to be influenced by the new discoveries in many fields including geographical ones. The old ideas in astronomy were challenged by new discoveries and scientific speculations. Reason started replacing dogmatism of the medieval scholastics. Browne, Bacon, Releigh and others have ushered in a new philosophy based on reason, logic and induction. Donne says in his 'First Anniversarie' that the 'new philosophy calls all in doubt'. The connection between man and cosmos, as being inevitably linked up in the universal order, as envisaged by the Elizabethan thinkers, finds its unmistakable echo in Donne's poetry. No wonder if Rupert Brooke describes him as ' the most intellectual poet in English'.

3.11.3 The Writer: His Life and Works:

John Donne was born in 1572. he was the third child of an iron monger at London. His mother's name was Elizabeth. She was the younger daughter of Sir John Heywood, poet and playwright. Four years later, the young Donne lost his father. His mother remarried. Donne and his brother Henry matriculated from Hart Hall, Oxford in 1584. It is conjectured that they remained there till 1588. Donne lost his stepfather in 1588. The next year, Donne went on an academic tour of Europe. Some say that this tour went on till 1591. In those days, it was a habit of the Englishmen to go on an academic tour of Europe (one may remember in this context, the elaborate European tour of Milton, the poet). After completing his European tour, Donne became a student of law.

Donne's mother married again, a third time. In October 1584, Donne matriculated and obtained admission into the Lincoln's Inn. As catholics at that time were prohibited from taking a Degree at Oxford, Donne also was denied the opportunity. Only the Anglicans or those taking the 'oath of supremacy' were permitted to take the degree. Incidentally, this was also the most rewarding period for Donne as a writer. His Songs and Sonnets, Satires and Elegies are said to begin at this particular period of Donne's life. Donne's Satires are concerned with the necessity for unity, integration and assimilation, the qualities which are often conspicuous by their absence in a world governed by the opposite qualities of disunity and disintegration. On the other hand, the 'erudite allusions of the Songs and Sonnets make considerable demand upon Donne's readers' (Margaret Willy in The Renaissance Excluding Drama).

In 1598, Donne became secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton. In 1601, he married Ann More secretly, and when this was brought to the notice of Ann's father, he got Donne imprisoned and dismissed from the post he held (John Donne, Ann Donne, Undone'). Although Donne managed reconciliation with his father-in-law, the damage that was already done to his career could not be easily compensated. Donne's ambitions for a greater career suffered a set back for a considerable period.

Donne had to seek the patronage of others. In this process, he found a new friend and patron in Sir Robert Drury the death of whose daughter, he commemorates in 'The First Anniversarie'. Donne published his Pseudo-Martyr in 1610, arguing that Catholics should take the oath of supremacy, and that they should not falsely pretend to be martyrs. The book brought a new reputation to Donne and an honorary M.A. degree from oxford. The book looks like Donne's dishonest compromise with Anglicanism. Donne went on to occupy several high posts. A sense of maturity and philosophic resignation however, came over him in the last years of his life. Having been made the Dean of St. Paul, Donne delivered a number of sermons. He breathed his last in March, 1613.

3.11. 4 and 3.11.5 Analysis of the text/s and A brief critical evaluation of the literary text/s:

(a) The Good-Morrow

Every morning is a new awakening. This is more so in the case of the poet who seems to have met with a sudden awareness and illumination. The shock is the result of the lover's belief that he wasted precious time, earlier. This particular morning however, a delighted sense of recognition tickles the lover's sense and sensibility. As in many other poems of his, the poet adopts a conversational tone and a direct address.

Stanza 1. The lover greets the morning with a delighted sense of wonder. To him, this is a real morning, as his earlier life looks to him like a long sleep. He seems to have joined the seven sleepers of the legend, and wasted his time, slumbering and snorting. He expresses his sense of shock at what in reality he and his darling were doing before they fell in love. They were separated from love for an insufferably long while, indeed. They were really childish and squandered all their time in frivolous pursuits in comparison to the pleasures and pursuits of their newfound love. Dazzled by the beauty of his darling, Donne exclaims that all the damsels who delighted him earlier were like a shadow as they lacked the substance and sublimity of his latest darling. They were but a dream, this being a reality.

Stanza 2. He bids good morning to their souls, now set on the course of a new awakening. Their souls are united not in fear, but out of love. They watch each other intently. A loving eye embodies the dominating emotion of love, which is all pervading. The little world of the lovers; which is merely like a little room and a mere microcosm can transform itself into a macrocosm, encompassing an entire universe, all because of the enchanting power of love. To a lover, his beloved is his world, his universe, and his all. Wanderers and seafarers may waste their time, discovering new worlds, but the clever lovers are content with their little world, as their union implies the integration of two worlds, which existed independently for each of them before they were locked in love.

Stanza 3. The scholarly Donne is once again tempted into a philosophical argument whose basis may be traced back to St.Thomas Acquinas who believed that compounds made of like elements were not subject to decay, while compounds made of unlike elements, were. Lovers are like mirrors. They can observe their reflection in the eyes of the other. Their love and longing can be read from their faces. Their hearts seem to lodge in their faces, in other words, their emotional attachment can be estimated from their facial expressions. The lovers are like the two hemispheres of the same globe. Together they make the world. Objects mixed disproportionately or unequally, attract decay, but the

lovers are a class apart, being made of the same substance of love in equal measure. This confirms a kind of immortality on the lovers. True love, after all, is immortal.

Critics have interpreted the poem, variously. Thus for Christopher Ricks, 'the poem proposes a human relationship which can stand against the way of the world altogether'. Louis Martz takes it as the theme of place of love in a world dominated by death. Arnold Stein reads the three stanzas of the poem as corresponding to the three steps of past, present, and future, corresponding in turn to the world of flesh, mind, and thereafter the spirit, and also from diversity or multiplicity to a singleness of identity. Joe Nutt remarks that the poem is highly conventional, dealing with a dawn, after a night of lovemaking, with its drowsy bliss.

(b) The Canonization

This poem by Donne is one among Coleridge's favourite poems. Canonization means conferring sainthood according to the edicts of the church. The title is paradoxical as the lovers of the poem have nothing spiritual about them, which would prompt canonization. Unless love were to be named a religion, the lovers cannot be called saints.

Stanza 1

The lover-narrator of the poem asks someone to hold his or her tongue, and allow him to love. If his love were to be mistaken for a disease like paralysis or gout, then let it be. He does not bother as to whether it be the result of his ruined fortunes or infirmities of his old age. He asks the others to fill their coffers or improve their minds with the help of arts. They may obtain wealth or positions that they desire, or they may bask in royal favour, or glance at the king's face imprinted on coins. They may do what they desire or what pleases them, if only the narrator is allowed his pleasure, namely, his uninterrupted preoccupation with love.

Stanza 2

The lover argues that his love doesn't harm anyone and hence he must be left to himself to continue with his amorous activities. No one suffers as a result of his love. His tears cannot ruin merchant navigation, nor can they flood the lands of someone. Nature continues to enjoy the same cycle of seasons. His passion will neither interrupt the military from warlike activities, nor the lawyers from their profession full of litigation. The poet therefore appeals to all and sundry to leave him and his darling, to carry on with their love, uninterrupted.

Stanza 3

The lover welcomes people to call them by any name, ascribe to them what they like, or describe them the way they like. Love has united them in such a fashion that they are one, a unity, ultimately. If the darling is a fly, so is the lover, another fly. Like flies being burnt by the candlelight, they are consumed by the same passion, the passion to be one in life or death. The poet then allows them to call themselves, two tapers, but even tapers do not last long, as they also burn only to be consumed at the end. Each of them assumes the role of the eagle and the dove, the consumer and the consumed. Each becomes more passionate than the other by turns and in the process, consumes the other. So the mutual holocaust becomes a certainty. What is more, in their union, the lovers tend to become sexless

like the Phoenix. If they live, they live together and if they die, they die together, as well. Love has bound them so much that they appear to be one. They acquire a mode of non-duality, which only the magic of love is capable of confirming. Like the mythical bird Phoenix of which at any given time there can only be one, the lovers in the poem are a unique blend and a singular example. Like the Phoenix that rises from the ashes, their love is also capable of resurrection as we remember how like the flies or the tapers, they are said to consume themselves in love.

The stanza thus becomes a specimen of Donne's wit, which is complex as well as ingenious.

Stanza 4

Even if the lovers cannot live by love, they can at least die by it. The tales of love are legendary but if in this particular instance the lovers are not capable of elevating themselves into legendary figures, they will make themselves fit to be celebrated in verse. Chronicles may not record their love as they may feel there is nothing historical about them, but they will find a due place in sonnets. They are no celebrities, and are not bothered that they may not find a vast stretch of land for them to be entombed, but they will have a well-designed urn to contain their ashes. Their religion of love will confer love's sainthood on them, they will be canonized for love, and they will be made love's saints.

Stanza 5

Having thus become Love's saints, the lovers will come to be adored. The lovers become each other's hermitage. Love which looks like mere passion full of strife and conflict to some is for the lovers, the very image of peace. Each of the lovers seems to represent the soul of the world. The Lovers' eyes have become mirrors in which whole worlds are reflected. Being a world all by themselves, they see countries, towns and courts in each other's eyes.

The poet pleads with the lovers to obtain a boon from God that their love be sanctified with a pattern so that others may emulate them. What is noticeable about 'The Cannonization', is what R.G.Cox calls it as the 'surprising directions of the speaking voice'. This is amply evidenced by the lover's call to let him love, 'for God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love…'

What is important about 'The Canonization' however, is the influence of Donne's religious beliefs on his love poetry. John Carey points out that the poem is composed after a considerably long while after the poet joined the Anglican Church, but the catholic in Donne returns and emerges on the surface whenever 'he feels himself threatened'. Carey rightly draws our attention to the fact that the help and intercession of the saints, which Donne invokes, is a Catholic belief, rejected by the Anglicans. The word 'hermitage' used in the poem, it is pointed out, is Catholic in its connotations.

As for the language of the poem, it is argued and rightly too, that the normal speech-order is inverted and it compares favourably with what R.G.Cox describes it as 'a realistic expressiveness' developed and employed by the Elizabethan dramatists in general, and by Shakespeare, for specific purposes.

A valediction: of my name, in the window

Stanza I

A lover tells his darling that his name engraved in the window, makes the glass, stronger. His name, acting as a charm, made it hard , as hard as diamond used to etch his name on the glass. But a pleasing and approving look of his darling makes it more valuable in comparison to the diamond point (used to etch a name) or his own name (which he claims , gave it the hardness which it now seems to have acquired).

Stanza II

It is true that the glass reflects the physique to the minutest details and the reflection resembles a confession. In reality, the glass is transparent like the lover, himself. What is more, it shows his darling and she can see her own reflection (both physically and figuratively) with her eye (not only the eye that bestows sight, but probably the mind's eye that can look inward and give her an insight of her personality). Love's alchemy transcends all barriers and cancels all rules such that the lovers become one. They appear to be two halves of an inseparable object.

Stanza III

The lover claims that he has a remarkable constancy. He says that his darling should also match his constancy. He believes that she has the ability to do so, making it a pattern of love that may serve as a model for others to follow. The lover believes that his name (with its accessories of points and dashes) cannot be washed away by rains or tempests.

Stanza IV

The lover pleads that if what he speaks, looks like an exaggeration or a piece of over ingenuity which it becomes difficult for his darling to digest; a lecture or a piece of learning which proves too much, coming from a person who is merely a name, scratched on a glass (' a scratched name') reduced merely to a memory, it may still be retained like the skull of a dead man, a bony memento of a lover, a piece of 'ruinous Anatomic'.

Stanza V

True union is a union of minds, an integration of souls. ('the marriage of true minds' as Shakespeare would say in the sonnets). The lover's soul is intertwined and mingled with his darling's. She is his heaven, his paradise. She becomes the source of his perception and understanding of things as well as his development and growth. His soul and even his physical frame (the body and the skeletal structure of the body) are with her. Only 'the muscle, sinew ad vain' are required to make him an individual, again.

Thomas Docherty argues that the name in the window is the name of Christ as a lover. The word 'engraved', it is argued, suggests the buried or hidden name of Christ. The name, according to the critic, serves as a Talisman fixed on the glass of the window. Between the poet and the reader of the poem, there is the figure of Christ. The poem thus becomes a prayer, an invocation to Christ. Docherty points out that the poem has a subtle reference to the parable in St. Luke where Christ accuses his disciples, of hypocrisy (Luke, 6:41-2).

The word ‘engraved’ recalls to one’s mind the suggestion of ‘grave’ and entombment and encourages the reader to consider the story of Christ’s resurrection after his death.

Thus the poem acquires a religious connotation and the lover in the poem is Christ. He is of course not the ordinary kind of lover, but a divine lover a ‘transcendental lover’, as some describe him.

Stanza VI

Separation is like death. The lover knows this. So he asks his darling to preserve his scattered body, united by repairing its parts and rearranging them into a complete whole. Besides in such contexts, planets seem to make a greater impression with their influence flooding into the body and the mind of the people. This is so, because some planets were in their ascendant when his name was being engraved in the window.

Stanza VII

Both love and the consequent grief of separation were intense at the time of his name being etched on the glass. So the memory of himself as a lover should make her more committed to love accompanied by grief and separation. Till his return, the pangs of separation should make her feel it daily. She should mourn their separation every day, as in his mind, he equates such a separation with daily death.

Stanza VIII

The lover warns his darling to think twice before she can make bold to open the casement with indiscretion forgetting her former affection for him. His name in the window would tremble and shake in anger at such an indiscretion on her part. If he thinks that she might think of another lover to recharge her heart with love, like a new battery, in the place of an old one, she is sadly mistaken indeed, as such an act will very much offend his spirit.

Stanza IX

The maid as well as the page in his darling’s house may be bribed by the new lover’s money and may place a love letter from him under her pillow. She may yield, but he hopes that his name may serve to hide her new lover’s name.

Stanza X

If this treachery and infidelity were to continue, the lover desires that instead of her new lover’s name, his name may flow into his imagination, just at time when she wants to address her new lover through a letter.

Stanza XI

A few lines on a glass are by no means a support for their substantial love. The lover is in a stupor resembling death. The lover indulges in such desultory babble as he is dying, and defends his practice by saying, ‘ for dying men talk often so’.

Donne as a Metaphysical poet:

Eliot says that a thought to Donne was an experience, as it modified his sensibility. It is the form more than the content that distinguishes Donne as a metaphysical poet. In Donne's poetry nature and art are ransacked for comparisons, if one were to borrow the words of Johnson. His poetry is characterized by paradoxes and far-fetched comparisons, all in the metaphysical vein.

Look at a poem like 'The Good-Morrow'. The images are picked up from several sources. Johnson's observation that the metaphysicals were men of learning, is more than amply evidenced by the practice of Donne with reference to geography, maps, the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, the Greek myth of seven sleepers' den among other things. It is not unusual for a writer like Donne to compare lovers to geographical explorers. The lovers are integrated in love. They are like two hemispheres of the same globe. They seem to defy mortality as love confers immortality on them. The lovers' world, while apparently resembling the physical world, goes beyond it, as unlike the world we live in, their world is immortal. Love operates at a level higher than the merely physical. True love is the union of souls,-'the marriage of true minds', as another Elizabethan, Shakespeare would put it.

It is no wonder that Dryden said that Donne startled the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy. Pope's definition of wit as 'what oft was thought, but never so well expressed' suits Donne's poetry, eminently. But for all this, his statements are remarkably direct. 'For God's sake, hold your tongue, and let me love' has all the casualness of a conversation.

Yet for all his directness, Donne does not hesitate to make a very liberal use of the hyperbole. Thus the lover in 'The Good Morrow' who wonders what he and his darling were doing before they fell in love, chooses to compare himself and his darling to the seven sleepers of the den. Nothing can be more far-fetched as the seven sleepers of the den slept for about two hundred years and their waking up amounted to nothing short of a rebirth, virtually.

Another poem, 'A Valediction: of my name in the window' starting innocuously with the ability of a mirror, to reflect one's image, proceeds to affirm the magic of love which does not stop at a mere refelction, an adumbration, but rather would go to the level of empathically uniting the lover and his darling,- ' I am you', says the lover to the darling, the instrument for his transformation being no other than love. In a hyperbole characteristic of Donne, it is stated by the lover that his darling's love will form a pattern worthy of an imitation or emulation. The dead lover asks his darling to perceive his image ('This ragged bony name') in his name engraved in the window.

'The Canonization' is a much more complex poem. In trying to defend his love, the lover says that he has not done anything extraordinary to upset the routine of the world. Donne indulges once again in a far-fetched conceit. The sighs of the lovelorn man do not drown merchant ships as they are no gales of wind, after all. His tears are like the tears of all lovers, and do not drown the lands of others. Their passion has the fierceness of an eagle, but when once it is fulfilled, it will have the tranquil quality of a dove. Thus love becomes a riddle like the Phoenix. Donne compares the lovers to a phoenix as the lover in the poem imagines himself and his darling as being a unique specimen of love, although many have loved and lived down the ages. It is an exaggerated claim on the part of the lover, certainly,- a claim fit for a lover in Donne's 'metaphysical' scheme of things, as it were.

The most startling image is, of course, that of canonization itself. We all know that lovers may not be saintly, after all. Donne however takes advantage of the fervour and spirit of sacrifice, which accompany true love, to elevate love into a religion and lovers, into saints. The lovers are canonized not by any religious intention, but by love. Love has become a religion, and the lovers, saints.

These illustrations, although they may appear inadequate in numbers, are yet representative of Donne's metaphysical vein.

Donne as a poet of Love:

Donne's love poems represent a complex mosaic with various shades of feeling. It is said that Donne's love poetry is partly based on his personal experiences of love. Besides, his love poetry also comes under the influence of his religion.

Donne's love poetry is not in the available poetic convention of the day. It is highly different from the Petrarchan convention of love. Petrarch, the Italian Sonneteer, was a model of many Elizabethan love poets.

Donne differs from Petrarch in that while Petrarch gives greater importance to love as a physical passion, Donne elevates it into a platonic and spiritual union. Donne however, borrowed the hyperbolic expression from Petrarch. The poetry of Donne is said to be full of Petrarchan hyperboles. But in certain places what is serious in Petrarch, assumes the form of a parody. The tradition of Petrarch is completely transformed by Donne. There is an intellectual touch and treatment given by Donne to a degree which is lacking in Petrarch.

Donne's mind was preoccupied with decay, mortality or death. Love, Donne knows, at a spiritual level or the level of the soul, is immortal unlike the body which is subject to decay and the mere physical passion which is not permanent or lasting. To a passionate lover, the very rhythm and routine of nature may be unacceptable, as they would suspend his desire for the beloved. In 'The Sunne Rising', the sun is the busy, old fool, unruly sun, who wakes the lovers up. In such instances, Donne is more with Ovid than with Petrarch. 'O lente, lente, currite no ctis equui'. ('O horses of the night, move slowly') cries the lover in Ovid, in the arms of his beloved, so that the dawn may be delayed, enabling the lovers to further their passion. Ovid's love poems, the 'Amores' set such a trend. Donne dealt with the opposite modes of the joy of love and the pangs of separation with equal emphasis.

Herbert Grierson, an acknowledged authority on Donne offers the triple classification of cynical, conjugal, and the platonic strains of love in Donne. Some of his poems are disquisitions on the inconstancy of women's love. There are however, other poems in which the constancy and permanence of love are deified. The poetry of union and conjugal love is to be noticed at its best in poems like 'The Canonization'. The poems acquire a religious and spiritual connotation as the lovers are elevated to the status of saints in 'The Canonization'. They were imitated by many Elizabethan writers.

'The Canonization' is the best example of Donne's love poems. It starts on an abrupt note, but proceeds to love being elevated to a religion, and the lovers being transformed into saints. All the love

poems of Donne are thus based on the yawning gulf between mere physical passion subject to decay and immortal and true love based on the promptings of the spirit or the soul.

3.11.6 A Summary

Although Donne was born in the Elizabethan age, he was quite ahead of his times. Ben Jonson rightly saluted him as the first poet in the world in some things. A catholic by birth, and an Anglican by conversion, Donne was torn between two shades of Christianity and his poetry reflects this tension and conflict.

Donne was born into a family with great traditions of poetry. Besides, he was an eminent scholar, himself. He puts his scholarship to use to make his poetry came alive with wit. Rupert Brooke has rightly described him as the 'most intellectual poet in English'.

Donne married Ann, without proper consent from their parents. Thereby he invited their wrath, which all but ruined him. A long tale of agony took place before he could seek a reconciliation to build a career out of the ruins.

The poems prescribed for study are typical of Donne's Metaphysical vein. The tone of 'The Good Morrow' is conversational, but is abrupt and direct'. Donne is hyperbolic and exaggerates the love of two individual lovers into a symbolic and all enveloping power of love. It is a love that goes beyond the mere physical limits as it confers immortality on the lovers.

'The Canonization' proposes love that transcends mere physical bounds. The lovers are like the saints of a religion, - the religion in this case being love.

'A Valediction of my name, in the window' is given a religious dimension by some critics as it is argued that the name in the window is the name of Christ, acting as a talisman or charm. The lover's name engraved in the window serves as a constant reminder to his darling, of their love.

3.11.7 Technical terms/ literary terms/key words:

Seven sleepers of the den : Seven young men of Ephesus ran way and hid themselves in a cave as they feared persecution by the dictator Decius. Thereupon the emperor ordered the mouth of the cave to be closed with a wall. The young men fell into a long sleep which went on till 187 years. When some of the stones covering the mouth of the cave were lifted, the sleepers woke up and when they went out to purchase food with coins that were no longer in use, the truth came to light. The young men went back to the cave, blessed people who visited them and breathed their last. Gibbon narrates the story in his Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. It is said that story is included in Mohammed's revelations in the Koran.

Phoenix.	:	A phoenix is said to be a mythical bird of which there was but one and only one specimen at any time and another could spring up only from its ashes. Fables say that the Phoenix would have a rebirth every 500 years after it burns itself to ashes on a funeral pyre, from its ashes, another would emerge with beautiful red and golden yellow feathers. A phoenix therefore is used as a symbol of rebirth or resurrection in literature. In his Samson Agonistes, Milton compares Samson to a phoenix.
The Eagle and the Dove :		'The Eagle is emblematic of masculine sexual initiative and the dove, of female gentleness and compliance'. (Richard Gill)
Rock	:	Symbolic of Christ.
Genius	:	A sprit of the dead.
Hermitage	:	A word that symbolizes the purity of love.

3.11.8 Sample Questions

1. Consider Donne as a Metaphysical poet with particular reference to the poems prescribed for your study.
2. Attempt a critical appreciation of one of Donne's poems prescribed for your study.
3. Give a brief account of Donne's handling of love poetry.

3.11.9 Suggested Reading

1. The Poems of John Donne (Vol.II), ed. Herbert J.C. Grierson (Oxford University Press, London, Reprint 1968).
2. Donne: Poetical works, ed. Herbert Grierson (Oxford University Press, Oxford, Reprint 1991).
3. R.C. Bald, John Donne: A Life (Clarendon Press, Oxford, Reprint 1986).
4. John Carey, John Donne: Life, Mind and Art (Faber and Faber, London, 1981).
5. Thomas Docherty, John Donne, Undone (Methuen, London, 1986).
6. A.C. Partridge, John Donne: Language and style (Andre Deutsch, London, 1978).
7. English poetry and prose (1540-1674), ed. Christopher Ricks (Penguin Books, London, Reprint 1993).
8. Donne : Songs and Sonnets : A Collection of critical Essays, ed. Julian Lovelock (Macmillan, London, 1973).
9. Joe Nutt, John Donne: The Poems (Macmillan, London, 1999).
10. The Pelican Guide to English Literature, Vol.3 from Donne to Marvell, ed. Boris Ford (Penguin Books Ltd., Harmonds worth, Reprint, 1976).
11. The Renaissance Excluding Drama ed. James Vinson (Macmillan, London, 1983).
12. John Donne: Selected Poems, ed. Richard Gill (Oxford University Press, Oxford, Reprint, 1991).

- Prof. T. Viswanadha Rao

Lesson - 12

John Milton : Paradise Lost – Book I

Contents

3.12 Objectives

i To Discuss Milton's justification of the ways of God to man
ii To show the epic features of Book I Of Paradise Lost has qualities of epic poetry
iii To find out an account of Milton's personality based on a reading of Book I
iv To give a broad account of Milton's characterization of the fallen angels and his description of Hell

3.12.2 A Biographical Sketch of Milton

Milton was both a child of renaissance and a staunch and strong puritan. It is very difficult to classify him; at best we can say that he seems to be a mass of contradictions. An English poet and controversial writer – (1608 – 1674) – he was a man of remarkably strong and consistent character. He devoted twenty years of his life to public service in a period of turmoil. He was a devoted Christian who participated in no formal religious observances, either public or private. In epic poetry he wrote in the grand style, and in political controversy he was a master of scurrilous personal abuse. He loved study and quiet; he was a tireless and fearless fighter for anything he thought right, and for nothing else, no matter how expedient it might be

John Milton was born on December 9, 1608. From his father, Milton inherited his lofty integrity, and his love of, and proficiency in music. He received his first education from a Scots friend of his father, Thomas young, a puritan of some note. Later he was educated at St Paul's school and Christ college, Cambridge, where he remained for seven years (1625-32) and began his career as poet. From his Cambridge days date his first known original poem (On The Death Of A fair Infant Dying Of A Cough accessioned by the death of his sister's baby) and such well-known works as the hymn On the Morning of Christ's Nativity and the poems At a Solemn Music and On Shakespeare. At the University he was known to his fellow students as "the lady Christ's".

After leaving Cambridge, Milton spent six years in self-directed study at his father's country place at Horton, where he read widely, studied languages, continued to write, and in general prepared

himself for the career in poetry, which had already become his goal. At Horton he wrote some of his best lyrics. L'allegro & Il Penseros are two companion pieces, describing in detail the day and night of two types, the cheerful man and the reflective man and thus presenting the two sides of the author's own personality. Lycidas, probably the finest example of the pastoral elegy in English, is a lament for a Cambridge fellow student who had drowned. At this time he was studying for the ministry and this enabled him to include fine passages on the triviality of much contemporary verse and the general corruption of the clergy. He wrote two masques, Arcades (1633) and Comus (1637). The works of this period are perfect illustrations of the "simple, sensuous, and passionate" language which he demanded for the best poetry.

In 1638 he went on a continental travel and visited France and Italy. He returned to England in 1639 and settled in London and seriously thought of writing a great poem, "I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes, as they should not willingly let it die". This project had to wait for nearly two decades. For the next twenty years, he lived and worked first as a private citizen, and later as Secretary in Foreign Tongues under Cromwell's Commonwealth. In 1641 he began to attack the hierarchical organization of the Church of England and in 1643-44 he wrote several tracts demanding more latitude in the matter of divorce. During this period he wrote a few sonnets mainly on political and religious subjects. As a Puritan he opposed the established Church of England and supported the rights of a democratic Parliament against the claims of an autocratic king. After seven years of fighting, the Puritans decisively got the upper hand tried king Charles I and beheaded him (1649). He held the post of secretary in Foreign Tongues, which Milton held from 1649 until the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660. His eyesight had been impaired as early as 1664 and in 1652, it entirely failed him so that he was totally blind when all his major poetical works were composed. He began Paradise Lost in 1658 and finished it in 1664 and published it in 1667.

This poem raised Milton from the position of a good poet to an eminence, which was great in his own time and has constantly increased. He wrote PARADISE REGAINED in 1671. Perhaps the key to Milton's poetic greatness lies in an unusual combination of splendid and magnificent language with absolute sobriety and integrity of character. Only Miltonic rhetoric could be worthy of a character like Satan, as he is drawn in Paradise Lost. From the study of the classics, he accepted the ideals of intellectual freedom and the models of poetic style. From the Hebrew prophets he acquired a moral passion, and from his Protestantism a sense of the immediacy of God. His humanism fused these elements and gave practical and poetic direction to his genius. He celebrated in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness.

According the Hudson, if we are taking up the study of PARADISE LOST, we may begin by reading it as the expression of Milton's personality and philosophy of life; and viewed historically, as the poetic masterpiece of English Puritanism. Having so read it, we may next go on to consider its general qualities as a poem – its imaginative power, descriptive power, dramatic power, its merits and

defects as a narrative, the splendour and range of its imagery, the majesty, beauty, and variety of its versification.

3.12.3. Critical Summary

Lines 1-16

The subject and the purpose of the poem are stated in the beginning of Paradise Lost Book I. Milton mentions briefly the subject of the entire poem – Man's disobedience and the consequent loss of paradise,

> "Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
> 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…."

Then we have the invocation to the Muse, which is an epic convention,

> "Sing heavenly Muse, that on the secret top
> Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
> That shepherd ……"

Milton appeals, not to one of the Muses, but to the Heavenly Power which inspired Moses on Sinai, and David on Zion. His is an ambitious poem in which he proposes to deal not with commonplace events, but with the loftiest theme ever attempted by man. The theme is too lofty even for the Muses of classical poetry who live on the Ionian Mount.

Lines 16 – 89

Milton prays to the Holy Spirit to raise him to the level of the great subject, and illumine whatever is dark in him.

> ……"What in me is dark
> Illumine, what is low raise and support;"

He knows that "just are the ways of God, And justifiable to men". In the Garden of Eden, the fruit of the Tree of knowledge was only forbidden to them. Except for this one restraint, our first parents Adam and Eve were free to do whatever they liked. They transgressed His Will. Envy and revenge provoked Satan to use guile and tempt Eve; Satan fell into Hell by his pride. He (Satan) stirred the fallen angels to rebellion. By opposing God, Satan hoped to equal in power the Almighty himself. As a result, "the almighty power / Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky / With hideous ruin and combustion down To bottomless perdition". For the space of nine days Satan and his crew lay rolling in the fiery gulf. Satan was completely bewildered and shocked as he lay vanquished. Thoughts of the joy he had lost began to torment him. He finds himself in a horrible dungeon; here hope and rest are perfect strangers. His only companions are those who fell from Heaven. Rolling near him in the fiery

gulf is Beelzebub, his next subordinate. While in Heaven Beelzebub was clothed in rich splendour. Satan and Beelzebub were akin in their ambition and fate seemed reluctant to part these twin spirits.

Lines 90 – 127

God with his thunder proved much stronger than Satan and Beelzebub. Satan did not evidently expect so much strength and power in God. It was a surprise to him when he found himself practically powerless,

"He with his thunder: and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms?….." (Lines 93, 94)

Satan is as stubborn and defiant as ever. The punishments already inflicted by God on him and which may yet be inflicted, breed in him no thoughts of repentance. Satan confesses that even now he possesses that steadfast mind and pride which provoked him to be the leader of a rebellion against God,

….. "What though the field be lost?
All is not lost; the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate
And courage never to submit or yield" (Lines 105 – 108)

Satan's unconquerable will and courage remain the same even now. He abhors the idea of suing for grace before God. Satan goes to the extent of saying that God was for sometime so much alarmed by His enemy's superior might that He doubted His ability to hold His empire. He is (Satan) still undaunted; he is determined to fight again; he recognizes only the supremacy of Fate,

……. "Since by fate the strength of gods
And this empty real substance cannot fail" (Lines 116 – 117)

It will be possible for Satan and his associates to plan out better. He may use force or guile to advance his interests. There was despair in his heart tormenting him, though he boasted aloud of the unconquerable will and immortal hate.

(Boasting Beelzebub Lines 125 – 154)

Lines 128 – 140

Beelzebub then addresses Satan. Satan belonged to the highest order of Angels and so he is the chief of many throned Powers. Under Satan's command and in deeds capable of inspiring terror in the hearts of the beholders Beelzebub has realized the grim consequences of the rebellion. The rebel angels have been injured not completely. When the mind and spirit are unconquered, vigour would soon come back to them.

Their glory has now become extinct. The bliss they enjoyed in heaven has vanished, giving place to the misery and horror of Hell. Beelzebub wonders if God has any grim purpose in leaving them their unconquerable mind and spirit after depriving them of heavenly happiness. It may be that God has given them their strength only to enable them to endure torments. He believes that God intends to use them as slaves of war and extract work from them in that gloomy deep,

"That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,

Or do him mightier service as his thralls
By right of war, whatever his business be
Here in the heart of hell to work in fire,
Or do his errands in the gloomy deep; (Lines 148 – 152)

Beelzebub concludes his speech with the question

"What can it then avail though yet we feel
Strength undiminish'd, or eternal being
To undergo eternal punishment?" (Lines 153 – 155)

Satan's Reply (Lines 157 – 220)

Lines 157 – 208

The arch fiend replied,
"Fall'n cherub, to be weak is miserable

Doing or suffering"…….. (Lines 157 – 158)

They will revel in doing ill because it is against the will of God whom they are opposing. Evil is distasteful to God, and so he proposes to pursue it. Satan assures Beelzebub that if God has any such purpose, they will do their utmost to defeat that end. Far from allowing God to bring forth good from their evil, they will still strain their best to find means of evil in what is good. Many of the terrors which greeted them on their arrival in the abyss have now vanished. The sulphurous hail shot after them has claimed the sea of fire. Thunder, with red lightning and impetuous rage, no longer bellows through the vast and boundless deep. The present opportunity is too good to be missed. It does not matter whether they owe it to contempt, or 'satiate fury' in their victor.

"Let us not slip the occasion, whether scorn,

Or satiate fury yield it from our foe" (Lines 178 – 179)

(Satiate fury – the fury of God which must have been appeased when He saw the piteous plight of Satan and the rebel Angels)

Satan's proposal is that they should retire to a plain near by, and if possible, rest there for some time. Afterwards they can confer and decide on the course of action to be pursued in the future. They must find out how they can harm their enemy most, repair their own losses, and tide over their present misfortune,

"How overcome this dire calamity,
What reinforcement we may gain from hope,
If not what resolution from despair" (Lines 189 – 191)

Satan was talking to his nearest mate Beelzebub with head uplifted above the wave, his full length stretched on the flood of fire. A vast area of that flood of fire was covered by the huge body of Stan which lay floating on it. Satan was as huge as the Titans, or the earth-born giants who fought against Zeus, or the monsters, Briareos and Typhon, or the leviathan swimming in the ocean. Satan

lay chained on the burning lake like some huge whale which is often mistaken in the dark for an island by sailors,

"Him haply slumbering on the Norway foam
The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff,
Deeming some island, oft, as sea-men tell,
With fixed anchor in his scaly rind
Moors by his side under the lea, while night
Invests the sea, and wished morn delays" (Lines 203 – 208)

This passage is of interest as presenting the first example of a Homeric Simile in this epic poem. In such a simile we have a number of interesting but quite irrelevant details. The only point that Milton has in making the comparison is to indicate the bulk of Satan.

Lines 256 – 278

Satan wonders that it matters not whether he is in heaven or hell, if he were to remain unchanged. God has been equalled in reason and is able to maintain His supremacy only by force. God would certainly not grudge Satan and his crew the possession of such a place. To reign supreme is certainly worth-while even if it is in hell – Satan argues that it is "better to reign in hell than serve in Heaven" (Line 263) Satan asks Beelzebub why they should not rouse their followers and see what could yet be done with their assistance. Satan's voice filled them with courage and urged them on to heroic deeds. Even in the midst of fears and dangers Satan's voice to them was the surest sign of hope. Satan's voice was their surest signal when an assault had to be made.

Lines 279 – 304

Beelzebub assures Satan that their followers who are now weltering in the lake of fire would soon rise to activity on hearing their leader's voice. Satan threw the shield on his back. Satan's shield is compared to the moon whose sphere is watched through the telescope by the Tuscan artist, Galileo. The broad circumference of the shield appears like the moon whose size and beauty are enhanced when seen through "the optic glass",

….. "the broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders like the moon,
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views….." (Lines 286 – 288)

Satan used his spear as a staff to support him when walking uncomfortably on the burning soil. The rebel angels, after being defeated in the war against God, were thrown into the burning lake of hell. Satan was the first to recover and managed to reach ashore. Then he called his followers who were lying dazed and shocked on the burning lake. Milton compares the rebel angels lying on the burning lake to the autumnal leaves in the valley of Vallambrosa (valley near Florence in Italy) or the scattered sedge on the Red sea,

…… "he stood and called
His legions, angel forms, why lay entranced
Thick as autumnal leaves that straw the brooks
In Vallombrosa" (Lines 300 – 304)

Lines 306 – 330

The Rebel Angels lay on the fiery flood, thoroughly bewildered like Bosiris and the Egyptian forces who were overwhelmed by the waves of the Red Sea when they treacherously pursued the Israelites. (It is said that Busiris was an Egyptian King who used to offer human beings in sacrifice. When Hercules came to Egypt, he allowed himself to be led to the altar but then broke loose and slew Busiris and his following.) The Israelites had been permitted to live in Goshen by an earlier Pharaoh who was Joseph's patron. The rebel angels lay as thickly strewn on the fiery gulf as the dead bodies of the Egyptians on the Red Sea. Satan addresses his followers as "the flower of Heaven as he considers them the pick and choice of heavenly angels". If they are so dismayed, it is because that they have lost the Heaven which was once theirs. Satan asks them if they had chosen that place for the comforts it afforded for their repose. Satan wants to know if the fallen angels adopt this humiliating posture to worship their conqueror. So he admonishes them with the words,

"Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen" (Line 330)

(profaned = made unholy – affront = confront and insult)

Lines 392 – 437

It is an epic convention to describe the chief warriors on both sides taking part in the war which is usually the theme of such a poem. In Paradise Lost Milton gives us a catalogue of the principal chiefs among the rebel angels. He identifies the pagan gods with Satan's chief followers and here the poet refers to Moloch who is described in the Bible as the chief god of the Ammonites. His worship was attended with many cruelties including human sacrifices. Moloch was, it appears, a hollow idol, filled with fire. Children were thrown into it. Lest their cries should sadden their parents, trumpets were blown to muffle their cries. The Ammonites were a Semitic tribe claiming descent from Ammon, an Egyptian deity. Moloch was not content with the daring of the people in that neighbourhood. The people of those regions were, no doubt, daring in their worship of him, but Moloch was not satisfied. He aspired for more and so set about tempting the wise King Solomon (King of Israel from 1015 to 977 BC He was in high repute for his love of wisdom and the glory of his reign). Solomon's pagan wives seem to have persuaded him to build various temples, on the Mount of Olives, to pagan deities. Mount of Olives is referred to in the Bible as "the mount of corruption". Moloch made the pleasant valley of Hinnom his grove. All the rebbish in the city of Jerusalem was shot into Tophet in the valley of Hinnom. It became the place for burning the refuse of the city, dead animals, and the bodies of criminals; and it was regarded as a fit symbol of the destruction of wicked souls. Moloch was worshipped in Rabba in the district of Argob and in Bashan. Moloch even corrupted Solomon and induced him to worship him (Moloch). Among the chief followers of Satan, Moloch gets pride of place. Next to him is Chemos the god of the Moabrites. He was also known as peor. The worship of peor was full of foul and absence rites and it provoked the wrath of god. They were visited with a plague, "To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe"(Line 414) Besides Moloch and Chemos Milton mentions after gods namely Baalim and Ashtaroth. These deities were worshipped in the region between the river Euphrates and another river dividing Egypt from Syria. According to Milton spirits can assume any sex they like. That is why, these fallen angels were sometimes worshipped as goddesses. It was for such bestial gods - Baalim and Ashtaroth - that the Israelites often forsook their real god. As a punishment for this they were made to suffer defeat and humiliation in the field of battle at the hands of despicable foes

"To bestial gods; for which their heads as low
Bowed down in battle, sunk before the spear
Of despicable foes" …….(lines 435 – 7)

Lines 438-457

Astoreth was a principal deity worshipped in the past. One of the chief followers of Satan assumed this form and was worshipped as a goddess by the Phoenicians whom they called Astarte, the moon goddess of Syrian mythology. Astarte was frequently represented as having horns like the crescent moon. In the ancient Phoenician city of Sidon there was a temple dedicated to Astarte. The praises of Astarte were also sung on the mount of Sion or Zion where there was a temple in her honour. The hill on which this temple was built is described as the (line 443) offensive mountain, because on it were found temples to strange gods. Solomon who was excessively fond of his wires and very much under their influence, forsook the true God and began to worship strange gods. One of the fallen angels by name Thammuz was worshipped in Syria. Thammuz ranks fifth in the order of the hierarchy of hell. According to legend, he was a Syrian prince, beloved of Astarte, the moon goddess. He was slain by a wild boar in Mount Lebanon, from whence the river Adonis descends, the water of which became reddened in the spring of each year. This gave rise to the belief that the blood of Thammuz (who was believed to have been killed by a wild boar) flowed fresh every year and that he repeatedly passed through death and resurrection. The Jews took over the worship of Thammuz from the Syrians. One of the Jewish prophets, Ezekiel, condemned this worship, particularly as it was attended with many obscene rites,

- - - - - - "the love tale
Infected Sion's daughters with the heat
Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
Ezekiel saw, when by the vision led
His eye surveyed the dark idolatries
Of alienated Judah" - - - - - - (lines 452-457)

(The love tale- The love story of Thammuz beloved of Astarte, Sion's of daughters – Israelite maidens. Wanton – lustful, Judah – true God)

Lines 490-520

Belial is the last or lowest in the hierarchy of hell. The word "Belial" literally means worthlessens or wickedness. Milton represents him as timorous, slothful, lewd and profligate. Belial had no temple or altar dedicated to him and yet it was his malignant influence that prevailed in all temples and altars. It was he who seduced the sons of Eli from the worship of the true God. By observing, "as did Ely's sons, who filled with lust and violence the house of GOD"(lines 495-496). Milton refers in these lines to the corruption and dissoluteness of the Church. An ardent Puritan, this was naturally one of his favourite subjects of attack. Milton expresses in lines 497–500 his hostility to the court of Charles II who was a licentious and gay monarch. Wicked licentious men were often referred to as the sons of Belial. Milton dwells on the sons of Belial, "flown with insolence and wine" (line 502) and their rowdy behaviour with a sense of intense personal resentment, let the streets of Sodon be a proof (Genesis in the Bible XIX verses 4-11). In Gibeah the matrons yielded themselves to their assailants

to prevent worse rape. These were the most important in order and in might. The names of the rest would take a long time to tell. In describing the principal followers of Satan, Milton identifies them with pagan gods. First he mentions the deities referred to in the Bible. Then he goes on to speak of the Greek gods. They were worshipped by the descendants of Javan. Javan was the son of Japheth who was one of the three sons of Noah believed to b e the father of the Greek race. Uranus and Ge, representing Heaven and Earth, (according to Milton) created a number of giants known as the Titans. The eldest of the Titans, Saturn, overthrew his father and ascended the heavenly throne. Saturn in turn was deposed by his son Jove. These Ionian Gods first in Crete and Ida were known,

Lines 522-562

Satan regaining his usual pride, with high sounding words which had the semblance of worth without the substance, gently raised their fainting courage, and dispelled their fears. Satan commanded that his royal mighty banner should be raised when the trumpets and clarions sounded. The banner streaming in the wind is compared to a meteor(a shooting star) shooting through the atmosphere. Seraphic arms and trophies were richly emblazoned in gems and gold on that banner. The instruments blew martial sounds on hearing which the entire army sent up a shout that tore hell's concave (the vaulted roof –of Hell) and terrified the realm of chaos and old night. Ten thousand banners rise into the air waving their orient colours. They marched presently in a solid disciplined mass, to the accompaniment of music. They marched like heroes of ancient times. The music filled them with a cool and deliberate courage and not with a fierce martial frenzy. Such firmness and courage did the music inspire in them that dread of death never made them take to "flight or foul retreat". The music with its solemn touches did not lack the power either to calm agitated minds or to dispel fear, sorrow and pain. The sweet strains of the soft pipes charmed them when marching over the burnt soil. Physical pain was forgotten in the music,

"Moved on in silence to soft pipes that charmed
Their painful steps over the burnt soil"…. (lines 561-562)

Lines 563-602

The army of Satan stood menacingly in advance with their bright spears in the guise of warriors with spear and shield awaiting orders from their mighty chief. Satan like a typical military commander inspected this army or guard of honour by a carefully directed side long look. Having been satisfied with their correct pr proper arrangement, their faces, and stature, he assessed their number,

….. "And now his heart
Distends with pride, and hardenings in his strength
Glories ; for never, since created man,
Met such embodied force as named with these" (lines 571-574)

(distends- expands / embodied – assembled/)

These rebel angels were more numerous than all the giants of Phlegra and the heroic armies who fought at Thebes and Ilium and the gods who helped the contending armies.

Glory still clung to him and he looked what he was – an Archangel in ruins. Milton gives us a vivid account of the splendour of Satan among the hosts of rebel angels. Even in his fall he outshone all his followers. There was about him loftiness as well as dignity. Milton compares him to the sun seen through a mist or temporarily hidden by an eclipse. He had lost of course, something of his original glory, but much remained. The thunderbolts which God had used on him had left their marks on his face. There was resolution and courage in his face though he looked careworn.

Lines 603-621

Satan was full of pride, full of thought, and waiting for an opportunity for revenge. Pride would urge him onto immediate revenge but after careful thought, he wants to think out a proper plan and wait for the opportune moment to strike. Satan had immense pity and strong emotion for his companions who had suffered so much for him (A noble trait in Satan's character) those fallen angels were not properly partners but only followers. The initiative for the crime was entirely Satan's. The others merely followed the leader. In Heaven he had seen them with very different feeling for there they were enjoying absolute happiness, and for the crime of their leader, they had lost the bliss of Heaven. They were sorely punished for the crime of their leader, and yet their faith in him was as great as ever. Satan's followers who are brave, proud and loyal even after their glory has faded, are compared to stately oak trees and long standing pines.

The army formed a semi – circle before Satan and his peers. All of them were silent in order to be at attention to listen to Satan. Thrice he attempted to speak, and thrice, though he scorned to weep, tears such as angels shed gushed from his eyes. At last he began to speak but his speech was interwoven with sighs.

Lines 622-642

A mighty fallen angel naturally scorned such weaknesses as shedding tears. He encouraged his followers by saying only the Almighty could be a match for them. They had acquitted themselves creditably on the field of battle. It was a defeat without any disgrace though the event was dreadful. This place, Hell ,proves conclusively that the issue of the battle was disastrous. Who could have entertained the fear that such an army could be defeated?. Satan seems to claim that Heaven has become practically empty after the exile of the rebels; Satan further swears that neither differing counsels, nor any unwillingness on his part to face danger personally, has been responsible for their defeat. Even heaven's faithful army of angels can testify to this. Satan is valiant and never shuns danger. Defeat was certainly not due to any cowardice on his part. God's supremacy was acknowledged by everyone though no one knew how it was maintained. No one could gauge God's strength. Satan confesses that it was sheer ignorance of the enormous strength of God that tempted him to war against the Almighty. God's strength ever lay concealed and Satan thought that it might not be as great as it was popularly imagined.

Lines 643-662

Satan declares his intention of fighting God unceasingly until victory is won. They have not succeeded with force and so they must use guile. They must make God understand that the victory gained by force is only partial. Their minds are yet unsubdued in spite of the defeat on the field of battle. As long as their spirit remains undaunted, there is hope of victory. Satan argument is that for a

complete victory the body and the mind must be fresh. So long as the will to resist remains, no defeat is complete,

"Henceforth his might we know and know our own
So as not either to provoke, or dread
New war, provok'd; our better part remains
To work in close design, by fraud or guile
What force effected not (lines 643-647)

(provoked – if war were to be forced on us again / our better part –our modified and wiser course of conduct / work in close design – by secret or concealed planning achieve our end)

Satan wants to make God realise that he who overcomes his foe by superior strength alone can really claim only a partial victory. The mind and the spirit of the foe are invincible and will continue to be active long after physical strength has vanished. In point of sheer physical strength they may be inferior to God but they may prove more than a match for Him in the powers of the mind. New worlds may be created out of space and this is the rumour that was circulated and God intended to plant, " a generation whom his choice regard/ should favour equal to the sons of heaven". Satan wants to gain full knowledge of that place. These are merely suggestions which should be carefully discussed and elaborated before they are put into execution. Peace is out of the question and it is futile to think of it. War, open or covert, should therefore be agreed on.

Lines 679-699

Milton next introduces us to Mammon the god of riches. Milton calls him "the least erected spirit that fell from heaven." The poet uses the words "the least erected spirit" both literally as well as figuratively. Mammon could never stand erect, lofty and upright. (Milton attributes to Mammon meanness and avarice, materialistic values and a lack of loftiness of mind and an outlook 'downword bent'. Mammon is a syriac word meaning 'wealth')

Mammon had to stoop to look hungrily on the gold in Heaven's pavements. The twelve gates of hell (according to Revelations 21 of the Bible) were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; the street of the city was pure gold as it were transparent glass. Mammon's thoughts were low and more on the gold and the riches of the pavements of heaven than on the divine or holy bliss to be enjoyed by the beatific vision. Men also along with the fallen angels plundered the centre of the earth, ("rifled the bowels of their mother earth") for treasures. Milton observes in this connection that it would have been better if these treasures were always hidden. Much misery and bloodshed could have been avoided if these had not been dug up from the bowels of the earth. Mammon's followers opened into the hill a broad crater and dug out bars of gold.

Hell is worthy of being called the precious evil or curse or bane .(This is an instance of Oxymorn, a figure of speech in which two incongruous or contradictory terms are united in as expression so as to give it point – bane = cause of ruin)

Lines 742-798

Masson, a critic of Milton, rightly thinks that Mulciber (Vulcan) did the building up of the Council House of the fallen angels, Pandemonium. In classical legend Vulcan had been thrown out of Heaven by Jove. He fell down to Lemnos, an island in the Aegean Sea. His fall lasted one entire day from sunrise to sunset. Milton thinks that the classical version of Vulcan's fall in erroneous. This band of rebel angels fell to hell along with Vulcan though he had built so many lofty towers in Heaven. By command of Satan whom the fallen angels acknowledged as a Sovran power, an announcement was made that a solemn conference would be immediately held. All such deemed worthy to participate in the proceedings of the council were summoned. All the approaches to the building were thickly crowded. The gates, the window porches and specially the spacious hall were densely crowded. The spacious hall is compared to one of the vast enclosed fields where tournament, took place and where doughty champions challenged to single combat the most valiant among the pagans. The air was disturbed by the hissing, rustling sound of their wings. The rebel angels crowding the spacious hall are compared to swarms of bees in spring time. The spacious hall in Pandemonium where the great conference was to be held looked like one of the vast enclosed fields where tournaments took place in the middle ages. Though the hall was spacious, it could not accommodate the thronging crowd of fallen angels. So the spirits who could appear at will either dilated or condensed, now reduced their gigantic stature and contracted themselves to the size of dwarfs in order to crowd together in the hall. In this condition they appeared like the pygmies, the fabulous race of dwarfs living on the borders of India, under a bright moonlight.

A peasant or farmer returning late from his work watches spellbound the midnight revels of fairies. What he sees may not be a reality but just a sweet dream induced by the magic of moonlight. The moon comes nearer the earth because she is influenced by the charms of the fairies. The fairies, however, are intent on their revels and do not worry about the moon and her fears. As these fallen angels had contracted themselves, there was now plenty of room in the Hall to move about though the number of spirits was as large as ever. The leaders the Seraphic Lords and Cherubim, sat there with their native statures undiminished. The golden seats were numerous and all of them were occupied. After a short silence, the summons having been read, the great conference began.

3.12.4 Paradise Lost As An Epic

Heroic or folu epic poetry is the soil out of which the classical epic grew and this was the form chosen by John Milton for one of the greatest poems in the English language, Paradise Lost. The legend of the old, blind poet Homer who composed the Iliad and the Odyssey is well known. The Iliad has had more influence on the culture of Europe than any other single work of literature except the Bible. It consists of a mixture of history and legend. Homer had given the epic its power and grandeur; Virgil in the AENEID gave it its permanent shape and its strange conventions.

With the collapse of his hopes for the development of an earnest Protestant republic in 1660 - –restoration of Charles II to the English throne – Milton turned away from direct political literature to the project of writing an English epic poem. He trusted that such a heroic poem would proclaim to the civilized world the coming of age of English literature. He prepared himself assiduously for the intellectual challenge by treating of King Alfred and his exploits. At last he settled upon the providential theme of Paradise Lost (1667, Revised 1674). As the poem's opening lines stress,

"Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden," ……. (Lines 1 – 4)

Milton had moved from a meditation on the political disappointments to an epic treatment of man's first disobedience. Homer's Iliad traced the causes and progress of the Greek struggle against Troy; Virgil's Aeneid explored the origins and nature of Rome's imperial destiny. Without projecting neither a nationalistic nor an optimistic stance, he chose to sing of the failure of humankind to live according to divine order and its slow but providential deliverance from the consequences of the Fall. "The myth with which he chose to deal, and in which he believed literally was an exploration of the moral consequences of disobedience".

At the outset, let us say, that an epic is a long poem about the doings of one or more character from history or legend. These doings, according to R.J.Rees, are usually war-like, and involve a large number of secondary characters, as well as a background of gods and spirits who join in the action from time to time. As the epic is long, the poet has plenty of time for digressions and descriptions. Homer gives us a description of the armour of Achilles and Milton does the same in describing the shield and spear of Satan. Milton's cosmology in Paradise Lost has become the theme of several learned treatises. In the first Book which describes Satan and his rebel host weltering in the lake of fire, he gives us a very detailed picture of hell, the region into which they were thrown. Satan and his followers were hurled from Heaven to Hell where for nine days they lay entranced in the fiery gulf. In the middle of that gloomy region there is a lake of fire fed with ever-burning sulphur unconsumed. The building of Pandemonium, its vastness and beauty are discussed in detail.

Another characteristic of the epic is "what Professor Tillyard calls its choric nature". Epic poetry is in a sense public poetry – generally nationalistic or tribal. The poet is not only writing to express his own thoughts and feelings, but the thoughts and feelings of some large group or community. Milton becomes a spokesman for English and European Protestantism in his own time. The epic is marked by what has been called its "high seriousness". The poet sets out to make something which will be the best of which he is capable – Something of real importance which his fellow men "will not willingly let die". Milton had this high sense of duty and dedication. Though he was busy in the politics of his time, he always felt himself to be a man chosen himself to be a man chosen by God to do a great work; to write a poem which would place England among the greatest cultural nations of Europe. Milton in Paradise Lost and Dante in Divina Commedia believed in following as closely as possible the example set by Homer and Virgil. This example was followed so closely that every true epic was expected to include certain features that are found in the Iliyad and the Aenied.

A prayer or invocation is one of the features of a literary epic like Paradise Lost. The poet asks some god or muse to help him in his great work. In the invocation to the Muses, Milton makes a daring departure. In the opening lines he does not call on the Sisters of the Sacred well, but on the Spirit which was present from the beginning, that is, the Holy Spirit,

….. "thou, O spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure

Instruct me, for thou knowest: thou from the first
Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread
Dove-like s'at'st brooding on the vast abyss"

In the Bible, Genesis, Chapter I verses 1 and 2 read thus, "In the beginning God created Heavens and the Earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of waters".

"Similes are an important adjunct of an epic poem. In poetry or prose, similes are used for the sake of illustration, but, in an epic poem, they are used not only for the sake of illustration but also for a decorative purpose. Epic similes have, therefore, a distinctive character. They are elaborate and rich in pictorial details". An ordinary simile might describe a young man as 'tall and dark and straight like a young Cypress tree', but a Homeric simile enlarges the comparison so that it becomes a little 'poem-within-a-poem', (e.g)

These Miltonic similes are not limited to the points of comparison but they have a beauty of their own, and are admired for their own sake, independently of their relation to the theme, of the poem, or to the purpose of illustration. Such similes have an interpretative character and they serve the purpose of decoration. There are five such similes in BOOK I. (a) Satan, weltering in the pool of fire is compared to a huge leviathan, often times mistaken by mariners for an island. (b) The fallen angels lying entranced on the lake of fire are compared to the autumnal leaves that strew the brooks in Vallambrosa and then to the sedge floating on the Red Sea. (c) The rebel angels rise from their heavy stupor and crown under the vault of Hell. They are compared to the plague of locusts that darkened all the land of the Nile, and to the barbarian hordes from the populous north, which overran Rome. (d) The imposing discipline of the army of angels is such that even the greatest army in the world look very insignificant. (e) The angels rushing in to take their place in Pandemonium for the great consultation are compared to the bees that come out in the spring season from their hives and walk on the planks enjoying themselves thoroughly. All these similes are a proof of Milton's vast learning.

B.A.Wright, in his Milton's Paradise Lost convincingly argues that true epic similes should be read, not as attempts at rhetorical illustration, but rather as vividly poetic transposed descriptions. When Satan is compared in Book I to the Leviathan —-

"Which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean-stream" —-

We are not simply to pick out specific points of comparison but visualize the image of the Leviathan with all its attendant ominous features as "an essential part of the creative process", and "the image must remain a part of our idea of Satan to the end of the story". No image that is ever used has relevance in that context only, for "each at once becomes an element in the growing forces" of the narrative – red corpuscles in the blood that are the very condition of the vigorous life of the body.

A description of some kind of contest is found in most sophisticated epics simply because Homer tells us how Achilles arranged a day of athletic competitions in honour of his dead friend Patroclus. In an epic the hero undertakes a long and perilous journey – Satan's journey through space.

Another convention followed by epic poets is to begin the story in the middle of the action – In Medias Res as the Roman critic and poet, Horace called it. There are many other tricks of style, which had been used by Homer and Virgil. Thus it will be clear that the literary epic is something entirely different from the simple and unwritten ballads out of which it grew. There are several Old English heroic poems dating from the eighth to the eleventh centuries. Of these mention must be made of BEOWULF, which was composed during the ninth century AD From the tenth to the sixteenth centuries there is no English poem which can be called a true epic. Sir Thomas Malory's MORTE D' ARTHUR (1470) can be called an epic of the unsophisticated kind. Certainly it contains epic material. In Paradise Lost Milton (1608 – 1674) Created The One Undoubtedly GREAT English epic. All through his life Milton felt that he was a man chosen by God to write this great English poem. Milton had a religious and philosophical purpose that was "to justify the ways of God to men", or to answer the old question, which all Christians must answer: namely, if God is all good and all-powerful, why is there suffering and evil in the world?

Look at the summary of Paradise Lost Book I – The story taken partly from the Bible and partly from old Jewish myth and legends, describes the Fall Of Man, that is to say, the disobedience of Adam and Eve (our first parents) and which caused them to be driven out of the carefree Garden of Eden, and which brought suffering and death into the world. The action,. Which takes place between Heaven, Earth and Hell, begins with Satan's defeated armies lying hopelessly on the burning lake of Hell. Satan (then known as Lucifer) had been chief of the angels in Heaven; but, having rebelled against God, he and his followers were driven out:

…… "Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition; there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms"

Satan, shown all through the poem as a great and powerful leader, awakens his downcast armies makes them build a great palace in Hell (PANDEMONIUM) and calls a council of war.

In Paradise Lost English poetry possesses one of the supreme masterpieces of epic literature. The literary epic naturally resembles the primitive epic, on which it is ultimately based, in various fundamental characteristics. Its subject-matter is of the old heroic and mythical kind: it makes free use of the supernatural; it follows the same structural plan and reproduces many traditional details of composition; it often adopts, the formulas, fixed epithets, and streotyped phrases and locutions, which are among the marked features of the early type. The heroic and legendary material is invented by the poet's creative imagination and is handled with laborious care in accordance with abstract rules and principles, which have become part of an accepted literary tradition. Its specifically literary qualities, its skilful reproduction and adaptation of epic matter and methods, its erudition, its echoes, its reminiscences and borrowings, are indeed, as the Aeneid.

3.12.5 Structure of Paradise Lost

After Shakespeare, Milton is the greatest English poet; which means that he is the greatest English poet outside the drama. He is to be regarded as one of the three or four supreme poets of the world. In him we have a wonderful union of intellectual power and creative power, both at their highest. He is also a consummate literary artist, whose touch is as sure in delicate detail as in vast general effects. When we use the term 'Miltonic', it is his sublimity. He is the most sublime of English poets, and England's one acknowledged master of, what Mathew Arnold calls 'the grand style'. In sustained majesty of thought and diction he is unrivalled. His descriptive power too, is astonishing, as we can learn for ourselves by turning for example, to the scenes in Hell in the opening books of Paradise Lost.

Though he lacks in the true dramatic sense, the magnificent debate in the council of the fallen angels, and the whole conduct of the temptation of Eve, show an extraordinary insight into motive and character. Though in theory an epic poem is supposed to be quite impersonal, Milton's epic is throughout instinct with the spirit of the man himself. Narrow he often is; he is often hard and austere. But there is an intensity of individuality in everything he writes which is singularly impressive; and the loftiness of his temper and passionate moral earnestness make us feel that we are indeed in the presence of one 'whose soul was like a star, and dwelt apart'.

Style & Versification

Milton's blank verse form had been used in the drama. It had not been adopted for any important non-dramatic poem. He was making an experiment, when he took as the measure of PARADISE LOST English heroic verse without rime. Of this measure he remains a great master.

Milton thought of writing a tragic drama entitled "Adam Unparadized" but how he had developed the scheme of this tragedy can no longer be ascertained. However the elements of it served in the dramatic shaping of the providential theme of PARADISE LOST. As the poem's opening lines stress, he had moved from a mediation on the political disappointments visited on "God's Englishmen" to an epic treatment of "Man's FIRST Disobedience…… Death….. Woe…… loss". Earlier European Epic poems had celebrated some kind of military success. Homer's Iliad traced the causes and progress of the Greek struggle against Troy; Virgils Aeneidexplored the origins and nature of Rome's imperial destiny. Milton's subject was the failure of humankind to live according to divine order and its slow but providential deliverance from the consequences of the Fall. The myth with which he chose to deal, and in which he believed literally, was, like any other parallel myths and folk-tales, an exploration of the moral consequences of disobedience.

The discovery of the knowledge of good and evil is neither accidental nor happy. The central character, Adam, has no heroic destiny. Through his, and Eve's corruption all humankind is corrupted and, as both are finally obliged to understand, the spiritual struggle to regain Paradisal equity and equability extends through each generation of their descendants. In a profound sense Adam and Eve fall from the ideal into the human condition. The great theme of the poem is disobedience to the behests implicit in the creative order of an omnipotent God. The will of God is imprinted in the harmony of nature, and the disaster of the Fall is as much ecological as it is moral. Despite the

temptation presented by the poem itself to see the rebellion of Satan as a heroic gesture of liberation and the Fall of Adam as a species of gallantry towards his wife, PARADISE LOST insistently attempts to assert to a reader the ultimate justness of a loving God's "Eternal Providence".

Professor R.D.Trivedi comments that Milton was supremely egoistic and had no dramatic gifts; the poem as a whole, so far as its theme is concerned, is a flop; it lives by virtue of the first two books (dominated by Satan and a few episodes and personal digressions scattered in the remaining books). The manuscript of Paradise Lost and its first copy were bought by the Earl of Dorset. After reading it, he sent it to Dryden, who in a short time returned it, with the comment, "This man (Milton) cuts us all out, and the ancients too". Dr Johnson admired the poem and admitted that there was an authentic, a gigantic loftiness about the work; Wordsworth deeply troubled by the discontents of his time said, "Milton, thou should'nt be living at this hour". And to this day, Milton is read with tireless concentration and devotion. Some would like to replace Milton by glorifying Donne and C.S.Lewis may continue to burn incense at the altar of Milton. Professor S.Ramasami observes that Milton has not been shoved away into limbo. Assessments of what is still 'living' in Milton continue to be made. Milton is no subject for weak intellectual digestions. Even those who lament his mistaking a scheme of life for life itself, look upon an appreciation of Paradise Lost as the last, the ultimate reward of consummated classical scholarship. Paradise Lost does the impress of two tremendous intellectual and social movements, the Renaissance and the Reformation, it gives as well rich evidence of the equally impalpable but proud influence of the classics of Greece and Rome, of the Bible, of English literature and Italian poetry. The poem is wrought out of the Bible – as few poems have been. Echoes of Homer and Virgil, of Spenser and Shakespeare, of Dante, Petrarch, Tasso and Ariosto, ring through the poem. Its central theme, the Fall of Man, is awe – inspiring in its huge, imponderable vastness – not of scale alone but of significance. Of a trifle such as the eating of a fruit by Adam and Eve, it may be easy to work out a mock-heroic poem of a few lines. But what Milton has wrought out of it is truly awesome in its superb grandeur, its sheer, towering majesty. Comparing all life and all time, Heaven and Hell, war, love and religion, Paradise Lost is unique in its intrinsic greatness and in the reverent homage it has evoked among all true lovers of poetry.

The central action of the poem, for all its seeming simplicity, is charged with universal, cosmic significance. The intensity of the passive suffering of Adam is invested with a heroic dimension which only those who have known tragedy in their lives and endured it, can assess aright. Adam surrenders to Passion, abandoning Reason. Out of such fateful surrenders is tragedy wrought. According to Professor Ramasami Paradise Lost is not just a narrative poem, it is high wrought tragedy. An epic is by convention, a poem wrought out of national history. Paradise Lost soars beyond this time – honoured convention to tell the story of the greatest of all tragedies, the awesome tragedy of the Fall of Man.

Professor K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar and Dr Prema Nandakumar say that the supreme example of a writer in whose work both Christian and classical influences flow together to make a poetic TRIVENI is Milton. He was steeped in Scripture as well as classical literature, and these verily became a part of him, and imparted to his thinking, feeling and speaking the austerity and the ethical earnestness of the

Hebrew myths, and the intellectual puissance (might) and multiple radiance of the master minds of Greece and Rome. Christian and classical imagery came easily and naturally to Milton –

"Last Came, and last did go,
The pilot of the Galilean lake" (LYCIDAS)

For the construction of Paradise Lost Milton went to Virgil and Homer for inspiration, but the 'matter' of the poem – the backgrounds, the incidents, the characters – is almost wholly Biblical. And he wove the texture of the poem with imagery drawn from both classical and Christina sources. When Dante wrote the Divine Comedy the cosmic myth comprising Hell's circles, Purgatory's slopes, and Heaven's spheres had complete internal coherence and adequacy and that is the reason why even the modern reader accepts the poem as something wholly self-sufficing in its grandeur of conception and realisation. This applies to a great extent to Milton's cosmic myth of hell, heaven and earth also. We are struck by the marvellous fusion of Christian and Biblical elements in the following passage,

"Hail, holy Light…… Before the sun,
Before the Heavens, thou wert, and at the voice
Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest
The rising World of waters dark and deep
Won from the void and formless Infinite!". (Book III, 1 to 12)

If Paradise Lost is Milton's cosmic epic structured out of hints in the Book of Genesis, Paradise Regained is built out of material quarried from the New Testament of the Bible. Artistically, Samson is a return of the method of Paradise Lost, and fuses the classical form and technique of Tragedy with Hebrew thought and Christian faith.

Milton has a theme better in its own way and for his particular purpose than the themes of Homer and Virgil, of Ariosto and Tasso. Milton's ostensible aim is to "assert Eternal Providence And justify the ways of God to men". It is almost a theological aim; and he would therefore try to effect a marriage of theology and epic poetry. Joseph H. Summers remarks in The Muse's Method that Paradise Lost is not a national epic but a poem about man and God; not of heroic events which occurred in one historical period but of the first events and of all time and eternity; not of pagan 'fiction' or even Christian 'dream', but of biblical, historical, and prophetic "truth".

In old time epics there are war councils, battles, single combats, domestic debates and scenes of temptation. All these are memorably there, yet all these are so transformed, says C.M.Bowra, "that their significance, and even their aesthetic appeal are new …. Before Milton the best literary epic had been predominantly secular; he made it theological, and the change of approach meant a great change of temper and of atmosphere". It would, perhaps be truer to say that Milton tried to fuse Virgil and Dante, the epic manner of the former and the theological insights of the latter. This meant creating a new style, which is best summed up by the word "sublime".

This epic poem Paradise Lost casts a spell on the reader with the opening lines and the spell continues till the end. Hell, all Hell the whole of Heaven and entire earth are comprehended in the scheme of the poem. In Book V he writes thus,

…….. “I shall delineate so,
By likening spiritual to corporal forms
As may express them best;”……

The triumph of Milton’s style is revealed as much in the superb translation of spiritual to corporal forms as in the realisation of the “structural ideal”.

Prof K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar and Dr Prema Nandakumar speak of the style of Paradise Lost. The hexameter of Homer and Virgil, the anushtup of Valmiki and Vyasa, the Terza Rima of Dante, the symphonic blank verse of Milton, the crystalline iambic pentameter of Savitri, all play no mean part in charging these great epics with life and movement and a rounded significance. In his early work Milton appears as the inheritor of all that was best in Elizabethan literature, and his first work, the ode “On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity” approaches the high water-mark of lyric poetry in England. L’Allegro Il Penseroso contain short descriptive passages which linger in the mind like strains of music. His famous sonnets brought the Italian form of verse nearly to the point of perfection. Undoubtedly the noblest of Milton’s works, written when he was blind and suffering, — (his daughters, upon whom he depended in his blindness, rebelled at the task of reading to him and recording his thoughts) – are Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, and Samson Agonistes. Paradise Lost is the greatest, indeed the only generally acknowledged epic in English literature since Beowulf. When we consider Milton’s poetic genius in Paradise Lost we must reckon its sublime imagery, its harmonious verse, its titanic background of heave, hell, and the illimitable void that lies between, its unsurpassed in any literature.

It will be seen that this is a colossal epic, not of a man or a hero, but of the whole race of men; and that Milton’s characters are such as no human hand could adequately portray. The splendours of heaven, the horrors of hell, the serene beauty of Paradise, the sun and planets suspended between celestial light and gross darkness, are pictured with an imagination that is almost superhuman. The abiding interest is in these colossal pictures, and in the lofty thought and the marvellous melody with which they are impressed on our minds. The poem is in blank verse, and not until Milton used it did we learn the infinite variety and harmony of which it is capable. He played harmony of which it is capable. He played with it, changing its melody and movement on every page, “as an organist out of a single theme develops an unending variety of harmony”. Lamartine has described Paradise Lost as the dream of a Puritan fallen asleep over his Bible. It is a curious fact that it is the dream, not the theology or the description of the Bible scenes, that chiefly interests us.

Ezra Pound says that the rhythm set in a line of poetry connotes its symphony, which, had we a little more skill, we could score for orchestra. Once the perfect metrical medium — in this case use of blank verse by Milton in Paradise Lost —— has been hit upon or shaped anew on the poet’s creative forge, his inspiration can flow with comparative ease, and the disparate epic material can be held together as if by magic. This verse by its blending of beauty and power to the acme of sublimity has given us what is found nowhere else in English poetry. As Professor K.R.S. Iyengar and Dr Prema Nandakumar would assert, “Hell yawns before us, and CHAOS threatens to engulf us; and Satan and Beelzebub and Mammon and Moloch and Belial strike us as almost apocalyptic projections. According

to Sri Aurobindo, “Rhythm and speech have never attained to a mightier amplitude of epic expression and movement, seldom to an equal sublimity”.

Milton invokes,

……. “Thou O spirit that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou knowest; thou from the first
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread
Dove-like satst brooding on the vast abyss
And madst it pregnant”…….. (Lines 17 – 22 Book I)

The poet craves the Spirit to instruct him, to illumine what is dark, to raise and support what is low. The above passage asserts the primary importance of man, and the divine preference for the heart rather than the works of man. It introduces the series of paradoxically juxtaposed ‘sizes’ and ‘strengths’ which follows: ‘all Temples’ and the single heart; ‘mighty wings’ and ‘Dove-like’; ‘the vast Abyss’ and the darkness and lowness of the poet’s mind and heart; the fertility which created the world and the implied fertility of man. Joseph H. Summers goes on to say that this series helps us to understand that the impregnator of the vast Abyss and the illuminator of the darkened mind are one. It implies Milton’s conviction that the subject of his poem is the largest that he could imagine and that it is also, paradoxically, the smallest: the theatre of its action is both entire universe and the mind and heart of individual man. In the ultimate analysis, the stage – be it Hell, Chaos, Heaven or Earth – is the human heart; the microcosm is the macrocosm. The Iliad and the Aeneid and Paradise Lost have the symmetry of a tragedy by Sophocles or Seneca or Racine. The structural principle of the poem is realisable in the sheer power of the style which like the blood circulates in the whole body.

‘Wars, hitherto the only argument heroic deem’d’ seemed to him utterly unworthy of epic treatment. He intended to soar higher and ‘above the Anoian mount’ pursuing things unattempted yet, in prose or rhyme. And he meant his poem to be deeply, profoundly theological, nothing less than a justification of the ways of God to men. Thus it was that PARADISE LOST came to be written. In itself it was a feat of truly heroic dimensions – a long poem in twelve books, devoted to the highest of themes – composed amid the most trying physical disabilities, amid pain of body and anguish of mind, and political isolation and personal humiliation. The poem was at last published in 1667 – and at once recognised as a transcendently great feat of poetic genius. And it had a sequel, Paradise Regained in 1667 in four books, telling the story envisaged in Book I of Paradise Lost of “one greater man restoring us to the blissful seat”. In the same year, a veritable Samson in years, if not in physical strength, Milton fulfilled another of his literary ambitions and published Samson Agonistes, in the form of a Sophoclean tragedy. Milton had thus handled with the ease and self-confidence of authentic genius all the poetic kinds that had established themselves in the world’s great literature – lyric, elegy, epic and tragedy. He is among the world’s greatest poets, with works of the highest quality in the world-renowned poetic kinds, to his credit an immortal among the world’s greatest immortals.

3.12.6 Sample Questions

1. Give an account of the Homeric Similes in Book I and explain their literary importance. Consider Paradise Lost as an epic.
2. Does Milton reveal his personality in Paradise Lost?
3. Give an account of the Building of Pandemonium.
4. Sketch the qualities of Milton's poetry.
5. Do the speeches of Satan in Book I reveal Milton's character?
6. How does Milton give a catalogue of Beelzebub and others identifying them with pagan deities?
7. 'In Book I Milton through his portrait of Satan exposes false romantic notions of heroism' – Discuss.
8. 'Satan combines grandeur with vulgarity, a commanding intellect with a fundamental stupidity' – Elaborate with reference to Book I.
9. What are your impressions of the fallen angels after reading the first book of Paradise Lost?

3.12.7 Suggested Reading

1. The Elizabethan World Picture – E.M.W. Tillyard.
2. From Virgil To Milton – C.M. Bowra
3. The Muse's Method – Joseph H. Summers.
4. Milton's 'Paradise Lost' – B.A. Wright.
5. Paradise Lost – Ed A.W. Verity
6. Milton – David Daiches.
7. A Milton Handbook – J.H. Hanford
8. The Living Milton – Frank Kermode
9. Paradise Lost And The Seventeenth Century Reader – B. Rajan.

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Lesson - 13

John Milton: Paradise Lost - Book IX

Contents

3.13.1 Objectives

i. to project the Renaissance and Reformation elements in the poem
ii. to expose the puritanical strain
iii. to explicate the blend of Hellenism and Hebrewism in the works of Milton especially in Book IX of Paradise Lost.

3.13.2 Introduction

"Book IX is the key-book of Paradise Lost, for it is concerned with the basic theme of Milton's epic", as suggested by the poet in the opening lines of Book I

"Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden", ……. (lines1- 4)

That is, "the Fall of man, consequent upon the temptation and seduction of Eve by Satan. This central theme is of cosmic significance, and by his masterly treatment of it the poet has raised it to the level of a high-wrought tragedy. Such is Milton's art that the reader's involvement in the awesome tragedy of the fall is total. Mathew Arnold's title of Grand Style to his composition is never artificial and removed from human speech. Raleigh rightly says that Milton may be called the inventor of the "poetic diction" of the eighteenth century. The mighty power of poetry and art is generally admitted. This power at its best resides chiefly in the refining and elevation brought on us by the high and rare excellence of the great style. In English poetry and art the Englishman's grand source is Milton. Admiring Milton's construction of the epic and the poet's avowed purpose of justifying the ways of God to man Samuel Johnson in his Life of Milton says, "Before the greatness displayed in Milton's poem, all other greatness shrinks away.

3.13.3 Critical Summary

Invocation Lines 1-47

The poem opens with the poet saying that he must change the joyous note, arising out of the friendly talk between the Man and the archangel to the tragic one. The angels sit in the company of man as his friends and guests, indulging in cordial talks and sharing in their pastoral pleasures. The poet must tell us of the disobedience and revolt and the consequence of it namely the Fall,

> "Disloyal on the part of man, revolt,
> And disobedience: on the part of heaven,
> Now alienated, distance and distaste,
> Anger and just rebuke, and judgement given,
> That brought into this world a world of woe,
> Sin and her shadow death, and misery
> Death's harbinger"….(lines 7-13)

Writing on the Fall of Man is a lamentable task; but the subject matter or theme of it is more heroic than those of the fierce fight between Hector and Achilles. Milton says that his poem has an advantage over the three great classical epics, The Iliad, The Odyssey and The Aeneid in Homer's The Iliad, Achilles, the Greek hero chased the Trojan Hector thrice round the walls of Troy before killing him. In Virgils's the Aeneid, Aeneas took to wife Lavinia who was to have married Turnus. In Homer's The Odyssey the anger of Poseidon (Neptune) prevented Odysseus for ten years from reaching his home after the fall of Troy. Aeneas was the son of Cytherea and a mortal Anchises. Juno, the Queen of the Gods, was his enemy. These actions perplexed the Greek and Cytherean people. Milton prays his celestial patroness to bless him with proper language and style to meet the great need of that difficult stage in the development of his epic. This celestial patroness favoured him with nightly visits without being requested and dictated his verses to him in his sleep, or inspired him to write his poems unpremeditated. The Muse inspired him to a fluent language so that the composition of the epic was made easy and spontaneous. This Muse had been inspiring him ever since he took up his great theme for his epic which he took a long time to choose and so have begun it so late. Milton had originally planned to write on Arthurian legend but later he changed to the Biblical theme. The poet speaks caustically of the long, detailed descriptions of the wounds of the Knightly combatants in the classical and romantic epics. The ancient poets found subjects like wars and adventures adequately grand for ambitious poetic achievements. These poets presented these actions with great analytic powers, patiently narrating the heroic exploits and destructive battles of their imaginary Knights and heroes. They left unsung the patient endurance and heroic martyrdom which are much more important, and of which the poet intends to sing in his epic. These poets also sang about the different races and the heroic games, the antique furniture, their carved shields, heraldic devices, their well-decorated and saddled horses, their armoured skirts and golden trappings. In this way they described magnificent Knights engaged in duels and tournaments, and excellent feasts given by Marshals in medieval halls and castles, served in fabulous utensils and crockery by several attendants and stewards. Such artificial devices and low achievements cannot give real glory and honour to these persons and poems. Milton has neither the skill nor the inclination to deal with such trivial subjects. To his share, has been left a higher and nobler theme, which by itself is sufficient to bring honour to a poet,

…….. "Me of these
Nor skilled nor studious, higher argument
Remains, sufficient of itself to raise
That name"……..

To write such subjects, inferior skill of craftsmanship is enough. Milton wants to win the laurel of the epic poet inspite of his blindness and age and the cold climate of his politics.

Lines. 48-98

The sun had set and Venus, the evening star whose function is to cause twilight on earth had risen in the sky. A little later the earth, from the Northpole to the south was covered with darkness. In Book IV we read how narrowly Satan escaped a trial of strength with Gabriel, the guardian angel of Man. Driven out of Eden by the threats of Gabriel, under the veil of darkness of night, Satan "fearless returned" to Paradise;

……now improved
In meditated fraud and malice, bent
On Man's destruction, maugre what might hap
Of heavier on himself, fearless returned" (ll 54 – 57)

He fled night by midnight, after circling the Earth, he(Satan) returned to his place of confinement. He cautiously avoided the day, because URIEL, the Archangel of the Sun had earlier observed him entering the world and had cautioned about it the angels who guarded the earth. Satan who had fled away in anguish, had circled the earth seven times. On the eighth night he came and stealthily entered the world by cleverly avoiding the eye of the guardian angels,

……. "and on the coast averse
From entrance or Cherubic watch, by stealth
Found unsuspected way" …….. (ll 67 – 69)

Satan, decided to hide in the form of the serpent to convey his evil designs. The serpent is a crafty creature, so his cunning could go unnoticed; while, if he was to hide in some other creature they might arouse suspicion that some demonic power beyond the capacity of the beast was at work.

Lines 99 – 178

Satan in his soliloquy poured forth his inward grief and passion. Satan observes that the Earth is better than Heaven, since God had created Earth after Heaven. Earth appears to be the centre of the universe and the sun and the stars seem to be shining just for man's benefit on Earth. If Satan has a mind to enjoy anything, he could enjoy walking on the Earth. But the more pleasures, he sees around him, the more hatred he finds in himself. A feeling of torment causes him to find ease only in destruction,

……. "and the more I see
Pleasures about me, so much more I feel
Torment within me, as from the hateful siege
Of contraries" …….. (ll 119 – 122)

Satan is suffering from the conflict of hateful opposites, delights outside him, torment within at the sight of them. All good becomes to him only a curse, his state would be still worse in heaven where the even greater delights would cause him correspondingly greater torment. Satan seeks to live neither here nor in Heaven unless he could conquer the Supreme Master of Heaven. Satan does not in any way desire to make his position less miserable, but he wants to make others as miserable as he is, even though in doing so he may have to suffer a worse fate. His thoughts which relentlessly torture him can be eased only by destroying others. Satan for a while, dwells upon the protest of spoiling the earth for man and turning man against God. He says that he has robbed God of almost half the number of angels. In his opinion, God's energy has already been spent and He could create only men and not angels. God is determined to replace the lost angels with a creature made of dust and God has made the angels serve man

…… "What he decreed
He effected; man he made, and for him built
Magnificent this world, and earth his seat,
Him lord pronounced, and O indignity !
Subjected to his service angel wings
And flaming ministers to watch and
Their earthly charge"…….. (ll 151 – 157)

Satan is afraid of the vigilant eyes of these angels, and in order to elude their eyes, he has stealthily entered Paradise in the form of midnight vapours. He is compressed into a beast and is compelled to brutalise his airy substance. He feels humiliated to think that he who was an angel who aspired to be God is forced to take the form of a beast. Ambition and the desire of revenge can make one to descend to any level. He who aspires must fall low in the same proportion as the height to which he aspired to rise, becoming the lowest and the basest of creatures. Jealousy is one of the motives that animate Satan against man, but the strongest is "to spite the great creator",

"Since higher I fall short, on him who next
Provokes my envy, this new favourite
Of Heaven, this man of clay, son of despite,
Whom us the more to spite his Maker raised
From dust : spite then with spite is best repaid" (ll 174 – 178)

Lines 204 – 225

Eve says that they cannot keep up with their pleasant work unless they have more hands. The work is becoming too unwieldy. The plants that they prune by day overgrow by night. All their labours in tending, pruning and binding the plants become useless in a day or two, for there is such luxurious growth. Therefore she asks for Adam's suggestion or she will unfold her proposal. She wants that they should divide their labours by going to the place of his choice whether it be to wind the woodbine creeper round that bower or to set the direction of the ivy creeper. She offers to go to the spot of rose bushes where they grow intermixed with myrtles and do the necessary work there till noon. When they work near each other the whole day, the tendency is to waste their time in looking and smiling at each other or in talking when they see some new object. These interventions check

their progress and they turn out little work even though they begin their work so early and the supper hour comes unearned. Therefore, Eve suggests that they work apart that day – the fatal day.

Lines 226 – 269

Adam tells her that she is the only companion and partner of his life and she is dearer to him than all living creatures. She has mentioned it well and has used her thoughts well how can they best do the work assigned to them by God. He is bound to appreciate and praise her suggestion, for, nothing is more lovely in a woman than her devotion to her household work and her encouragement to her husband to do good acts. God has not imposed labour upon them so as to debar them from life's pleasures, food, rest, sweet conversation, and exchange of pleasant looks and smiles. Pleasant smile issues from reasoning faculty which is denied to the brutes and these smiles are the food of love, and it is the noble motive of life. They could prune everything till the time they are assisted by younger hands who will soon come to their help. If she is tired of too much conversation, "to short absence I could yield" says Adam.

Adam has a foreboding that the wiles of Satan may bring them to grief and shame by cunning tricks. Satan might be waiting for a suitable opportunity. If they work jointly Satan will be powerless. Their married love and life provokes the envy of Satan. Hence he advises her not to leave the faithful arm of security of her husband, from whom she was born, and who constantly covers and protects her. He advises Eve,

……. "where danger or dishonour lurks,
Safest and seemliest by her husband stays,
Who guards her, or with her the worst endures" (ll 266 – 268)

Lines 320 –341

Eve does not seem to think seriously protecting herself from the impending calamity. Adam spoke "in his care and matrimonial love". Instead of taking the advice of her husband, Eve feels as though she is hurt by his remarks. She asks a basic question. How can they be said to be happy if they live unequipped under the threat of a foe? She argues perversely that if she is harmed it does not lead to her sin; on the other hand it recoils upon the doer. If one of them gains honour by resisting temptation, the unsuccessful tempter would only dishonour himself. She adds further that faith, love and virtue are not worth anything, if they are not tested. They need not fear that their happy condition has been left so imperfect by God that one of them could not stand alone. Paradise were no paradise if they are exposed to the cunning of Satan.

Lines 342-377

Adam says that all things are best as they are ordained by God. But he has given a free will and so, if at all there is any defect, it lies in man himself. Although man is sound in reason, he needs to be cautious and alert on this score that man's will may be misinformed by false beings appearing to be good,

"But God left free the will, for what obeys
Reason is free, and reason he made right,

But bid her well beware, and still erect,
Lest by some fair appearing good surprised
She dictate false, and misinform the will
To do what God expressly hath forbid" (ll 351-356)

The real source of danger in any man is the weakness of his own will and this is an 'internal' and not an external danger. If one acts in accordance with the dictates of his Reason, he will always find himself safe. They are firm in their loyalty to God. If they do not keep a strict watch evil might happen at any time. It is better to avoid the circumstances of temptation and this is possible if Eve does not separate from him. If she wants to prove the constancy of her faith, she should first prove her obedience. How would he approve of her firmness, unless it is tested? If she really believes that unsought trial may find her in a more secure position than with this warning, then she is free to go. Her stay there without her free will, shall be as good as absence. So let her go in all her natural innocence. He tells her to depend on her own virtue, let her call forth all the virtue that she has to help her, because God has done for her whatever was possible and she has to do her part. In this way Adam, the father of Mankind spoke, but Eve persisted in having her own way. "Eve appears submissive but she has the last word. In the past her submissiveness had been of a very different character. "My author and disposer, what thou bid'st unargued I obey…."(Book IV)

Lines 377-472

Even though Eve is submissive, she is still persistent. She takes the hint given by Adam. She has her own way but she flatters her husband that she is going away by his permission. She goes off thinking of Adam's last words that their trial unsought may find them less prepared. She does not expect that their enemy will stoop to tempt the weaker sex; in that case his repulsion by the weaker one will put him to greater shame. Thus saying,

…….. "from her husband's hand her hand
Soft she withdrew, and like a wood nymph light
Oread or Dryad, or of Delia's train
Betook her to the groves, but Delia's self
In gate surpassed and goddess-like depart" (ll 385 - 389)

(when Adam and Eve forst appeared in the epic, they were hand in hand; now Eve withdraws her hand; and pays the penalty very soon; at the end of the poem, reconciled and reunited, hand in hand they depart from Paradise into the world) Going about in the consciousness of her new born sense of freedom, amidst the groves and orchards of Eden, she is compared to the classical nymphs and woodland goddesses. She moved about gracefully like any Oread or Dryad. Eve is also compared to one of those agile and fleet footed virgins who formed the train of the classical goodess Diana, the huntress. Eve was walking alone among the gardens and orchards of Paradise and is compared to the Pastoral goddesses of Greek and Roman antiquity. She is likened to Pales,(goddess of the pastures) to Pomona(goddess of the fruit trees) and to Ceres(goddess of agriculture)

Lines ll 412-493

A mere serpent would not be suspected of such treacherous designs as Satan really had. If there had been more men and women, the temptation and fall of just one man and woman among them would not have vitiated the whole race at the source. Satan sought both of them –Adam and Eve- but wished he could find Eve alone, and so he was very much pleasantly surprised when he found her alone. He spied her hidden in fragrant flowers, and, therefore, only half seen. The luxuriant roses so thickly covered her that she was not fully visible. She often stooped to support the tender stalk of a plant, whose head, bearing a beautiful flower, purple, blue or speckled with gold, hung low without any support. She supported these drooping plants gently with the twigs of myrtles. In the mean while she was oblivious of herself, that she was the fairest of all the unsupported flowers, for her best support her husband was far away, while the storm of danger was so near. Satan disguised as a serpent drew nearer through beautiful avenues of majestic cedar, plam or pine. Sometimes hidden, sometimes visible, through the thick foliage, he approached near Eve, voluble and bold. A more beautiful place than these Gardens could hardly be imagined. It was the handiwork of Eve. The artistic garden of the Greeks or those of Alcinous or Laertes bore no comparison with them,

"Or of revived Adams, or renowned
Alcinous, host of old Laertes' son
Or that, not mystic, where the sapient king
Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse"

[Adonis = the gardens of Adonis at the time of his yearly revival or coming back to live on earth. He was a handsome youth and the beloved of Venus.

Aleinous, King of Phaecia, treated Ulysses with loving hospitality when Ulysses was thrown on the Phaecian coast on his return voyage from Tory. His gardens are described in Homer's Odyssey.]

The garden is more delicious than the garden of Solomon, the sapietn King who entertained his Egyptian spouse, the daughter of Pharaoh. Satan admired the place very much, and the person of Eve even more. He felt like the inhabitant of a populous city, habituated to living in a suffocating and foul smelling atmosphere of closely built houses and bowers, suddenly moving out on a summer morning to breathe beautiful and fresh agricultural farms and pastures spread over a large area. Satan felt delighted with everything that he saw. The smell of rice crops, rural sight and sound, thrilled him. The serpent enjoyed intense pleasure by looking at this flowery spot. In appearance Eve was like a heavenly angel, though more tender and feminine. His malice seemed to be drowned in her graceful innocence; with sweet repentance he regretted the fierceness of his intention. Satan stood still, disarmed of all enmity, guile, hate and revenge. But the hot flames of hell continually burning within him, very soon ended his delight. The more pleasures he saw around him, the pleasures that had been denied him, the more unhappy he felt. Soon he recollected all his fierce hate and all his thoughts and himself on finding Eve alone, he encouraged himself thus. Satan thinks that he should seize this opportune moment; Eve is alone, her husband is far off; after his recent Fall, Satan lost certain powers. Therefore, Satan feels that he is not a match to Adam's intellect, strength, courage and heroic built physique.

Further Adam is invulnerable whereas Satan is not so now. Satan decides to bring about Eve's fall by disguising his hate under a show of love. Satan comments,

"She fair, divinely fair, fit love for gods
Not terrible, though terror be in love
And beauty, not approached by stronger hate,
Hate stronger, under show of love well feigned,
The way which to her ruin now I tend" (ll 489 – 493)

Lines 532 – 612

Adam and Eve were the lords of the animals in Paradise. Perhaps, Satan's flattery reflects this acknowledged true lordship. Satan flattered her with smooth talk and his introductory speech struck the right note. ("Satan's ingratiating style, the careful repetition of key words, the sinuous rhythms stealthily flowing up to the concluding climax are all a part of the tuning"). The words of Eve made way into Eve's heart though she greatly wondered at the power of speech of the serpent. With great surprise she answered Satan in the form of a serpent. Eve began to wonder, "What does this mean? The language of man is being spoken by a beast who is expressing human thoughts and feelings". She thinks that beasts were denied the power of speech for God created them dumb on the day of creation, that is, without the power of articulate expression. She accepted hesitatingly that in their looks and actions the beasts showed much reason. She says that the serpent is the most cunning of all animals but she never even thought that it had the power of speech. She wants to know from the serpent how the latter came to acquire the faculty of speech and how it has grown so friendly to her, more friendly than the other beasts. Such a wonder claimed her attention. To this doubt, Satan says,

"Empress of this fair world, resplendent Eve,
Easy to me it is to tell thee all
What thou command'st and right though should'st be obeyed".

Satan tells Eve that at first he was as dumb as the other beasts of the field that move on the grass and are capable only of abject and low thoughts, and take low food. It looked for nothing else but food and sex and had no higher thoughts. Then one day, roving in the field he happened to see a beautiful tree at a great distance laden with the most attractive ruddy golden fruits. He drew nearer to look at them, when from its branches and boughs came a pleasing fragrance, which added to his appetite. That fragrance was more pleasing than the sweetest smell of all herbs or of the milking goats and sheep dropping milk every evening being unsucked by lambs or kids that move in company with them. Satan in Serpent's guise spoke thus,

"To satisfy the sharp desire I had
Of tasting those fair apples, I resolv'd
Not to defer; hunger and thirst at once,
Powerful persuaders, quick'n'd at the scent
Of that alluring fruit, urg'd me so keen".

At once he went to the mossy trunk of the tree; he climbed up as the fruit laden branches stood much above the ground, beyond the reach of any creature, including Adam too. All other beasts looked at

those fruits with great longing and envy, but could not reach them. He climbed up the tree; seeing so many fruits hanging around him and tempting him; with the result he plucked so many of them so that he could eat to his fullest satisfaction. He had never found such pleasure in feeding and drinking before; suavely he adds,

"Sated at length, ere long I might perceive
Strange alteration in me, to degree
Of reason in my inward powers, and speech
Wanted not long, though to this shape retained.
Thenceforth to speculations high or deep
I turned my thoughts, and with capacious mind
Considered all things visible in heaven
Or earth, or middle, all things fair and good:" (ll 598 – 605)

But in Eve's divine form the serpent finds the combination of all things that are fair and good, and he sees in her beauty heavenly light. It is this realization that has prompted the Serpent to gaze at Eve and worship her, because she has been rightly declared to be the sovereign of all living creatures and Eve is the Universal Mother.

"So talked the spirited sly snake; and Eve
Yet more amazed unwary thus replied" (ll 614 – 615)

Lines ll 613 – 624

Being more surprised and suspecting no danger Eve addressed the Serpent and wished to know where that tree grew and how far was it from that place. She had seen many trees in Paradise, trees of different kinds that were still unknown to them. There was an abundance of choice and store of fruits that many of them had neither been touched nor tasted.. They would remain so until there would be more hands in proportion to the trees. Fearing that Eve may reverse her opinion if the tree is far off, Satan says that the tree is just near. Satan says that if Eve allows herself to be conducted by the Serpent, he will take her to the spot in no time.

…… "If thou accept
My conduct, I can bring thee thither soon"

To which Eve replies,

"Lead then", said Eve. He leading swiftly rolled
In tangles, and made intricate seem straight,
To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy
Brightens his crest, as when a wandering fire,
Compact of unctuous vapor, which the night
Condenses, and the cold environs round…." (ll 631 – 645)

The Serpent at once rolled leading Eve. "The serpent's winding guidance makes the intricate path to the forbidden tree easy to follow. His hope of bringing about the Fall of Man elevates and the consequent

thought of joy brightens his crest. With his crest thus brightened, he is like the ignis fatuus, the wandering light sometimes produced by ignited marsh gas. Lines 635 – 637 – "the image refers to the phenomenon of ignis fatuus, a phosphorescent light to be seen flickering over marshy ground, though rarely, at night caused by the spontaneous combustion of inflammable gas given off by decaying substances". It was believed that it heralded the arrival of evil spirits. It misled the confused night wanderer from his path into bogs and mires through ponds and pools into which he sinks and perishes, being far away from any help or succour. The crest of the serpent shone bright and he led Eve 'our credulous mother' to the Tree of Prohibition, and her temptation proved to be the root cause of all our suffering, 'root of all our woe'. When Eve saw the tree she spoke to the serpent thus.

Lines 646 – 732

Eve is led to the tree by Satan and she says they may have spared the trouble of coming over there, because their labours are wasted, though fruits are found to be in abundance there. The credit of the virtue of those fruits lies with Satan; it is wonderful indeed, if their talents are really the effect of that fruit. But they may not touch or taste that fruit. God so commanded them and that is the sole command issued to them prohibiting the eating of the fruit thereof from the said Tree of knowledge.

Satan asks her if God has said they must not eat of this particular tree in the Garden, how could Adam and Eve be declared to be the supreme masters of all the earth and air. Eve replied thus,

"But of the fruit of this fair tree amidst
The garden, God hath said, 'ye shall not eat
Thereof, nor shall ye touch it, lest ye die'".

"No sooner does Eve close her lips after explaining than Satan assumes the posture of one who is indignant at the wrong committed by God to man in forbidding the fruit and of one who has fathomless love for the human beings". Satan elevated his voice to new heights of eloquence, as if he were about to speak on some important matter.

Public speaking is an art. The primary quality of an orator is that he should be a good and wise man. Satan's oratory is an art of words only. Milton compares him with a reputed orator in Greece or Rome because of the outstanding importance of the occasion to which he is addressing himself and because of his skill in the arts of language and acting.

By the power of that fruit he (Satan) has acquired more perfect life than fate assigned him by venturing higher than his lot. Satan belittles God and at the same time tried to make Eve concentrate on the mere act of eating the fruit, without any thought of disobedience to God, which it involves. If the knowledge is of good, how could God justly punish Eve for acquiring it. It is in no way wrong to know the good.

God cannot punish you and still remain just. Satan tells her that God's imposition on that fruit was to keep them in awe, to keep them low and ignorant. God knows that the day Eve eats that fruit, her eyes, which seem to be clear but actually dim, will become very clear and bright, and then they will be as gods, knowing good and evil as they know. Satan adds,

Satan declares that God is not the creator. If he is the creator, why should He create such a tree and should forbid it too. If he has the power of creation, he would not have created that tree at all, putting in the knowledge to discern between Good and Evil. Satan argues further, that if man can attain wisdom, by eating that fruit, then how could eating that be an offence. If Man attains wisdom how could that hurt God?" Satan says that it is sheer envy on the part of God, to forbid it for Man. Satan's persuasive argument finds an easy entrance into the heart of Eve. She stares fixedly at the beautiful fruit. It appeals to her much because it is noon and she is hungry. Milton comments thus,

"He (Satan) ended, and his words replete with guile
Into her heart too easy entrance won
Fixed on the fruit she gazed, which to behold
Might tempt alone, and in her ears the sound
Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregned
With reason, to her seeming, and with truth:" (ll 733 – 738)

Lines ll 745 – 779

Eve is inclined to touch and taste the fruit. Her senses rouse her appetite and desire. On the brink of eating the fruit, Eve muses on the great virtues of the best of fruits whose taste gave the power of speech to the mute serpent. God has forbidden the fruit for human beings. The serpent identifies the Tree of Knowledge, which will giver her knowledge of both good and evil. She says that knowledge of good will come to them, which is wanting in them. For good, if unknown, cannot be acquired, or if acquired but still remaining unknown would be as if not acquired at aLines Eve concludes that God forbids them to have knowledge thus to be good, to be wise. Such prohibitions cannot be binding. If the threat of death, which binds them, is there, there is no use of any internal freedom. If they taste the fruit of the Forbidden Tree they will die, how is it possible that the Serpent continues to live even after eating the fruit. Moreover the serpent lives, knows, speaks, argues and understands everything. She asks if death was invented only for human beings or was that intellectual food (Fruit of that Tree) denied to them and reserved for beasts. The one beast that has tasted it does not envy: he rather tells them with joy what good the fruit has brought to him. The Serpent has no suspicions, he is friendly to man and free from all deceit or guile. She has therefore nothing to fear. She wonders how can she know what to fear under ignorance of good and evil. She can know nothing of God or Death, law or penalty.

Lines 780 – 792

It is now self-evident that Eve's irrational senses have now become her authority; and her rational faith is gone. Eve thus was convinced and plucking rashly the fruit she ate it in that evil hour. There was no gap between her plucking and eating "she plucked, she ate". The logic of Satan has so befogged the mind of Eve that she does not for a moment suspect the words of Satan, though she suspects the words of God,

"So saying, her rash hand in evil hour
Forth reaching to the fruit, she pluck'd, she ate:
Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat

Sighing through all her works gave signs of woe;
That all was lost"…… (ll 780 – 794)

Milton is here expressing the philosophical idea that the whole created universe fell with man, the lord of it. He is also referring to the popular tradition that great disasters in the human world are accompanied by unnatural signs and portents in the external world. This act of Eve is felt as a wound by the earth. Nature sighed that the entire natural world was ruined; because Eve has undermined the law of obedience where the whole hierarchical system is governed

Lines 795 – 833

Eve satiated at the level of belly, soliloquises as one intoxicated by wine. She addresses the tree with all her praise for it. She thinks that the Tree of knowledge is very virtuous and the most precious of all other trees in Paradise, having the blessed quality of giving wisdom, hitherto unknown and thought to be injurioes. She would like to sing songs every day morning in praise of that tree. She thinks that she will be a regular visitor there and she will be a regular visitor there and she will consequently grow mature in knowledge like the gods who know all things. The tree will be her best guide. If she had not come there, she would have remained ignorant. The tree has opened the way of wisdom and given her access to secrets of wisdom and knowledge. She tells herself that Heaven is high, high and remote to see clearly everything which happens on earth. Other cares might have diverted the attention of God. Perhaps she is hidden she is sinned, Eve thinks of God in purely negative terms. The guardian angels are now spies to her. She wonders,

…….. "But to Adam in what sort (ll 816 – 817)

She asks herself if she can keep the odds of knowledge in her power. In that way she can add and supplement what is lacking in the female sex and thereby draw more love from him, and make herself equal to him, or even superior, for who can be free if inferior. She questions herself what if God has seen her and death follows. After her exit Adam will be married to another Eve; he will enjoy all pleasures with her after her death. Therefore she resolves to herself that Adam shall share with her in her blessing or woe. She loves him so dearly that she can endure all death with him and life without him is no life at all for her,

…….. "Confirmed then I resolve,
Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe. (ll 830 – 831)

Lines 834 – 855

Idolatry is made the first result of eating the forbidden fruit. She who thought it beneath her dignity to bow to Adam or to God, now worships a vegetable. After paying her reverence to the tree with its potential nectar, she turned her steps from the Tree. Eve hastened towards Adam, and in her face there appeared an expression of apology as an introduction to something mysterious that she was going to say.

Lines 856 – 916

An apologetic expression comes on her face, before she offers any excuse. She is prepared to make a speech excusing herself. She starts addressing Adam with a note of apology. Eve feels guilty for having eaten the fruit without Adam's knowledge. Eve's guilty demeanour is apparent here. She

missed him so much and had been thinking of him so long. Being separated from Adam, Eve says that she felt so much agony and therefore resolved not to repeat it a second time. Never again will she try to do what she did that morning out of rashness; but her experience had been wonderful which Adam will wonder when he hears all about it,

> "This tree is not as we are told, a tree
> Of danger tasted, nor to evil unknown
> Opening the way, but of divine effect
> To open eyes, and make them gods who taste:
> And hath been tasted such." …… (ll 863 – 867)

She tells him that the Tree is not dangerous but divine; making gods of those who taste and relish its fruit. She says further that the serpent has eaten and has become human. She too has eaten and become godlike. She concludes by saying that she did it only for Adam and he should also eat so that she will not be his superior in wisdom. As she says his her cheek glows with a guilty blush. Eve invites Adam to follow her example. Adam is dumbfounded at the report of Eve. The garland, which he has made for Eve, falls down from his hands and all the faded roses are scattered. He stands speechless and his face becomes pale because of a premonition of danger,

> "The fatal trespass done by Eve, amaz'd,
> Astonied stood and blank, while horror chill
> Ran through his veins, and all his joints relaxed," (ll 888 – 891)

Eve now calmly accepts Adam's remonstrances about her leaving him but remains oblivious of wherein her rashness really lies. Eve attempts an explanation of the serpent alone having tasted the fruit, which they had refrained from approaching. Eve was previously associated with roses. The faded petals now symbolize her mortality and also remind us that in the fallen world the rose will be a symbol of transience and of love. Tillyard, a great critic of Milton observes that the roses faded in sympathy with Adam's horror thus foretelling the effect that Eve's crime will have on nature. (This is an example of the figure of speech called Pathetic fallacy). Adam did not care to explore any alternative course involving chastisement of Eve and interceding with God on her behalf.

Adam clearly sees now that Eve is fallen. He describes her as the fairest of creation, last and best of all God's works, a creature in whom there is perfection of all that can be seen or imagined, holy, divine, good, charming or sweet. He asks her finally "How are thou lost!"; he says that she stands now lost 'defaced' and 'deflowered'. Adam detects the work of Satan and declares his sharing of Eve's fate. He fails to see how she agreed to violate the strict forbiddance of God and how she ate that Forbidden Fruit. She has ruined him also with herself for he is resolved to die with her. He cannot live without her; he cannot forego neither the pleasure of her sweet company nor the love, which has so dearly united them, and he cannot live alone in that wild forest. Even if God creates another Eve his heart can never forget her. She is the flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. He shall never be parted from her either in weal or woe. Adam is thus resolved to partake Eve's doom,

I feel
The link of nature draw me: flesh of my flesh'
Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy state
Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe" (ll 913 – 916)

Lines 917 – 989

Adam collects calmness, gathers strength after the shock, submits to the situation, resigns to peace after an inner turmoil. He felt like a man who receives comfort after great sorrow. He speaks to her and reminds her that she has done a bold deed and provoked great peril as she had dared to transgress God's command. The fruit is so covetous to the eye and more so to the taste but God forbade them to touch it. But her past deed cannot be undone. Neither the Omnipotent God nor Fate can do so. Probably the act of transgression is not serious now; the serpent lives even after tasting it; according to her the brute has risen to the level of man, to a higher degree of life. This may be a strong inducement to them; they may also rise higher in the scale of life; they may become gods or angels or demi-gods. Adam hopes that God, the wise creator, will not in fact destroy them who are His supreme creations, so highly dignified. Adam determines to share Eve's fate. He begins complimenting Eve on her daring and adventurous spirit. He appreciates the bold deed of Eve and in his opinion Eve is much daring to taste the fruit when it lay under a curse. Eve is extremely happy but says that she is not as perfect as Adam. Eve concedes at last that she is Adam's inferior. She is proud of having sprung from his ribs, and gladly listen to his talk about their inseparable union. There is one soul and one heart between them. That day Adam has given good proof of his sincere love for her. He is prepared to embrace death or any other worse evil for her sake.

Lines 990 – 1033

Eve embraced Adam and "for joy tenderly wept" as she had proved his love to be so noble. On account of this love Adam chose to incur divine displeasure for her sake and even death. In recompense for his compliance she gave him that enticing fruit with a liberal hand. We have Milton's comment in the following lines,

…….. "He scrupled not to eat
Against his better knowledge, not deceived,
But fondly overcome with female charm.
Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan:
Sky loured and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal sin
Original"…… (ll 997 – 1004)

When Adam took the fruit, which was offered by Eve, he did not hesitate to take in the fruit – it was rather a case of his foolish surrender to a woman's beauty. Then the whole universe shook with horror, and thus lodged an emphatic protest, in its own way. Earth shook from its foundations – there was a terrible earthquake. This was a mild expression of the great Mother's birth pangs, giving birth to that universal monster, sin. She gave out a second groan; the first groan had been given when Eve ate the fruit. There was a rumbling of thunder followed by a downpour; universal wrath bitterness and weeping,

that Man should have completed the Sin started by Woman and brought death into the world, and all our woe. The subversion of cosmic order by Adam and Eve is thus effectively described. All the while Adam took no notice of these things and ate to his fill nor was Eve afraid to repeat her former sin and tried to soothe him more with the pleasure of her company, which Adam loved. Now both of them felt as if they had been intoxicated with new wine of pleasure and mirth. They felt as though a new spirit of divinity had penetrated into them that raised them heavenwards. As a result, he began to cast lustful eyes on Eve and she too responded with equal passion. They burned in lust, till Adam began to play with Eve with lustful passion. He saw her exact in taste and elegance. Adam feels that of all human senses the sense of taste is the most judicious. He praised her overwhelmingly for having brought to him a fruit of rare taste, the pleasure of which they had lost so far. If there is such pleasure in things forbidden, God should have forbidden at least ten such trees. Since the day he first saw her and married her, her beauty had never been adorned with full perfection. That is the gift of that virtuous tree. (Eve became a tree-worshipper as soon as she ate the fruit that the tree gave and Adam becomes a woman-worshipper as soon as he takes the fruit that the woman gives). "For the first time Adam and Eve experience a carnal desire for each other. Adam finds that Eve's beauty is stimulating. He feels sorry that until then they had lost much pleasure by abstaining from eating that delightful fruit. Adam leads her to a shady bank and indulges in amorous acts. Their sexual indulgence is followed by shame. Even before that, their grosser sleep was not pleasant but burdened with conscious dreams of guilt and they wake up in a bad mood. Their innocence is gone and with it righteousness, confidence and honour. They are conscious of their nakedness.

They rose from their bed in great emotional disturbance and they looked at each other and found their eyes opened but mind darkened. They found themselves naked. It was this same feeling of guilt and shame that assailed strong Samson when he rose from the bed of the Philistine harlot, Delilah, discovering that all his strength had disappeared.

Adam accused Eve for her yielding to the temptation of the serpent who has truly led them to their fall by false promises of their rising higher. They really find their eyes open but only to the knowledge of good and evil. They had lost good and got evil. It is a bad fruit of knowledge, which made them realize that they are naked, devoid of all honour, innocence, faith and purity which were their ornaments. These higher virtues stand impaired and stained. Signs of guilt and shame are on their faces. He can never behold the faces of God or Angel, which he always saw with great rapture and joy. He cannot look at those bright angels. He would like to live in seclusion as a savage in some obscure valley. He calls on the pines and cedars to cover him up with their innumerable boughs; they should at least hide those parts of their bodies, which are unseemly. When they are conscious of their nakedness,

"So counseled he, and both together went
Into the thickest wood: there soon they chose
The fig tree, not that kind for fruit renowned,
But such as at this day to Indians known
In Malabar or Deccan spreads her arms" (ll 1099 – 1102)

Our first parents gathered leaves of this tree, which were as big as Amazonian shields, and they sewed them as skilfully as they could and wrapped them round their waist to hide their guilty shame. C.M.Bowra observes that this simile shows the degree of the FaLines From their old dignity Adam and Eve have become like the lowest of mankind conscious only of their human shame. Though they hid their shame in part, they were torn within by relentless and mental agitation, and shaken by winds of uncontrollable passion, they sat and wept. This was unlike their former naked glory. In this state Columbus found the aboriginals of America who also sought to cover their nakedness with feathers and leaves, otherwise naked and wild living on islands and woody shores. According to mediaeval thinking man was a microcosm, a little universe, containing within himself everything in the macrocosm outside him. Adam and Eve's ordered harmonious inner world has become a turbulent reflection of chaos, just as the outer world is shortly to become.

Lines 1134 – 1189

For the first time Adam was very angry with Eve and asked her, "Is this your love, is this the reward of my devotion to you, ungrateful Eve?" He remained calm when she was lost though he was unstained; even after her fall, he could have lived in immortal bliss, yet willingly chose to die with her. And she can never upbraid him as the cause of her FaLines He was not very severe in restraining her, but he did not know what more could he have done. He sufficiently warned her; he foretold her danger and the lurking enemy lay in wait for her. Beyond warning her, if he had done anything, it would have been force and the use of force has no place in Free WiLines She was ruled and dominated by self-confidence, that either she was sufficiently secure against any kind of danger, or else she expected to find possibility of glorious trial. He had also over-assessed and over-rated her seeming worth because apparently she seemed to be perfect and capable of resisting evil. He feels sorry for his mistake in judgement. He concludes by saying that this will be the fate of every man who trusts a woman and allows her to have her wiliness. A woman will not like to be restrained; and left to herself, she will succumb to evil and then accuse her man of weakness in allowing her to have her way. In this way Adam and Eve wasted their time in quarrelling and accusing each other, but neither examined their own behaviour and conduct. There seemed to be no end to their futile quarrel and discussion.

3.13.4 <u>Paradise Lost</u> as an Epic

(The Essays below are supplement to the ones found at the end of Paradise Lost (Book I)
Paradise Lost is a long objective narrative poem about the great persons of God and his son, on the subject of justifying the ways of God to man; comprising great deeds and events: Homer's Iliaad and Odyssey are about Achilles and Ulysses. Virgils Aeneid is on the destiny of Rome. Camoe's Lusiads is on the glory of Portugal. Dante's Commedia is on the mediaeval thought of the pilgrimage of the soul. Tasso's Jerusalem delivered is on the unifications of the Christians against the Heathens; and Milton's Paradise Lost is on the Fall of man.

Homer's Epics, Beowulf (the Anglo Saxon poem) and the French Song of Roland…….were intended for recital and hence primary epics.

The secondary epics are meant for reading Paradise Lost has both the qualities of a primary and secondary epic.

The sheer length of the poem (Book I to XII) is 10,565 lines written on an elaborate scale and in a dignified manner, treats of Heroic deeds-the poem is rendered in grand style. The Invocation in each book is on the lines of Homer and Virgil. Milton's invocations are a humble prayer to God Almighty.

The list of rebel angels in Book II resembles the catalogue of ships in the Iliad. The pandemonium assembly is like a parallel to the meeting of the Greek leaders. To Milton the Bible is a kind of divine epic. Milton's scholarship and immense industry helped him largely to choose and write on a universal theme of the Fall and Redemption of Man. The adoption of the Homeric simile is another attribute of Milton's epic.

3.13.5 Epic Simile or Miltonic Simile

Milton's style - characterised by a kind of allusive, detailed, decorative- that is a language of similes. Such a simile makes some idea clear and provides illuminating information. The clarity of the comparison depends in part on the degree of resemblance. Only long tailed similes are traditionally associated with an epic. Ferry observes "without disturbing the desired unity of structure, epic similes could be used to add variety to the poem to widen its range of reference and to ornament its poetic surface. In similes the poet could claim his relationship to a wealth of literary tradition, by their formal conventionality and by their allusions to other learning".

A traveller in a road side park relaxes, refreshes, renews his interest recoups his energy, reviews his progress and renews his journey - In the same way a reader of an epic is led to a simile.

There are nine Homeric similes in Book IX – of which four are distinct:-

On man's revolt and disobedience	ll 13-19.
Eve separating herself from Adam	ll 386-396.
Description of the beautiful Garden	ll 439-444.
The serpent looks lovelier	ll 505-510.
The grest of the serpent allures Eve	ll 634-645.
The serpent speaks out boldly	ll 670-678.
Fallen Eve and Adam compared to Samson and Dalila	ll 1059-1062.
Adam and Eve go near a fig tree	ll 1100-1110.
Dressed in fig leaves Adam and Eve appear	ll 1115-1118.

3.13.6 Representation of Adam and Eve in Book IX

In Book IV we read their "nobler shape, erect and tall, godlike erect, with native honor clad in naked majesty, seemed lords of all". Raphael, an angel, instructs them as to how they should be grateful to their maker and should not eat the forbidden fruit. The fall takes place in Book IX, "Eve fell through pride. Adam fell by luxuriousness". In earlier Books Adam is projected as having insight into the mysteries of the soul and can give Eve a full explanation of the phenomena of dreams. He is Eve's Author and Disposer. He for God and she for God in him. Eve in Book IX becomes a fore-runner of human tragedy in spite of her grace, beauty and knowledge - They begin as a loving couple with faith in God and faith in each other and finish up with mutual recrimination – gardening, their relaxation

and work – Eve's suggestion of better work in separate areas – Together they look at each other, smile and converse - separately they could turn out more work - Adam warns her of lurking danger – Eve persists rather than making her unhappy, he permits her – This is what Satan wanted – Satan's fine moment, at Eve nearing the forbidden tree – use all arts of oratory Eve falls an easy victim to the Serpent's wiles - when she eats he slinks away- Fallen Eve convinces Adam – Thinks that the fruit has made her a goddess- does not care for death – she does not want another Eve for Adam – In contrast Adam is altogether selfless and sacrificing – He eats the fruit out of female charm – Both are filled with a sense of shame – nakedness stares on their faces and the fig leaves cover their nakedness. There is a moral degradation in both.

3.13.7 Sample Questions

1. Milton Exhibits Rare skill and Understanding of Human Nature – Explain with Reference to Book IX
2. Do you find a Degraded Satan in Paradise Lost, Bk IX? Elaborate.
3. Consider Book IX of Paradise Lost As the Climax of the Whole Poem.
4. The Actual – Temptation in Paradise Lost in Book IX is a Masterpiece of Persuasion – Discuss.
5. Bring out the Dramatic Elements in Paradise Lost Book IX
6. Comment on the Epic features Illustrated in Book Paradise Lost, Book IX
7. Explain Milton's use of Epic Similes in Paradise Lost, Book IX.
8. Comment on the Scene of the amputation of Eve in Paradise Lost, Book IX
9. Write a note on the Life of Adam and Eve in Paradise
10. Write an Essay on the Theme and Structure of Paradise Lost, Book IX

3.13.8 Selected Reading

1. John Milton & Modern Critics – Adams R.M.
2. From Virgil To Milton – C.M.Bowra
3. Lives Of The English Poets – Johnson
4. A Preface To Paradise Lost – C.S.Lewis.
5. Paradise Lost And The Seventeenth Century Reader – B.Rajan
6. Paradise Lost Book IX – A.Fowler (ED)
7. Milton – E.M.W.Tillyard.
8. Milton – David Daiches.

Lesson - 14

Sidney's An Apologie for Poetry

Contents

3.14.1 Objectives

After going through this lesson you will be able to appreciate

i the critical climate in which Philip Sidney wrote An Apologie
ii the role of poetry in the culture of a community.
iii the ways in which poetry is more valuable than other fields of knowledge
iv Sidney's views on English drama and prosody.

3.14.2 Elizabethan criticism and Sir Philip Sidney

Sir Philip Sidney was an Elizabethan poet, playwright, critic and a well-known courtier at Elizabeth's court. He was rated the best among Elizabeth lyric writers and sonneteers, that is next to Shakespeare. His significant work An Apologie for Poetry or Defence of Poesie published only in 1595, though written before 1583, seemed to have originated out of a literary quarrel with Stephen Gosson. Let us first have a brief look at the Elizabethan criticism before we assess the contribution of Philip Sidney to it.

Elizabethan age was a golden age for arts and letters and received a great impetus from the fast changes taking place in Europe under the impact of Renaissance. Chaucer had already made his mark by writing excellent poetry in the native tongue. Innumerable classical texts in Latin and Greek in English translation as well as in the original received immense attention of the contemporary men of letters. Renaissance also marked a break from the earlier theocratic order (a belief that everything in life is inspired and ordained by the divine) in matters of life and letters. Further the Renaissance revival of interest in Greek and Roman culture, literature and arts awoke an affirmation of man's immense powers, a fresh vision of things and a spirit of enquiry and discovery. All these gave rise to great interest and regard among the gentry for literature and also developed a critical attitude towards it.

In the critical scene of the period, the Italian influence was considerable. Some of those critics who were inspired by this influence were Cambridge friends, Roger Ascham, Thomas Wilson and

others. Though they studied classical literature devotedly, they pleaded for the promotion of the native tongue. They recommended the study of classics to guide and inspire, and advocated the purity of native tongue from all foreign influences, i.e., Latin, French and Italian. To improve English as a means of communication for literary and other purposes along the classical lines was their main focus and they already had the good example of Chaucer at hand. Roger Ascham advocated writing all English matters in English for Englishmen in his Schoolmaster (1568). Thomas Wilson's The Art of Rhetorique, based mostly on Cicero and Quintillion, pleads for a plain and lucid style in prose, free from obsolete and strange words and is the first book of systematic criticism in English. Cambridge scholars were primarily concerned with the development of English prose in contrast to which a second group of poets and scholars who named their group Aeropagus (after the hill of that name in Ancient Athens on which was situated the highest court of the state) were concerned with the study of prosody in the light of the classical system of versification. Sir Philip Sidney, Gabriel Harvey, Spenser, Edward Dyers and a few others were members of this literary circle and the classical influence was predominant on them too. There was much focus on the place of accent on which English prosody is based and the classical versification which was based on the quantity of syllables and hexameters. Although Sidney, Spenser and Dyer supported the classical mode, they wrote their own poetry in the traditional English way.

At the same time, there was also much philosophical and apologetic criticism occasioned by the attacks of Puritans on poetry and drama. Philip Sidney's own essay was occasioned by Stephen Gosson's The School of Abuse. In the second half of the sixteenth century the Elizabethan criticism took the classical turn and Sir Philip Sidney and Ben Jonson were its leading critics. These were some of the important and persistent preoccupations of the sixteenth century literary theorists. Let us have a look at the occasion which gave rise to Sidney's Apologie because it influences the main lines of Sidney's argument.

The wrangle between Gosson and Sidney was the first of its kind in English literature. Stephen Gosson, himself a playwright, strongly believed in the sinfulness of poetry in general and he passed stringent moral strictures on the art in his The School of Abuse (1579). He dedicated this book to Philip Sidney without his permission saying "To the right noble Gentleman, Master Philip Sidney, Esquire", and called poets "pipers and jesters", "caterpillers of commonwealth" and "enemies of virtue". Having grown out of his youthful zest for drama because of the Puritan influence, he was all the more ruthless in his attack. Though he never formally became a Puritan, he became an Anglican clergyman. These were some of Gosson's charges against the poetry and arts. He denounced music because it undermines virtues, condemned drama because of its pagan origin and also because the men played female parts in drama which is against the law of nature. It turned males effeminate and contributed to the growth of debauchery in society. In his view, tragedies are packed with acts of cruelty, bloodshed and murder, and comedies presented love affairs of a vulger degrading kind. Comedy evoked foolish laughter, and in watching tragedy one is provoked to uncontrollable emotions and passions. Thus he concluded literature and fine arts weakened the moral fibre of the society. Sidney's 'Apology' was written partly to counter Gosson and partly to explain to a confused age what poetry was and what it stood for in the cultural life of a society. Though Gosson spewed much scorn on poets in his work, Sidney did not scorn Gosson (as suggested by Spenser) but leaving him unnamed, gave a polite reply

to it. "As a personal revelation it is entirely delightful. Its formal survey of poetry and its particular examples are alike engaging". Wimsatt gives the following reasons for considering Sidney's Apology a counter to Gosson's The School of Abuse though it was published as late as 1595. Gosson dedicated his work to Sidney. Spenser made a reference to it in his letter to a Cambridge scholar. Sidney not only countered many charges made by Gosson against poetry but also parodied in patches the Euphuistic style of Gosson. Wimsatt calls this work a kind of formal beginning of literary theorizing by an English man of letters. It is highly enthusiastic work of a gifted amateur champion, headlong out to dazzle the myopia of professional moral grumblers. If the context of Apology made us see the atmosphere in which it originated, a look at Philip Sidney, the man and his works make us appreciate the sources of his work better.

3.14.3 Sidney, his life and works

Philip Sidney was born in a distinguished aristocratic family at Penhurst in Kent. His father Sir Henry Sidney was Elizabeth's Lord Deputy in Ireland from 1599 onwards. The King of Spain, Philip II was his godfather and Sidney was named after him. After schooling in Shrewsbury, in 1568 he joined Christs church, Oxford which he left without taking a degree. He visited many major cities in Europe and studied music and astronomy in Venice. In his travels abroad he had so many friends and followers among scholars that when he returned to England in 1575, he left behind a trail of books dedicated to him.

Sent on a diplomatic mission to Germany in 1577, Sidney tried for a Protestant league, which did not meet with success. His ardent Protestantism got him into trouble at court sometimes as Queen Elizabeth was more cautious in her religious policies. His suggestion that Elizabeth make an alliance to protect Holland was not to her liking. Nor did his letter of 1579 advising the queen not to marry the Duke of Anjou find her favour. Bored by lack of active employment he made a secret attempt to join Francis Drake's expedition to the Spanish coast in 1585, which ended with Elizabeth summoning him to court. Finally he was given a minor appointment as governor of Flushing in Low countries and left England in 1585. In 1586 he was involved in a minor skirmish at Zuphen and was wounded. He did not survive the wounds sustained in the battle.

The grief felt at his death in England and Europe was so profound that his long funeral procession was spectacular. English people, poets and scholars mourned the sudden death of the young poet deeply. His school friend and biographer Fulke Greville mourned his loss and paid tribute to him thus. "What he was to God, his friends and country, fame hath told". England felt the loss of a man who had seemed to empody all the qualities and graces of the perfect courtier. Thomas Nashe lamented the death of a "Maecenas of learning" and the patron of virtue and wit. In Astrophel, Edmund Spenser mourned the passing of 'a gentle shepherd' and poet. Long after death Sidney was remembered by the later ages fondly. For Shelley in Adonais Sidney fought and fell as he lived, 'Sublimely mild, a spirit without spot' and W.B.Yeats in "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" paid Gregory the consummate compliment of comparison with Sidney with 'Our Sidney and our perfect man'.

Apart from An Apology for Poetry, Sidney wrote a massive prose romance Arcadia which was the first work of English fiction. He did not regard Arcadia much and asked for it to be burned later.

Next is his book of sonnet sequence Astrophil and Stella, in fact, the first English collection of sonnets telling a story of love like that of Petrarch for Laura which brought him immense fame. Sidney was interested in metrical experimentation and his poems display an astonishing variety of stanzaic and metrical forms. George Sampson remarks that "Sidney was indebted to foreign models, though he was much more original than his contemporaries. His sonnets are real contributions to English poetry. They have grace, ease and sincerity, and a genuine character reflecting the admirable spirit of the writer". Not much of Sidney's work was published in his own life time, much of it being circulated privately in manuscript form. His minor works include a playlet The Lady of May composed for the entertainment of Elizabeth and some translation of religious works.

In the next section we will look at the major issues raised by Sidney in his essay.

3.14.4 "An Apologie for Poetrie"

We have already discussed how Puritans' attacks and Gosson's dedication, partly, forced Sidney to write the defence. He says poetry has fallen from the highest estimation of learning to be the laughing stock of children. Even the teacher who taught Sidney horse riding not only held his art in high regard but spoke about it in great terms. Since he slipped into the title of a poet, Sidney's feels it is his duty to defend his vocation.

In all nations and languages, poetry is the nurse through whom they began learning and it is the first light giver to ignorance. First books were written by poets in all languages. In Greece if it was Musaus, Homer, Hesiodus, in Italian it was Dante, Boccaccio and Petrarch. If first Roman writers were poets Livius, Andronicus, and Ennius, in English there were Gower and Chaucer. Philosophers of Greece have penned their work only in the guise of poetry. Natural Philosophy was written by Thales, Empedocles and Parmenides in verse. Pythagoras and Phocylides gave their moral counsel in poetry. So did Solon in matters of policy in his fable of Atlantic Island. All these were continued by Plato. In the body of Plato's work if the inside and strength is Philosophy, skin and beauty is poetry. Sidney asserts that both philosophers and historiographers entered the gates of popular judgments through the gate passport of poetry.

In most countries all over the globe, poetry and poets were greatly respected. Turkey has no other writers but poets besides their law-giving Divines. Since Ireland has no other learning, poets are held in great reverence. Wales for a long time had poets called Bardes whose work remains alive even through the conquests of Romans, Saxons, Danes and Normons. Even simple Indians use poetry to praise the heroic deeds of their ancestors and their Gods to please them. Among Romans and Greeks authors of sciences were poets.

Let us now look at the way different cultures, Roman, Greek and others called poets. The word Romans used for poets is Vates which means as much a diviner, fore-seer or prophet. It could be a superstition to think that spirits were commanded by such verses as it is indicated by the word charm. In both oracles of Delphos and Sibyllas prophecies were entirely delivered in verses. Exquisite balancing of syllables and measure in words and high flying liberty of suitable conceits proper to the poet seemed to have lent divine force to oracles. Is it justified to call poets vates? Let us look at Sidney's reasons for it and the evidence he provides.

Both ancient and modern men gave a testimony of holy David's psalms being great poetry. These songs were fully written in meter and handling of his prophecy was chiefly poetical. David in his Prosoppeias makes people see God coming in his majesty and describes the joy of beasts and hills leaping in heavenly poesie. He also shows himself a passionate lover of everlasting beauty seen by the mind cleared by faith. Sidney thinks it is indeed profane to apply the name poetry to such work since it has fallen to a ridiculous state in contemporary estimation. He again defends poetry saying those with deeper insight wish the name poetry not be thrashed out of the church of God.

The Greeks called him a poet and the word spread to other languages. It originated in the word Poiein which means to make. The Englishmen have also equalled the Greeks in calling him a maker. For Sidney this is more exact than being a partial allegation.

Let us now look at Sidney's arguments regarding the nature and content of poetry.

For most arts delivered to mankind the principal objects are the works of nature. An astronomer studies stars, an arithmetician diverse sorts of quantities, a moral philosopher focuses upon natural virtues, vices and passions of men. A lawyer speaks about what men have determined, a historian about what men have done. A Grammarian is concerned about rules of speech. A rhetorician and a logician study what nature will prove and persuade us to give artificial rules. A physician weighs the nature of man's body and also the nature of things helpful or hurtful to it. The metaphysician through abstracts notions that are considered supernatural, in fact builds his theories based upon the depth of nature. Only the poet, refusing to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up by the force of his imaginative powers can grow another nature in effect. He thus makes things either better than nature or gives new forms such as never were in nature as the heroes, demigods, Cyclops, Chimeras and furies and such like. The poet goes hand in hand with nature not within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging within his own imagination.

Sidney further asserts that if nature's world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden one since poets make the earth set forth in rich tapistry by nature all the more lovely with pleasant rivers, fruitful trees and scented flowers. He also asks whether nature ever brought forth so true a lover as Theagenis, so constant a friend as Pylades, so valiant a man as Orlando, so right a prince as Xenophons Cyrus and so excellent a man in every way as Virgil's Aeneas

The works of nature are essential and that of poetry are an imitation and fiction. The idea or fore-conceit is more important in understanding the skill of the Artificer than the work itself. It is the poet who makes the idea manifest by delivering it in an excellent manner as he imagined it. While delivering it he also makes it very convincing.

Saying that it might not be considered too bold to compare the highest points of man's wit with the efficacies of nature, Sidney makes the greatest statement of Renaissance Man expressing confidence in his powers.

…but rather give right honor to heavenly maker Maker of that maker, who having made man to his owne likeness, set him beyond and over all the works of that second nature, which is nothing hee sheweth so much as in Poetrie, when with the force of a divine breath he bringeth things forth far surpassing her dooings, with no small argument to the incredulous of that first accursed fall of Adam,

sith our erected wit maketh us know what perfection is, and yet our infected will keepeth us from reaching into it (p.49)

Though few can understand this argument, Greeks with some justification gave the name 'maker' to a poet. Whether such a great name is justified or not for the poet, one should not be prevented from noting its main commendation.

Poesie therefore is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in his word Mimesis that is to say, a representing, counter fetting, or figuring forth: to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture: with this send, to teach and delight (p.49)

This imitation can be of several kinds. The chief and excellent among these is to imitate the unimaginable excellencies of God. David's Psalms, Solomon in Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs, Moses and Deborah in Hymns and the writer of Job are the first kind. No one who holds God in reverence can speak against these. Psalms are sung by people when they are merry, and when they are in sorrowful pangs these give them consolation.

The second type of imitation is that which deals with philosophies whether it is moral, natural, astronomical or in the form of history. Tyrtaeus, Virgil, Georgicks, Manilius and Lucan were those who contributed to each of these knowledges and were all sweetly uttered. If people dislike these it is due to the fault in their own judgment and not because of the way these works are written since the subjects are not the writers' own invention.

The last category of those who imitate are poets. Between them and the philosophers there is the difference between the ordinary painters who paint the models in front of them and those brilliant artists who present imaginary figures, pleasant to the eye, outward beauty personified but not the actual person.

Echoing Aristotle, Sidney says the poets imitate to teach and delight. They do not imitate what is or shall be but range freely into the divine consideration of what may be or should be. That is the reason the noblest sort of poets are called vates (prophets or seers) and rightly so.

Finally to assert the immense value of poetry, Sidney says the purpose of any learning is to move men to action which only poetry can do effectively. He thus remarks poets are justly called vates or seers.

… for these indeede doo meerely make to imitate, and imitate both to delight and teach, and delight to move men to take that goodnes in hande, which without delight they would flye as from a stranger, and teach, to make them know that goodnes where unto they are mooved, which being the noblest scope to which ever any learning was directed, yet want there not idle tongues to barke at them (p.50)

He further says poetry can be subdivided into Heroic, Lyric, Tragic, Comic, Satiric, Elegy and Pastoral according to their matter and manner. There are poets who never versified as there are versifiers who could never be called poets just as a gown does not make anyone a lawyer. A poet might be identified by the notable images of virtues, vices and others he presents through his delightful teaching. But the Senate of poets chose versification as their fit dress that is, chosing words not as they fall from

the month but picking up each syllable of each word by just proportion according to the dignity of the subject as the chief element of poetry.

A poet thus can be judged by his works first and then by his partes and if he is not condemned in either he shall later be considered favourably. In the purifying of wit, enriching of memory, enabling of judgement and enlarging of coceit which we call learning to whatever immediate end it is put, the final end is to lead and draw us to as high a perfection as our degenerate souls are capable of.

The end of all knowledge, whether it is Astronomy, Music or Mathematics, is finally in the ethical or political consideration only the well-doing not simply well-knowing. Since the ending of all earthly action is virtuous action, the skills that bring forth that action are the greatest. Since poets are fit more than anybody else, philosophers or historians, to lead one to right action, they are the greatest. Philosophers indulge in definitions, divisions and distinctions and assert that the way to lead a man to the right path is by teaching him what virtue is and what vice is. They say passions might be destroyed by showing people how they work in families, governments and public societies. In contrast to philosophers, the historian bases his knowledge on other histories which are in turn based on hearsay. He has more knowledge on what happened thousand years ago than in the present age and knows better about how the world runs than how his own wit does. The historian proclaims that philosopher teaches disputative virtue by abstractions whereas he teaches by concrete examples, by the experience of many ages. Senators and princes are directed by history. The philosopher gives the precept and the historian the example.

The poet is the true moderator and goes beyond both the historian and moral philosopher. Nor can any other human skill match him. Though justice is the chief of virtues, lawyers do not make men good. They only see that the men's evil does not hurt others and thus one becomes a good citizen though he is a bad man. Preachers are concerned with the eternities, not the moment. All these four, the historian, the philosopher, lawyer and the preacher are to be commended for being concerned with men's manners. Since the philosopher focuses on the bare rule and theorizes, few can understand him. The historian, wanting the precept, is tied to what is but not what should be, to the particular truth of things. Since he does not draw on necessary consequence is less fruitful.

But a poet plays both the roles by illustrating through particular figures what the philosopher says should be done. Through his imaginary powers he creates a figure appealing to the soul that is missing in the philosopher's description. A vivid portrayal of an elephant or rhinoceros or a gorgeous palace of architecture by the poet will make people comprehend them better. Philosophers' learned definitions of virtue, vice and public policy may give one great wisdom but it remains dark before the illuminating pictures and judging power of the poet.

Tullie makes people realize the force of love people have for the country. Stoics may say anger is madness. But people can experience it better when Sophocles shows Aiax on a stage killing and whiping sheep and oxen madly, thinking they are Greek armies. Whether it is the wisdom in Ulysses, valour in Achilles, friendship in Nissus or the remorse of conscience in Oedipus or repenting pride of Agamemnon or the sour-sweetness of revenge in Medea, these are shown to us in such a telling manner that now we associate their names to signify trades, vices, and passions. So the feigned images of poesie have more force in teaching than Philosophy. Whereas Philosophy can teach obscurely

(only learned men can understand them), poets can make it accessible to everyone. Aesop's fales in the form of pretty allegories make stealing in beasts tales more beastly than beasts when we hear the dumb speakers speak of virtue.

Aristotle in his discourse of Poesie speaks about the immense value of poetry. Poetry deals with universal considerations and history with the particular and the now. The universals deal with probabilities, the particular marks what is now. Poets show persons better than they are, they don't show the ugly and the repulsive whereas the historian does not have this freedom. He also shows things misliked in Alexander. How can then we discern what to follow? The poet's feigned example has much more force to teach than a true example. A poet rather than a philosopher can move a human heart. A philosopher can teach only those who are moved or desire to learn. Moving is both the cause and effect of teaching. For Aristotle, Praxis is more important than Gnosis. Praxis cannot be without moving to practise. The philosopher shows the tediousness and also the pleasantries on the way to those who are half-way through the journey. To be moved to a desire to know, only a poet can lead one on the path.

The poet is also a monarch of all sciences for he shows the way, and will entice any man to enter it. If your way is through a vineyard, he at first gives you a cluster of grapes through delightful words, accompanied by an enchanting skill of music. When poetry imitates nature, Aristotle says it shows things – cruel battles or unnatural monsters-in a delightful manner. Plato and Boethius knew quite well since philosophers scorn to delight, they cannot move people and so borrowed the clothes of poesie to do so. Sidney says though infinite are the strange effects of poetry, two are most significant. The poet can delightfully teach and move people to virtuous action.

Next Sidney goes on to speak about types of poetry and their function. The Pastoral makes much of trifles and can be sentimental. In the elegy lamenting moves one to pity. It is justified if it is accompanied by compassion or has just causes. Satire makes men laugh at folly including their own, which will make them avoid folly. In comedy, the poet represents the most ridiculous so that the beauty of virtue can be understood. Excellent tragedy shows the weaknesses of men behind surfaces. It makes kings fear to be tyrants, tryrants to manifest their tyrany, and finally teaches the uncertainty of the world and upon how weak foundations golden roofs are built.

It is lyric which is most misliked but not tragedy. But the lyric poet sings of human joys and miseries, praises reward of virtue, virtuous acts, moral problems. It is they who sometimes raise their voice to immortal heavens in singing of immortal God. Soldiers in antiquity carried songs to battlefield. Heroic poems champion great heroes Achilles, Aeneas and others. Songs gave comfort to heroes in dangers.

Poetry of all human learning is the most ancient and of most fatherly antiquity from which all other learnings took their origin. Poetry is worthy of laurel crown. Let us hear the objections made against poetry now.

Imputations against Poetry

a) There are many more types of knowledges a man might spend his time in profitably.
b) Poetry is mother of all lies.

c) It is the nurse of abuse, infects people with harmful desires and a seductress drawing them into sins, especially comedies. Before Chaucer softened their hearts Englishmen were courageous, given to martial exercises. For these reasons, Plato banished poets out of his Commonwealth.

Sidney's defence against the charges

a) For the charge that a man might spend his time elsewhere fruitfully, Sidney says no learning is as good as that which teaches and moves to virtue and none can do it better than poetry. He strongly says ink and paper cannot be put to a more profitable use.

b) Of all the writers under the sun a poet can scarcely be a liar. The Astronomer, measuring the distance of stars, a doctor giving assurance to a critically ill patient can hardly escape the charge.

> Now, for the Poet, he nothing affirmes, and therefore never lyeth. For, as I take it, to lye is to affirme that to be true which is false… Hee citeth not authorities of other Histories but even for hys entry calleth the sweete nuses to inspire into him a good invention, in troth not labouring to tell you what is, or is not, but what should or should not be: and therefore, though he recount things not true, yet because hee telleth them not for true, he lyeth not… (p.71)

No one, not even a child, looks for truth in fiction. Who could think Aesop expected his tales taken to be true and not even a child will take a door with 'Thebes' written on it on the stage in theatre to be actual Thebes. In poetry things are allegorically and figuratively written but not affirmatively. In history people may look for truth and go away with falsehood. In poesie looking for fiction, they shall see the narration but only as an imaginative ground plot of a profitable invention.

The principal charge is about how poetry abuses mens' wit, training them in wanton sinfulness' and 'lustful love'. They blame comedy for teaching rather than warning about amorous conceits, lyric for being full of passionate sonnets, elegy for weeping for non-existent mistress and even in the heroic poem Cupid is important. Not just love, but lust, vanity and scurrility possess many leaves of the book. For this charge Sidney's defence is "not that poetrie abuseth man's wit, but man's wit abuseth poetrie". Poetry which should present good things, sometimes deals with unworthy objects. Just as law and medicine, can be abused but cannot be done away with poetry also can be abused but has immense use and value for mankind.

Sidney then speaks of the utilitarian aspects of poetry. Poetry is the companion of camps. Homer flourished much before Greece, many Greek men learnt from him and took first motions of courage from him. Alexander left his teacher Aristotle behind and took a book of Homer with him to the battle. Seven ancient cities welcomed Homer but banned philosophers as not fit members to live among them. From what commonwealth did Plato banish poets? Where he allowed women? If a man can have a woman he wanted, poetical sonnets should not hurt him. Sidney says he honours philosophical instructions and the minds that created these. Let that courtesy be extended to poetry. Plato says poets filled the world with wrong oninions of Gods, making light their tales and youth depraved. Poets did not induce such opinions but they are already induced. If Greek stories depicted many fashioned

Gods, it is mere imitation. Plato merely wanted to drive out the abuse of poetry, not poets themselves. Plato in his Ion gave high and divine commendation to Poetry. Socrates, whom Apollo himself called a wise man, tried to put Aesop's fales into poetry. Plato cannot say such harsh words against poetry in his master's work. Plutarch writes history as well as philosophy in the garments of poesie. Sidney thus defends poetry from the major charge.

> So that, sith excellencies of it may be so easily and so justly confimed and the low – creeping objections so soone trodden downe; it not being an Art of lyes, but of true doctrine; not of effiminatenes, but of notable stirring of courage; not of abusing man's witte, but of strengthening man's wit; not banished, but honored by Plato; let us rather plant more Laurels for to engarland our Poets heads …(p.77).

Sidney asks why England grew a step-mother to poets because they use only their wit to make themselves. France was more hospitable to poetry. Since poetry receives hard welcome in England, it has less laurels than it should have.

Saying that in England true poets can scarce endure the pain of pen, bad poets rush into print making readers weary, Sidney asserts that poets need someone to guide a Daedalus with his three wings to soar high in air, i.e., Arte, Imitation and Exercise.

Sidney praises Chaucer for balancing the three excellently in his Troylus and Cresseid. Chaucer could see clearly in the mystic age, whereas Elizabethans in clear age stumble after him. He also finds Earl of Surrey's lyrics worthy of noble birth and mind. Though Shephard's Calendar has much poetry in it, the rustic use of language in it is a folly. Except Gorboduc no English tragedies, nor English comedies observe either rules of honest civility or of skillful poetry. Gorboduc has stately speeches, well-rounding phrases worthy of Seneca's style and is full of notable morals. It achieves the very end of poetry by delightfully teaching. However it might not be an exact model of tragedy because it does not maintain unities of place. In other English plays it is worse. It might be countered by saying tragedies are bound by laws of poetry but not history. If one knows the difference between reporting and representing, many things can be told that cannot be shown on stage. Things done in former times and other places can be recounted. One can speak about Peru and Calicut in one breath too. Other absurdities in the English scene include mixing of tragedies and comedies, mixing of kings and clowns without adequate reason. Even in that comedy one finds only vulgar jesting which evokes loud laughter whereas the tract of comedy should be full of delight and the tragedy should still be maintained in a well raised admiration. Comedians think that delight comes only through laughter but these could be contrary too. Delight has a joy in it, whereas laughter has only a scornful tickling. We are delighted to see a fair woman but are moved to laughter by looking at deformed creatures who can never evoke delight. We delight at good chance but laugh at mischance. We can laugh without delight and delight without laughter. The end of comedy should not be stirring laughter alone but it should teach delightfully. Even in that, one should not laugh at sinful things which are more detestable than ridiculous. So also misery should be pitied not scorned at. Aristotle forbids these things. Should one laugh at a wretched beggar or a stranger with inadequate English? But rather a busy loving courtier or a pedantic school master or dishevelled traveller with whom we can identify ourselves at times? The latter evoke delightful laughter. And teaching delightfully as in the tragedies of Buchanan brings forth divine admiration.

Songs and sonnets, another kind of poetry, could be used either to sing of immortal beauty and immortal goodness of the God or to make lovers' fiery speeches, stirred by pure imagination. In the second variety we miss the right use of the material point of Poesie. Regarding the outside of it, diction, it is worse in English poetry.

At times words in poetry overflow with honey or are disguised in affectation, with many far-fetched words which sound strange to any simple English man. Some times they simply follow dictionary, at others dry figures and flowers. This fault is not peculiar to poets alone since it could be found in prose writers, scholars as well as preachers. Sidney wishes that the translators of Tullie and Demosthenes had used their own language instead of making them sugury with figures and phrases of the original writers, and using repetition to express overemotion.

Most stories, those of beasts, fowl and fish, are full of similes. The force of a simile is not to prove anything to a disputer but only to explain to a willing hearer. Too much stuffing of similies only deflects the writer. The great forefathers of Cicero in eloquence pretended they did not know the art of using similes and thus won the popular ears by plain sensibility. This is close to persuasion and the chief mark of oratory. Sidney says those who use similes sparingly speak truly whereas those who use these generously speak curiously. Those who are moderately learned have more effective style than those who are very learned. A courtier who speaks directly of what he finds fittest to nature and does it with art though not by art but the learned ones by using art to show art fly from nature and abuse art.

Next Sidney speaks of oratory to show the writers one or two of their limitations. English language enables writers to use both manner and matter slightly. One says it is a mixed language and another it lacks grammar. In fact, there are advantages. Its structure is simple being devoid of cumbersome differences of cases, genders, moods and tenses. If a person has to go to school to learn his mother tongue, Sidney feels it is due to the curse of Babel. But English is simple and supple enough for carrying sweetly the conceits of mind since that is the real purpose of speech. One of the beauties of English is the happy composition of one or two words.

Next Sidney speaks about two sorts of versifying, one ancient and the other modern. The ancients marked the quantities of each syllable and the moderns observed only number i.e., rhyme. The ancients observed quantity in both words and time, fit for music and more fit for expressing diverse passions by lofty sound of the well weighed syllable. The modern poet with his rhyme makes his verse music, it does delight i.e., he obtains the same purpose, wanting in neither sweetness nor majesty. English language is fit for both sorts. Italian is full of vowels and burdened with elisions, Dutch full of consonants and can yield sweet sliding for poetry, French has almost no words with accent on the last syllable and Spanish gracelessly uses dactiles. English is subject to none of these defects.

Sidney next comments on English for its phonetic quality. Though moderns do not observe quantity, they observe accent very precisely in English which cannot be done so absolutely in other languages. In rhyme, English has what the French call masculine or feminine rhyme and what Italians call Sdrucciola. English has all the three. So English Poesie is full of virtue breeding delightfulness and is not devoid of any gifts that ought to be there in the noble name of learning. Thus the blames laid against poetry are either feeble or false.

Finally Sidney pleads with those who read his essay not to laugh at poets as if they are fools. He pleads with them to believe with thinkers like Aristotle, Homer, Scaliger, Hesios and others that poets are ancient treasurers of Divinity, bringers of all civility, and give readers knowledge under the guise of rhetoric, natural and moral philosophy. He pleads that the readers believe that poets are beloved of Gods and whatever they write proceeds from a divine fury. Sidney also has a genial curse on those who disdain poetry, that is, one in love will not get the favour of his lady for lacking the skill of a sonnet. When he dies his memory will die from the earth for want of an epitaph.

Sidney thus makes a powerful plea for poetry countering all the charges made by moralists by an effective argument, illustrating each point he makes. The text is studded with flashes of humour that enliven the serious discussion and his gentle and modest personality comes through in the text.

3.14.5 Analysis of the Text

In his Apology Sidney successfully defends all the charges made against poetry made by his contemporaries. Scott–James remarks.

> Sidney speaks throughout as if the learned and respectable opinion of his time was hostile to poetry – so hostile indeed, that it was worth his while to write an Apology to show that poetry does not deserve this scorn, and that it has the very qualities which that respectable opinion would respect: namely that it instructs, that its purpose is moral, that it is consistent with correct religion.

A commendable feature of An Apology is it is well-planned, with four sections, each devoted to a particular aspect. The first section deals with conventional reasons for attaching special value to poetry. In the first section Sidney gives reasons for attaching special value to poetry by giving the examples of several languages and nations. In the second section he discusses the nature and usefulness of poetry. The third section deals with the contemporary charges against poetry. In the fourth and the last section he makes a general estimate of the current English poetry with focus on the English practice of prosody. Far from being dry and cerebral it is an engaging document revealing the young poet's personality throughout. An Apology contributes to flourishing critical self-consciousness for the first time in English literature. It is undoubtedly the most important and best written critical work of Elizabethan period in English. Wimsatt and Brooks rightly remark that

> The sources of Sidney's 'Defence' were classical, but the spirit was not sternly classical. Sidney sends up joyous fireworks of the Italianate Renaissance. His colors are enthusiastic, neo-Platonic, ideal purple and gold, the motion is souring. He is essentially a theorist of the exuberant imagination.

3.14.6 Brief Summary

Sidney's "Defence of Poesie" is a true Elizabethan document representing all that is best in the age. He discusses how poetry is the nurse of learning, having connections with every other field of knowledge. Poets can persuade people to take virtuous path better than any one else because they combine the best qualities of philosophers and historians. Poetry cannot be accused of lying because unlike other fields of knowledge it never makes any claims to truth. Follies of the society are reflected

in poetry too and it is persons who abuse poetry and not poetry which abuses others. Finally he bemoans England's step-motherly treatment of poets and gives a practical critical estimate of English writers, poetry, tragedy and comedy. To make his points, Sidney effectively draws on Greek, Latin and Italian poets and philosophers.

3.14.7 Glossary

Antiquity – ancient times, great age.

Dactyl – metrical foot of one accented syllable followed by two unaccented syllables.

Feminine rhyme: rhyme on the second syllable from the last as in 'father', 'rather'.

Gnosis – knowledge

Masculine rhyme: rhyme on the last syllable as in 'due', 'true'.

Oracle – one held to give divinely inspired answers or revelations.

Praxis – customary practice or conduct

Prophane: to treat something sacred with irreverence or contempt

Sdrucciola – rhyme on the third syllable from the last as in 'motion' or 'potion'.

3.14.8 Sample Questions

1 Discuss the context in which Sidney's "Apologie" was written.
2 How does Sidney demonstrate that poetry must be highly valued?
3 Write an essay on Sidney's views on the nature and functions of poetry.
4 How does Sidney establish the superiority of poetry to other fields of knowledge, especially philosophy and history?
5 How does Sidney counter the Puritans' charges against poetry?
6 Critically comment on Sidney's views on either English drama or prosody or language.

3.14.9 Suggested Reading

1. William K.Wimsatt & Cleanth Brooks, *Literary Criticism: A Short History,* New Delhi: Oxford and IBH Publishing Co., 1957, rpt. 1970.
2. George Sampson, *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature,* 1970.
3. Ed. S.Ramaswami & V.S.Sethuraman, *The English Tradition: An Anthology of English Literary Criticism*, Madras: Macmillan, 1977. (Textual quotations from this book)
4. R.A.Scott James, *The Making of Literature, The Wordsworth Companion to Literature in English,* 1994London: M.Secker, 1932.

Dr. C.L.L. Jayaprada

Lesson - 15

Bacon - With A Brief Introduction To Elizabethan Prose

Contents

3.15.1 Objectives

i To trace the rise of English prose till Bacon
ii To estimate Bacon's contribution to English prose
iii General Assessment of his Essays

3.15.2 The Nature and Origin of the Essay

"The field of the English essay is very rich. Not to know the essayist is to have absolutely no adequate knowledge of English literature. They are of its very warp and woof. From Bacon down to the present day their names are among the brightest in the galaxy of English writers".

"The literary essay is as elusive and charmingly indefinable as a spring day in woods. The essayist is a fairy creature who can assume the role of philosopher, scientist, critic, confidential friend, gossiper and court fool".

We can classify the literary Essays into two groups, subjective and objective. The objective Essays may be literary in style, but they treat of a definite subject, which is the focus of the author's attention and has to be kept steadily in view. In such Essays there is little scope for egotism, for personal whims and idosyncracies. But the essay, is par excellence, the true literary essay, is essentially subjective and familiar, and A.C Benson has rightly asserted that in the true essay the subject is not important because any subject may serve the purpose, and no subject is excluded — homo sum ë me alienum —. The main charm of the essay arises from the magic of the writer's personality. Thus the true essay is a "prose—form" of self-expression or self-revelation-its essence being personal sensation, personal impression, evoked by something strange or beautiful or curious or interesting or amusing. The essayist may write on something, on anything, on everything or on nothing. He reveals his self ultimately, that is, his vision of life and humanity garbed in the light of his private feeling.

Another commonly accepted canon is that the method of the essay —— as distinguished from that of the dissertation and the treatise — is marked by considerable freedom and informality. This brings it well within Johnsonian definition —— " a loose sally of the mind, an irregular, undigested piece". A certain want of organic quality, and the absence of that orderly and logical mode of procedure which we look for in the more ambitions kinds of literature, may be reckoned among the essay's most pronounced structural peculiarities. In fact, the essay arose because man had come to feel the need of

a vehicle of expression in which they could enjoy something of the freedom of conversation. Thus Bacon's Essays are, as he himself tells us "brief notes set down rather significantly than anxiously. We may, therefore consider the essay as relatively unmethodical as well as relatively short. The well - marked tendency among modern essayists towards greeter logical consistency and regularity of structure is only one among many signs of the transformation of the essay into something different from the original and genuine type. "Thus the development of the essay is it is in the likeness of a sinuous rill, meandering with its mazy motion, lit up here with the beams of humour, tinged there with the shade of pathos or pensiveness, but making the whole discourse personal, chatty, rambling, impulsive and unpretentious".

3.15.3 Elizabethan Prose

According to Professor Trivedi the prose of the Elizabethan period is not so brilliant as its poetry or drama. Historically it reached in this period the middle stage of its development. In thought, diction and style it is nearer to modern times than the older prose, say the prose of Malory's Morted' Arthur. But still it is not modern prose. Most of the Elizabethan prose is poetic, and except in a few cases, coloured with romantic conceits. During the fifteenth century Latin was the vehicle of prose, and works of importance were almost entirely written in Latin. Stimulated by foreign models – Classical Italian, French and Spanish – made available through translations, much of this prose is rather juvenile, artificial and conventional. It is also verbose. It was an age abounding in vitality; the resources of the language had increased vastly through translations. For the first time prose rises to a position of first rate importance. The dead weight of the Latin tradition was a passing phase. English prose was acquiring a tradition and a universal application.

Pecock, Fortesque and Paston Family

Three names alone stand out before the time of Caxton as makers of English. They are Reginald Pecock, Sir John Fortesque and the Paston family. Peacock's personality was a remarkable one. He was a Welshman by birth, and an Oxonian by training. One of his offences was that he wrote in English, another that he urged the use of reason in confuting arguments. This is the line that he adopted in the Repressor, but his learning excited both jealousy and suspicion and his tolerance to heretics was looked down upon. The language in which he wrote is fairly clear, but the English is often stiff and formal. Yet there is something of the vigour and colloquial ease that began to show themselves later in Ascham. John Fortesque was a constitutional lawyer, a traveller and conversant with other modes of government. His treatise The Difference Between An Absolute And a Limited Monarchy is a critical approval of English rule. The book was completed about 1470; it is an interesting piece of controversial writing. In October 1471 Margaret Paston, the wife of a Norfolk gentleman, wrote to her husband in London a description of the violent incursions of armed men employed by the Duke of Norfolk on their property. The Duke's men ransacked the Parsons' estate and other manors in the area and desecrated the local parish church. The Pastons, a large number of whose family letters have been preserved for posterity played a relatively insignificant part in politics. This collection of letters is a document rich in human interest; and as a picture of the social life of the age it is unequalled for its plenitude of curious and informing detail.

Myriads of Prose Writers

A sign of the times is the prevalence of books dealing with England and English customs. Stubbes in his Anatomie of Abuse and Lyly in his Eupheus each congratulate themselves that they are English. Stow, Holinshed, and Camden embark on the history of their country. Holinshed dives into the past; Stow deals methodically with the present; Camden discusses religious affairs; Hakluyt gives expression to the maritime adventures of the age. Elizabethan prose falls into two main periods; the first culminating in Hooker; the second in Bacon. The translation of the New Testament by Tyndale gave a potent impulse to the study of English. His translation (1525) fixed a standard of good English, and at the same time brought that standard not only to scholars but to the homes of the common people. Tyndale made his translation from the original Greek, and later translated parts of the Old Testament from the Hebrew. It was the foundation for the Authorized Version, which appeared nearly a century later and became the standard for the whole English speaking race.

Roger Ascham

Roger Ascham (1515 – 1568), a famous classical scholar published a book called Taxophilus (School of Shooting) in 1545, expresses in his preface, or "apology", a very widespread dissatisfaction over the neglect of native literature. He became a student of St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1530, and soon obtained his fellowship; notwithstanding his well-known sympathy with the Reformed doctrines. He was tutor to the Lady Elizabeth at Chestnut. His extreme care and tact helped him to escape suffering in any way for his opinions. Ascham, a sturdy, old scholar of the more formal type, was a Puritan in his tastes, and opposed to the new taste for Romance, but an undoubted pioneer of good, direct English prose. He illustrates not merely the worth and excellence of the old scholar in the School Master but the characteristics of the typical Saxon teacher who combines praise of bodily culture with that of the mind. In an age so saturated with rhetoric and ornate conceits, it is a great tribute to Ascham whose prose was simple and straightforward, yet never bald and unmusical.

The Pamphleteers

A form of prose writing that was peculiar to the time was the pamphlet. Pamphlets were written on all kinds of subjects and were specially used in controversies – literary, religious, and political. A certain man calling himself Marprelate published a series of pamphlets containing ribald attacks upon episcopacy. The bishops replied in the same terms in the writings of Nash who was a vigorous pamphleteer of the time. It provoked Richard Hooker, a country divine, to write his monumental book Of The Laws of Exxlesiastical Polity. It is a sober, dignified and closely reasoned defence of the Church of England and its Episcopal government. His is a plea for tolerance, understanding and freedom. Hooker's book is an object lesson in religious controversy. He conducts his argument on a burning question with a quiet, grave eloquence. His language is simple yet scholarly. His book is a classic of English prose.

Malory's Morte d' Arthur

The greatest English work of this period, measured by its effect on subsequent literature, is undoubtedly the Morte d' Arthur, a collection of Arthurian romances told in simple and vivid prose. He completed his work in 1470,fifteen years before Caxton printed it. Malory treats subjects like the search for the holy Grail, the story of Tristram and Isolde in such a way as to preserve the whole spirit of mediaeval

Christianity. It is to Malory that Shakespeare turned for his material. The book belongs to the Renaissance. Malory may be read for his style and his English prose and his expression of the mediaeval spirit. The book is written with a uniform dignity and favour that expresses the very essence of romance and chivalry. It is a skilful blend of dialogue and narrative and is full of colour and life, while the style has transparent clarity and a poetic sensitivity which make Malory, England's first great, individual, prose stylist.

Erasmus and More

Erasmus's Praise of Folly is like a song of victory for the new learning, which had driven away vice, ignorance and superstition, the three foes of humanity. It was published in 1511. In his book, Erasmus satirizes the foolish standards of education without any mercy. More's Utopia, published in 1516, is a powerful and original study of social conditions, unlike anything which had ever appeared in any literature. Utopia speaks of a kingdom of nowhere in which all questions of labour, government, society and religion have been easily settled by simple justice and common sense. More wonders why after fifteen centuries of Christianity, England is so less civilized.

Tyndale

Tyndale's translation of the New Testament (1525) fixed a standard of good English and brought that standard not only to scholars but also to the homes of the common people. There are two translations that had most influence – North's Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius (1557) and Painter's Palace of Pleasure (1566-67) The latter one is a collection of tales mainly from the classics and the Italian of Boccacio and Bandello. North's Golden Book was translation of The Dial of Princes written by a Spanish ecclesiastic GUEVARA. Its highly elaborate, antithetical and epigrammatical style had an irresistible attraction for aristocratic circles. This book is supposed to have inspired Lyly's 'Euphues'.

Influence of the Renaissance

In the development of literature renaissance worked in two ways (1) It did much to emancipate thought from the bondage of mediaeval theology by restoring the generous spirit and ideals of pagan antiquity. The new learning was firmly established at Oxford and Cambridge. The reformation was the work of a preacher Hugh Latimer (1485-1555) whose energy and good sense produced some of the most pungent English prose of the period. He accomplishes a work similar to that of a pedagogue like Ascham. He often formulates his phrases briefly and balances them symmetrically. (2) There was in England a tendency to adapt the learning that came from Italy to native tradition and to preserve far more than the Italians and the mediaeval outlook. Thomas Linacre (1460-1524) and William Grocyn (1446-1519) taught at Oxford what they had learnt in the Italian Universities. Sir Thomas More (1478-1535) and John Colet (1467-1519) combined real scholarship and minds highly critical of current abuses in Church and State.

Lyly's <u>Euphues</u>

John Lyly (1554-1606) marks another stage in the march of English prose; he become a literary man in London. At first he had considerable success, and entered parliament but his popularity declined and he died poverty stricken in London. His first prose work Euphues, The Anatomy of Wit (1579)

made him one of the foremost figures of the day. The work is a kind of romance, recounting the adventures of Euphues a young Athenian. It was the style of its prose that gave the book its great vogue. It is the first consciously fabricated prose style in the English language. It certainly suited the growing literary consciousness of its day.

Richard Hooker

The controversy generated by the Martinists provoked Richard Hooker (1554-1600) a country divine to write his monumental book of the Laws of Ecclesiastical. It is a sober, dignified and closely reasoned defence of the Church of England and its Episcopal government. Hooker argued that the scripture does not, cannot, provide for all matters and God's word has to be supplemented by reason in matters not covered by it. His is a plea for tolerance, understanding and freedom. Hooker conducts his argument on a burning question with a quiet, grave eloquence unprecedented in the controversies of the reformation. His language is simple yet scholarly, and his sentences though long have a subdued poetic rhythm. His book remains a standard work of theology and is at the same time a classic of English prose.

Apologie for Poetrie

Sidney (1554-1586)came of a very high family, was educated at Oxford. Sidney realised in his person the renaissance ideal of the perfect gentleman. He was a perfect scholar. His life expresses the two ideals of the age – personal honour and national greatness. HIS ARCADIA is a pastoral romance. His Apologie for Poetrie is eloquent, frequently poetic, franker and more virile than that of the Aracadia. In it Sidney makes fun of euphemism, and protests against the abuse of literary armaments. It is indeed, one of the most forceful and most pleasing prose works of the period. Sidney's Apologie appeared in 1595 in answer to a pamphlet by Stephen Gosson called The School of Abuse (1579). The Apologie is one of the first critical Essays in English; in clear manly English; Sidney defends poetry as greater than history or philosophy and as an art which instructs by pleasing.

3.15.4 Sir Francis Bacon

Viscount Baron

Bacon (1561-1626) was a philosopher scientist, essayist and jurist. With his versatility, ambitions, and materialistic bent. Bacon is a fine illustration of the disquieting paradoxes of the Renaissance. The English poet Alexander pope described him as the "wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind". He came of a family interested in state affairs, his father being Lord Keeper of the seal and his uncle Elizabeth's principal minister. Bacon attended Cambridge, studied law, and was elected to Parliament and appointed Queen's Counsel (1598). Later he was knighted, created Baron Verulam and Viscount St. Albans.

Holistic Approach

Bacon's place in the history of thought rests on his pioneer exposition of the modern inductive method and his attempt at a logical systematization of scientific procedures. With the titanic aspirations typical of the Renaissance, he boasted " I have taken all knowledge to be my province".

Bacon's Works

In The Advancement of Learning (1605) a sketch in English of his key ideas, he explained his wish to review all the sciences of his own time, all methods of acquiring truth and to work out a system

of classifying the various branches of knowledge. The New Atlantis (unfinished and published in 1627 after Bacon's death) is a Utopian sketch like Sir Thomas More's Utopia of an ideal common wealth of scholars. It is the Essays (1597,1612,1625) which have given Bacon his fame in world literature. " Dispersed Meditations," impersonal, almost curt, these fifty eight Essays are a tissues of maxims quite unlike the subjective, conversational Essays of Montaigne. Their sub-title, "Counsels Civil and Moral, is indicative of their point of view, a concentrated worldly wisdom designed, as it has been remarked, as a handbook for success. They are realistic, epigrammatic, dissertations based on Bacon's own observations even when he adduces support for his conclusions by quoting the classics.

Contribution

Both in his life and in his writing, Bacon always showed the practical bias. He completely accepted the Renaissance idea that it is life on earth which is important and that all studies should be directed to improving that life. In his political attitude, which was almost Machiavellian, he separated his legal decisions from morality and ethical ideals, in his scientific writing he aimed to give mankind mastery over nature by discoveries and inventions; in his Essays he hoped to teach man mastery over the world in social and civil life. He himself achieved success in a legal career, though it ended disastrously. In his scientific works, which make him one of the most important figures in the philosophy of science; and in his Essays whose compact wisdom has never been duplicated in English.

Special Merits

According to Hudson, an essay by Bacon consists of a few pages of concentrated wisdom, with little elaboration of the ideas expressed. Essay is the same as assay and as such it means a trial of a subject or an attempt towards it, and not in the least a thorough and final examination of it. It was in this sense that it was employed by Bacon and Montaigne. Bacon seemed to give more importance to sentient man than to the thinking man. Bacon insisted that knowledge could only be enlarged by observation of the world, by the careful collecting and recording of facts, and by the "induction" from them of general "laws" he was stating the belief on which the whole scientific revolution of the seventeenth century was based. By saying that the Essays were written "rather significantly than curiously" Bacon meant that they had been written for their meaning rather than for their style. In Macaulay's words ,Bacon had a wonderful talent for packing thought close and rendering it portable". It is this plain, meaningful, readable prose which makes the Essays such an important landmark in the history of English literature. Bacon showed that the essence of good writing is to have something to say, and to say it as shortly as possible. Many of his sentences have become almost a part of the English language – a few examples are furnished below:

A man that hath no virtue in himself ever envieth virtue in others.

Man fear death as children fear to go in the dark; and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales so is the other.

The remedy is worse than the disease.

The French are wiser than they seem, and the Spaniards seem wiser than they are.

Why should I be angry with a man for loving himself better than me?

Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested.

Fame is like a river, that beareth up things light and swollen, and drowns things weighty and solid.

Money is like muck, not good except it be spread.

Wives are young men's mistresses, companions for middle age, and old men's nurses.

A little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion.

Conclusion

Bacon described some of his Essays as "civil" and some as "moral". The civil Essays are those in which he sets down his thoughts on political and administrative questions; the moral ones are concerned with private and personal questions like love, marriage and the problems of parents and children.

3.15.5 Sample Questions

1. Trace the development of prose during the Age of Elizabeth.
2. Ascham, Lyly, Hooker and Bacon developed Didactic prose – Explain.
3. Name some of the prose works of the Elizabethan Age.
4. Write a brief note on the prose works in translation during this period.

3.15.6 Suggested Reading

1. An Introduction To The Study Of English Literature – W.H.Hudsam-Edn-2000
2. The Reader's Companion To World Literature – A Mentor Book
3. The Short Oxford History Of English Literature – Second Edition – Andrew Sanders.
4. Bacon's English Essays – Edited By Selby.
5. Bacon – R.W. Church – Englishman Of Letters Series.

Prof. S.N. Kulandaisamy

Lesson - 16

Bacon's Prescribed Essays

Contents

3.16.1 Objectives

i to study the basic themes of Bacon's prescribed essays
ii to study his prose style
iii to evaluate his positions among the English Prose stylists.

3.16.2 Analytical Summary

I — "Of Death"

Introduction

The opening sentence of this essay is oft quoted, " Men fear death, as children fear to go in the dark, and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other". It arises from our ignorance about the state we enter after death; our fear of death is intensified by the legends about hell and its tortures, as well as of the unbearable pang which attends it. The philosophers think that the accompaniments of death frighten more than death itself. The accompaniments are groans and convulsions, a discoloured face, friends weeping — these show death to be terrible. The Christian idea of death is the penalty imposed by God on the first man Adam for his disobedience is religious and holy. The law of Nature is, anything that is born must inevitably die. Bacon says that this law is mean and depressing because it equates man with animal.

Man is Moral

Seneca the famous Stoic philosopher of Rome, has aptly commented that the circumstances connected with death are much more fearful than death itself.—— Seneca, Lucius Annacus was a Roman dramatist and essayist (4 B.C — A.D 65). As a writer he is now remembered chiefly for his philosophical and moral essays, was a heathen; to him man was simply a mortal creature; he never believed that man was made in the image of God with an immortal soul ——. The physical changes, make death a terror. If one thinks calmly and reasonably, one could easily understand that the terror of death is more fictitious than real. Seneca is of opinion that a man of delicate and refined sensibility tends to embrace death through sheer satiety of life. In Roman history we have innumerable examples of noble spirits who faced death with perfect equanimity betraying not even the slightest alteration of their demeanours.

Suicidal End

In certain cases Man anticipates death by committing suicide under the stress of fear. OTHO the Roman Emperor committed suicide after the defeat of his forces at Bedriacum in A.D 69. Augustus Caesar the first Roman Emperor, died in A.D 14, with a compliment to his queen Livia, who ironically, had poisoned him. Tiberius the successor of Augustus Caesar, according to Bacon, was a dissembler in life as well as in death. Vespasian, the Roman emperor considered the moment of his death as the beginning of his deification. The Roman emperors, after death, were worshipped as gods. Galba, the Roman emperor, was murdered by rebels. Amidst the quick disposal of business, the Roman emperor Septimius Severus died. Philosophers, who followed the teaching of Zenos cultivated an attitude of indifference to the vicissitudes of life. We learn from all these examples that far from attaching great importance to death, the Roman emperors slighted it. In the play JULIUS CAESAR by Shakespeare we read that Brutus, the great senator committed suicide to preserve his honour. Juvenal, the great moral satirist of Rome has this to say "who accounts the end of life as one of the boons of nature".

Death Window to Fame

It is as natural to die as to be born and to a little infant, perhaps the one is as painful as the other. Men who are intent upon their pursuits and have no leisure to think of death, are not sensible of the pain which death may cause. Bacon observes that the noblest attitude is the contemplation of death as the culmination of a virtuous life when man is ready to surrender to God the life which was granted to him. "Death has this also; that it openeth the gate to good fame, and extinguisheth envy "Extiactus amabitar idem", that is, He who was envied when alive, will be loved when dead. The prayer of saint Simeon, who was able to see Christ and was convinced that his highest hope on earth was realized and there was no point in his further lingering on this earth. We read in the Bible, according to Luke Chapter 2 verse 29, Simeon took up Jesus, the child in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen the salvation." Bacon's quotation starting with the word, "Extinctus" is from Horace, a celebrated satirist of the golden age of Rome — the Augustan age.

II – "Of Unity In Religion"

Introduction

In the beginning of this essay Bacon observes. "Religion being the chief band (Bond, uniting force) of human society, it is a happy thing when itself is well contained (held together — a broken band will hold nothing together) within the true band of unity." The unity of the Christian Church can have very wholesome consequences. The quarrels and divisions from religion were evils unknown to the heathen. The old pagan religion (Greek and Roman) was free conflict and division, because it was more a matter of rituals and ceremonies than of fixed beliefs and doctrines. It is no wonder therefore, that its priests and propagators were poets like Homer and Hesiod. But Christianity insists on the worship of one God who can brook no rival and is jealous about the unaided allegiance of his followers. We shall therefore speak a few words concerning the unity of the church; its advantages, its bounds and the best way of securing or preserving it.

Unity – A Must

The fruit of the unity of the Church is peace, and peace is a great blessing. The unity of the church leads to faith, charity and devotion. Church unity is pleasing to 'the jealous God' its advantages are two — first in relation to the persons outside the fold of the Church and secondly in respect of the persons within. Heresies and schisms are of all other the greatest scandals, more than corruption of manners. Christians should remain united where the basic doctrines of their religion, as laid down in the scripture are concerned. There is no harm if there are differences in minor matters or over unessential points. Followers of any religion would do well to maintain a sense of unity as regards the essentials of their religion. Division and open conflict are scandalous. So, when discordant views arise about God and the Cardinal principles of any religion, it is well to recall the warming of Christ, Nolite exire, — — Go not out, and remain within the fold: St Paul, one of the staunch followers of Christ, said that the quarrels and noisy disputes in the Church would sound as the ravings of maniacs to a heathen. The Church, then, becomes a laughing stock in the eyes of the non-Christians who will find no inducement to join its ranks.

Fanatics

It is necessary to determine the bounds within which the Church must maintain its unity. Certain fanatics are not at all interested in peace. What matters to them is "following and party" that is strife and partisanship. To fanatics all speech of pacification is odious(disagreeable) – Bacon illustrates their character from a Biblical incident. One Jehu, started to attack Joram, King of Israel. The messenger of the latter met and accosted him, "Is it peace, Jehu?". To this Jehu replied that he should not talk of peace, but turn behind him and be his follower. This is the main purport of the policy of the fanatics — Others are so lukewarm in matters of faith that they are willing to accommodate all points of view in religion. Both these extremes should be avoided — Laodiceans are lukewarm persons: In the Bible, REVELATIONS Chapter 3, the Church of Laodiceans is rebuked for its lukewarm attitude to religion — .

No Division on Fundamentals

Christ himself has indicated the true basis of unity in the church in his two sayings, which are apparently contradictory, but really complementary to each other, if properly and rationally expounded. The sayings are "he that is not with us is against us" and "He that is not against us is with us". It means that disagreement on fundamentals must lead to division. Disagreement concerning the trivial and superficial points only is not incompatible with unity. Churchmen can remain united despite their differences over secondary tenets.

Christ's Robe

Christians must agree on points, which are fundamental. Different forms of Church government and different forms of ritual and worship are permissible. When the Bible explicitly lays dawn a rule it should be accepted without any division. The Church, as such, must strive for unity rather than uniformity — this idea is expressed through the metaphor of garment. The coat of Christ was seamless, that is, in the primitive Church there was perfect unity. When the four soldiers guarding Christ after his arrest wanted to divide Christ's clothes among themselves they cast lot for his coat because it was seamless and could not be divided. St Augustine takes this seamless coat as a symbol of unity — The church is the queen of Christ, which means that the basic unity in religion is consistent with external diversity. Unity in diversity is distinguished from uniformity, where no deviation or departure is permissible.

No Controversy

Bacon goes on to elaborate that, "For as it is noted by one of the fathers, Christ's coat indeed had no seam, but the Church's vesture was of diverse colours". This only means, "let there be variety, but no division in the garment." ———— ("one of the fathers" the reference is to St. Bernard, who rightly pointed out that the) Church must strive for unity rather than uniformity. There are some critics than this is a reference to the famous " coat of many colours" in the Bible. St August takes the multi coloured coat to be a symbol of the essential oneness of Christian doctrine in all the different languages. Bacon warns the Christians against disrupting the Church by (1) a point at issue being very slight and small but the controversy gathers heat and momentum through the friction of rasping tongues and (2) when the matter of controversy is serious it is rendered vexed and confused by the use of novel and rigid phraseology. St Paul excellently expresses this in his words, "Avoid profance novelties of terms, and oppositions of science falsely so called" ——— Refer in the Bible, Timothy 1 chapter 6, avoid profane novelties of terms and opposition of false wisdom". ———-

Truth & Untruth Can't Coexist

Division in religion is very often artificial, the product of human ingenuity. A heretic invents a new term and attaches a meaning to it arbitrarily. This is perverse because it makes meaning subordinate to words, which become the primary consideration. But there are also two kinds of false unity in religion: the unity based on ignorance, therefore, indiscriminate: and the unity which is a mere patch

work: an expedient to reconcile oppositions regarding fundamental points openly admitted. Just as the inharmoniousness of a combination of colours is not apparent in the dark, so the incompatibility of opinions is not apparent to one whose mind is darkened by ignorance. Bacon observes that " For truth and falsehood, in such things are like the iron and clay in the toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image; they may cleave, but they will not incorporate"

Spiritual Sword

Regarding the means of unity Bacon says that while Church and State are the two arms for the defence and propagation of religion, the Christians should in no case adopt the inhuman way of the Muslims, followers of prophet Mahomet to propagate religion at the point of sword. Bacon comments, "There be two swords amongst Christians". ———— The two swords are temporal power and spiritual power. The temporal sword is the secular authority of the king and the State which may be summoned by the Church to protect religion. The spiritual sword is the power of the Church authorities themselves.

Avoid Violence

One's zeal for Christianity must be accompanied by a regard for one's duty to one's follow men Violence should never find a place in one's zeal for conversion. Persecution violates the rights of others while rebellion is directed against the divine institution of government. ——— In this context Bacon refers to the story of the Trojan war. The Greek fleet started under the leadership of Agamemnon till it reached Aulis, the seat of Artemis, goddess of the moon. There it came to a standstill and Agamemnon had to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia, in order to placate the goddess who made the wind to blow and the fleet to move. Lucretius the Roman poet, atheist and Epicurean, was horrified at this religious murder. Bacon refers to the massacre on St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24, 1572, in which 60,000 Huguenots perished —— "to such evil deeds could religion prompt a man".

III — "Of Revenge"

Forgiveness - Introduction

Bacon begins by saying, "Revenge is a kind of wild justice, which the more man's nature runs to, the more ought law to weed it out". Hence according to him revenge is quite out of place in any civilized community. So the impulse of revenge should be curbed effectively. Certainly in taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy, but in passing it over, he is superior for it is a prince's part to pardon. That is to say, to forgive is a princely action; forgiveness reveals an exalted mind. Solomon, a biblical character famed for his wisdom and justice, observes, "It is the glory of a man to pass by an offence."

No Pleasure in Wrong - Doing

That which is past in gone and irrevocable (beyond recall). Therefore those persons who exert themselves in relation to things past are merely wasting their time. It is a folly to spend one's energies over things that belong to the past and that cannot be undone. There is hardly any man who commits

a wrong for the sake of the wrong. A man who commits any wrong does so either because he gains thereby monetarily or in terms of status or dignity or because he derives pleasure from wrong – doing. A man who does any wrong is prompted by self-interest. And if any man commits a wrong simply because he is malicious or spiteful, he too should be ignored. It is the nature of such a man to commit wrongs. Wrongs come naturally to such a man. He may therefore be compared to the thorn or briar which pricks or scratches and which can do nothing else.

Don't Plan Revenge

A man who is always planning revenge keeps the memories of the injuries received by him fresh. These memories would be forgotten if he were not to nourish thoughts of revenge in his heart. Augustus who avenged the assassination of Caesar, Septimius Serverus who avenged the murder of Pertinax and Henry IV who avenged the death of Henry III all prospered and flourished. This is not the case with revenges of a private nature. Individuals who keep meditating revenge live miserable lives like witches — witchcraft was a living superstition in the age of Bacon. They were supposed to be in league with the Devil and consequently they were baited by the public and tried and condemned by the law courts. Just as the life of the witches is unfortunate, so also revengeful persons meet a sad fate.

Public & Private Revenge

Thus Bacon tells is that revenge is a kind of the justice, that is, taking law in one's own hands and attempting to punish the wrong doer without recourse to law. A man who meditates revenge keeps the evil done to him fresh in his memory. Bacon, at the same time, makes a distinction between public or political revenge and private revenge. This essay is brief and austere "It is devoid of the sensuous beauty of style as well as the weight of wellordered thoughts".

IV "Of Parents And Children"

Introduction

The thoughts that are couched in this essay might have been drawn from Bacon's experience and observation. He begins by observing, "The joys, sorrows and fears of the parents in respect of their children are personal and private, not to be shared with others". Bacon further observes, "Children sweeten labours; but they make misfortunes more bitter. They increase the cares of life; but they mitigate the remembrance of death". Children add to the anxieties of parents, but parents feel compensated by the thought that they will continue to live in their children. Every species perpetuates itself through reproduction but memory, intellectual achievements, and beneficent activities belong to the human species only.

Childless Man

Bacon is of opinion that it is the childless men who are the greatest benefactors of mankind. The various kinds of beasts continue for ever the same process of reproduction. In the case of human beings, what is done by one generation is remembered by the generations that follow. While the beasts live only a physical life the human beings produce noble and meritorious works. The highest works have been achieved by men who never married – Such men having no family to look after, they

excelled the others in respect of intellectual effort and beneficent activities. They never produced children but they succeeded in producing marvellous works in various walks of life. Those who first bring honour and glory to their families treat their children with utmost leniency and affection. "Their loving indulgence towards their children is due to the fact that they look upon their children not only as continuing their family but also their work".

It is wrong on the part of parents to be miserly in granting a pocket allowance to their children. If children receive too small a pocket allowance they will tend to become dishonest and will use all kinds of tricks to get more money. They may be tempted to move in the company of low and mean fellows. Such children will indulge in all kinds of excesses if eventually they come into the possession of a lot of money. Having been denied an adequate pocket allowance while young, they would take to evil courses when at last sufficient money comes into their hands. In order to achieve the best results, the parents should exercise a strict authority over their children but they should not be miserly in granting a pocket allowance to their children. Parents, school-masters, and household servants are often responsible for encouraging a spirit of rivalry between brothers during their childhood. The spirit of rivalry thus started will go on developing as the brothers grow up so that they will become enemies to one another. Family relationships are thus badly damaged by the mistakes made by parents and school.

It is sometimes observed that a boy resembles his uncle or some other relative more than his own father. The question of resemblance is settled by the accidental operations of the blood. As there is a great physical resemblance more between a boy and his uncle than between the same boy and his father, there is nothing wrong in the uncle treating the nephew on the same footing with his own son. Parents should determine the professions which their children should enter. Parents should make their choice when the children are still young and pliable. Then it will be easy for the children to adjust themselves to their professional pursuits if these have been already decided for them by their parents. Parents should not take a decision in this matter by thinking too much of the natural inclinations of their children. Bacon observes, "It is true, that if the affection or aptness of the children be extraordinary, then it is good not to cross it". In general parents should act upon the principles of choosing what they think to be the best profession for the child and then letting the child develop a liking for it through sheer habit. The Latin proverb is "choose what is best, custom will make it agreeable and easy". In western countries younger brothers generally receive a very small share of the family wealth. It is the eldest son who gets the lion's share. In this respect the younger brothers are generally fortunate; they feel compelled to work hard and make a success of their careers. This incentive is withdrawn if the younger brothers hope to inherit a lot of wealth.

V "Of Marriage And Single Life"

This essay offers another fair example of Bacon's uncommon capacity for charging brief, simple sentences with a world of meaning. Look at the peculiar structure of this sentence where there is a three-fold balance – "wives are young men's mistresses; companions for middle age; and old men's nurses".

A man who has a family may be regarded as one who has given an assurance to fortune that he will fulfil certain conditions – that he will not do anything to endanger his peace and security. "Certainly the best works, and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men; "says Bacon.

Childless men think no farther than their death; they do not have any desire to be remembered after death. Impertinence in this context means only irrelevance. There are others who look upon a family as a financial liability. Such persons look only at the negative side of the family. They are so money-minded that they think of the family in terms of the expenditure involved and not in terms of the advantages that a family confers upon them. There are some foolish rich people who are so greedy and money-minded that they are proud of having no children. They are of opinion that if they had children their wealth would be less. Children are regarded by them as a financial liability. Having children means spending money on them and therefore being regarded as less wealthy than would be the case if they had no children.

The most ordinary cause of man's remaining single is his desire to enjoy freedom. This is specially true of persons with a whimsical nature and persons who aim solely at pleasing themselves. They will even look upon their belts and garters to be undue restraints. According to Bacon such men "will go near to think their girdles and garters to be bonds and shackles". He continues to observe that unmarried are best friends, best masters, best servants; but not always best subjects; for they are light to run away. Having no wives and children they have no encumbrances. They are thus free to run away from the country when necessary. Bacon explains this thus: fugitives always travel light and do not carry any burden in the form of a luggage or family, so that they can run away or flee at the shortest possible notice. If a man has first to satisfy the needs of his family, he will have little left to give charity to others.

Certainly wife and children are factors that develop the humane values of life. A family provides opportunities to a man for developing his softer qualities like sympathy, tenderness and affection. Single men may be more generous in giving charity but they are also more cruel and hard-hearted. They are generous because they have more money to give, as they do not have families to maintain. They are cruel and hard-hearted because they lack opportunities to develop their feelings of love and affection. Bacon refers to Ulysses, who, in Greek mythology was famed for his exploits in war and in exploration. In the course of his wanderings, Ulysses met the enchantress Calypso who offered to make him immortal if he would stay with her. Ulysses rejected the offer in order to be able to return to his wife, Penelope. The Latin quotation here means "Ulysses preferred his old wife Penelope to immortality".

We have the famous Baconian brevity in this observation, "Wives are young men's mistresses; companions for middle age; and old men's nurses", so that he may have sufficient reason to marry when he desires; yet wittily he says, when a man is young, he should not marry because he has as yet an inadequate experience of life. And when a man has grown older, he should not marry because it is too late.

"With regard to Churchmen, Bacon claims that those leading a religious life spend more of their time and love on others, if they do not have to utilise that time and affection on their own families. We see the truth of this in the life of the Roman Catholic Fathers and Sisters of the Church. By 'charity' Bacon means love and affection, and he uses a simile from gardening to express his view; just as the water which flows through a hollow land will exhaust a substantial part of it in forming a pool and will not be able to irrigate the area beyond the pool".

VI "Of Envy"

Selby observes that Bacon was inclined to share the opinion that the thoughts, beliefs, and feelings of one person could directly influence and affect the state of another, just as one body may infect another. Bacon in another place says, that there are affections which draw the spirits into the eyes: which are two: love and envy which is called the Evil Eye. Envy emitteth some malign and poisonous spirits, which taketh hold of the spirit of another; and it likewise of greater force when the cast of the eye is oblique. It has also been noted that it is most dangerous when an envious eye is cast upon persons in glory, in triumph and in joy. There are, Selby observes, mortuary spirits as distinguished from the vital spirits, which are subtle compounds of air and fire diffused throughout the body: and so long as they remain in the body, life is preserved".

Love and envy are the two passions noted for their power to bewitch or cast spell upon their objects. They are marked by violent desires and thick-coming wild fancies and suggestions, and they affect the eyes, which enchant as they encounter their objects. This is why the Bible describes envy as 'evil eye' and astrologers term the influence of evil stars as 'evil aspect'. Some subtler observers have gone so far as to assert that the darts of envy prove most injurious when the persons envied are seen to be at the height of their glory and their spirits are most exposed to the sharp strokes of the envious eye. Bacon then goes on to point out what persons are apt to envy others; what persons are most subject to be envied themselves; and what is the difference between public and private envy.

A person who is not virtuous in himself envies virtue in others, for a man is delighted either in the contemplation of his own good or of the evil in others, and if he despairs of the virtue present in somebody else he would proceed to pull him down to his own level. Persons given to the habit of prying into the affairs of others are most subject to envy, while those busy in their own are least prone to envious soliciting. An envious man is always moving about in the world around him in order to fish out the secrets of others or note the conditions of life they are leading. He very seldom likes to mind his own business and sit at home setting his own house in order. The Latin proverb in this connection means "All inquisitive persons are malevolent".

Deformed persons, and eunuchs, and old men, and bastards are generally envious of those who possess the properties, which they lack beyond the hope of improvement. If persons of noble spirit have such handicaps they become useful as instruments of honourable deeds. Tamberlaine, the famous Scythian conqueror, founder of the Mongol dynasty, was a lame man. Narsus, the Roman general, who defeated the Goths was a eunuch. Agesilaus was the famous King of Sparta (398 – 361 B.C) was lame-footed. The same is the case of men who rise high after calamities and misfortunes because they

are men out of tune with the age, find secret satisfaction in causing harm to others. Likewise vainglorious men who are anxious to excel in too many things are envious of those who surpass them in those things severally, which they are ambitious to command collectively.

Kinsfolk, colleagues and associates are envious of those men in their ranks who rise to a higher position and by their rise seem to cast their companions into the shade and pin-point their unworthiness. Bacon refers to the story of Cain and Abel in the Old Testament. They were the wicked and virtuous brothers respectively, sons of Adam. Cain was envious of Abel, when God accepted the sacrifice of Abel and rejected that of Cain.

Persons of eminent virtue excite little envy by their advance or promotion, because their fortune is taken to be the reward of their virtue, and also because they are too high for the common people to challenge comparison with and feel envious of them. Envy is ever joined with the comparing of a man's self; and where there is no comparison, no envy: and therefore kings are not envied but by kings. Unworthy men are most envied as they first come into good fortune: the envy thus aroused grows thinner with the passage of time. Worthy men, whose fortune lasts long, are apt to stir up envy, as their original virtue begins to grow familiar and lustreless.

Men who win honour by hard work, painful labour and much exposure to danger are able to neutralise envious feeling in men who pity them for their pains, and pity is an antidote to envy. The more deep and sober sort of politic persons always bemoan themselves that they suffer over- much. Not that they feel it so, but only to abate the edge of envy. Men in authority are less envied under the burden of work imposed upon them as their duty, than under the business which they officiously take away from others and thus monopolise the whole business of their office.

Bacon would like to conclude this part by observing that the act of envy had somewhat in it a sort of witchcraft; it can be cured by the remedy effective in the removal of witchcraft, which is, to shift the enchantment to another object. Worldly wise men, therefore, in high offices create a number of subordinates or functionaries to serve as scapegoats for the envy, which they may excite.

There is yet some good in public envy, whereas in private there is none: The fear of envy curbs the inordinate ambition of a great public figure to climb beyond reasonable limits. Envy in body-politic is a deadly infection which may quickly assume the form of an epidemic by tainting even the sound and well disposed citizens. The men who fear envy most are its easiest victims in public life. The public envy generally reaches its limits with the ministers immediately below the king, who remains unaffected. According to Bacon public envy is as an ostracism (a sentence of banishment anciently passed upon men when their greatness became dangerous for public weal) when one mixes popular and unpopular action, the good action may be tainted by the bad one.

If there is public envy against all the ministers alike, there should be no doubt about the fact that it is directed against the King. Envy is distinguisheable from other human passions by virtue of its persistent and perpetual operation. Like love, envy breeds a languishing tendency in its subject through its unceasing operation. Of all other affections, envy is the most opportune and continual. "An

envious man, in this consideration, the Devil's disciple – a public enemy of incalculable potentialities for mischief". Thus envy is seldom gratified and is ever in operation and works havoc upon the physical and mental health of the envious person.

VII "Of Love"

Bacon thought of "love as a passion which drew men away from the sway of Reason and Judgement. Hence he begins by declaring that in life it does much mischief". Bacon's treatment is essentially that of a rationalist; he speaks of the negative side of love as he dwells on the disadvantages of love.

Love is more prominent and occupies a larger room on the stage than in the life of man. "For as to the stage, love is ever matter of comedies, and now and then of tragedies; but in life it doth much mischief; sometimes like a siren, sometimes like a fury" Dramatists write more dramas dealing with the passion of love than the actual life of man justifies. This passion serves as rich material for many comic plays, and tragic pays too. Sometimes this passion plays the role of an enchantress – like the Sirens, women who by the sweetness of their songs lured sailors to destruction. Homer mentions them in his ODYSSEY. The Furies were personifications of revenge. They were represented as ugly and horrible women with snakes hissing in the hair on their heads – Love sometimes tempts a man to self-indulgence, and sometimes provokes a man to extreme wrath.

Mark Antony may be taken as an example of the lover who yields to the temptation of love, thus ruining his career for the sake of Queen Cleopatra of Egypt. Othello may be taken as an example of a lover who grows furious and murders his beloved Desdemona, the chaste woman, all out of suspicion born of misunderstanding.

History thus clearly illustrates numerous instances of the capacity of love to have dominion not only over the heart of a voluptuary like Mark Antony or Appius Claudius, but also over the heart of austere and wise men. Epicurus, (342 – 270 B.C) the founder of the Epicurean sect of philosophers in Greece, opined that one individual bound to another by the tie of love can spend his time with profit and delight in the contemplation and worship of another. As against this view of Epicurus that human beings should be content with studying themselves we must understand that man was created to contemplate divine mysteries and sublime objects. It is, therefore, foolish for a man to kneel before a woman and offer worship to her just because she has charmed his eyes with her beauty. It is a well known fact that lovers speak of their love in a hyperbolic or extravagant manner. "It is believed that under self-love man is given to have a high conceit about himself and is the greatest flatterer. But the lover can easily beat him in his gross flatteries of his beloved – he can find 'Helen's beauty in the brow of Egypt' –

Therefore the lover thinks more highly and absurdly of his beloved than the proudest and most vainglorious man is ever capable of doing with regard to his own self. Hence we have the proverb, that "it is impossible to love and be wise". Bacon says the folly of love is quite apparent even to the

beloved who happens to remain heart-whole and returns but contempt for the lover's flattering protestations. For this reason men ought to be all the more vigilant against the passion of love which leads to the loss of other things and which at the same time falls of its own object; which demands much sacrifice of other things and which may yet not prove fruitful. The ardent or passionate lover has to suffer many losses. This is well illustrated by the story of the judgement of Paris.

A man feels a natural inclination and desire to love others. If a man does not concentrate his love on one individual or on a small number of individuals, his love will naturally spread itself over a large number of people. If that happens, a man will become more kind-hearted and charitable, as is the case sometimes with monks. Monks are kind hearted and charitable because they spread their love over many people. Married love is noble and has beneficial results for society in general. Love of friends is also noble and it serves to raise manking to a high position. Love of friends in sublime and has an elevating effect. But immoral love, the kind of passion that a man feels for prostitutes, has a corrupting and degrading effect upon human beings.

As we read this essay we feel that Bacon confines himself largely to the contemplation of sexual love, probably because it is common in the world and stands in the way of man's progress and prosperity in the world. For Bacon, wordly success was something solid and serious while the raptures and repinings of lovers were wasteful illusions and absurdities. Hence this essay mirrors Bacon's peculiar nature and temperament.

VIII "Of Simulation And Dissimulation"

SIMULATION = pretending to have / feel pretending to be, feigning
DISSIMULATION = pretending not to have or not to feel dissembling

"This Essay is that of a politician or man of affairs who has to deal with all sorts and conditions of people, it contains advice that seems Machiavellian in its care to guard oneself from the misjudgments of the public. It is also clear, however, that this habit of mind was typical of Bacon himself, and it is therefore typical of him as a man; it is not really advice for the common man or the student".

Dissimulation is a poor substitute for policy or wisdom. It is habitually employed only by those who are wanting in ability and decision. To judge the occasion when the truth should be told and to have the courage to tell the truth requires a strong mind and a strong heart. It is the weaker kind of politicians who resort most to dissimulation. The weaker a politician, the more he will dissemble.

Some men have a penetrating judgement. Such men can understand what things are to be fully revealed, what things are to be kept a complete secret, and what things are to be partly revealed and partly concealed. Such men also know when and to whom things are to be revealed, and when and from whom things are to be concealed. Tacitus, the Roman historian was right in calling this capacity for revealing and concealing things the arts of life and the arts of government. Bacon observes "Tacitus saith, Livia sorted well with the arts of her husband and dissimulation of her son: attributing arts of policy to Augustus (her husband) and dissimulation to Tiberius (her son). He who knows these arts

need not resort to dissimulation. In the case of such a man dissimulation will prove to be an obstacle and a drawback.

If a man has not attained that accuracy of judgement, then he should learn to be secretive and to resort to dissimulation. Whether a man should resort to dissimulation or not will depend upon whether he is deficient in a penetrating judgement or whether he possesses a penetrating judgement. A wise man will vary in particulars – that is change their conduct in accordance with the demands of changing situations. Such a wise man will see when openness is expedient, and when secrecy, just as a man with the use of eyes can see when it is safe and when dangerous, to walk quickly. "As a blind man must walk slowly everywhere, so he who wants the light of wisdom must always hide his purposes and dissemble. For uniform secrecy and dissimulation are safer than an inopportune betrayal of his intentions".

There are three degrees of man's self-concealment:
(a) Closeness or Secrecy.
(b) Dissimulation of a negative kind.
(c) Simulation of the affirmative kind.

The above three may be explained thus:-

(a) Closeness or secrecy – that is, they are not frank and open in their conversation, revealing little about themselves.

(b) Dissimulation is a further step in the direction. It is not always possible to avoid being questioned and thus of affording information, and so sometimes to preserve secrecy it is necessary to "dissemble" – to pretend or give some false information to a slight extent in a negative manner. It involves not telling the whole truth.

(c) Simulation – this is positively giving false information, pretending to be what you are not. This is the third degree of secrecy, where the individual actually gives wrong information for some private or political purpose.

('man leaveth himself' – when a man gives nobody an opportunity of observing or finding out in any other way, what he is)

Secrecy is the virtue of a confessor – a confessor is a priest who listens to the confessions of a sinner. A confessor's special merit is that he can keep everybody's confession a secret. Nobody will reveal his secrets to a man who is likely to pass them on to others (Babbler is a man given to gossip or a man who irresponsibly gives away the secrets of others). People open their minds to a man who has the reputation of keeping the secrets of others.

Therefore let it be accepted as a general rule that to be silent and not to disclose the secrets of others is not only wise but is also morally desirable. It is wise because it leads to one's being told many things which one would not have otherwise known. It is morally desirable because it shows decency and is also a safeguard against the habit of lying.

Simulation means pretending to have or feel what one does not actually have or feel. Simulation may arise from a natural tendency to falsehood. It may arise from a timidity of mind or it may arise from certain serious defects of character which a man may be suffering from and which he would like to hide. A man who is sufferi9ng from serious defects of character will not only try to conceal those defects but will try to practise simulation in other things also so that he may become an expert in this technique (ure – practice).

The great advantages of Simulation and Dissimulation are three (1) to lull opposition and to take them by surprise or attack when they are unprepared for it. (2) A way of escape from commitment to a policy. If a person openly declares his intention he must proceed with its execution in favour or against a situation, like a wrestler booked for a bout. Secrecy can save him his necessity. (3) Better to discover the mind of another. This will give a man power to discover others, who will be indisposed to think and speak freely before him if his intentions are known to them from open declaration.

To these advantages may be added three disadvantages also:-

1) Simulation and dissimulation indicate a weakness of disposition which prevents one to go straight boldly to his business.
2) It puzzles the mind of many who would otherwise cooperate with him.
3) It deprives a man of the best aid to action, which is trust and belief a person inspires by his frank and honest behaviour.

We may conclude this essay by observing that a man should have a reputation for openness and straightforwardness. But he may, in general, maintain secrecy, use dissimulation when occasion demands it, and feign when there is no alternative to doing so. Dissimulation according to him is a poor substitute for policy or wisdom. Only weaker kind of politicians resort to dissimulation. Weak persons cannot tell the truth and have therefore to dissemble.

3.16.3 Bacon's Place In Literature

"During the period of Transition in English literary history (1485 – 1557), saw the work of a brilliant satirist like Skeleton and a saintly Utopian like Sir Thomans More and prepared the way for the Elizabethan harvest, the first being "Tottel's Miscellany" or the Book of Songs and Sonnets (1557), Elizabeth herself ascending the throne in 1558. The period of the Renaissance and Reformation (and Revolution) was the age of Spenser and Shakespeare and Bacon, of Donne and Milton and Browne, undoubtedly the most opulent age in English literature".

Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam (1561 – 1626) was a rich and successful lawyer who became a Member of Parliament and, in 1618, Lord Chancellor. Apart from his importance as a statesman, he was undoubtedly clever though many took him to be corrupt and dishonest. Alexander Pope's assessment of Bacon was, "the wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind". Truly he was a luminary in the literary history of England. Not only is he remembered for the ESSAYS which chiefly concern us here but also for his work in supporting and encouraging science. He brought to bear on his ESSAYS

this scientific bent of mind. In The Advancement of Learning (1605) Novum Organum (1620) and De Augmentis SCIENTIARUM (1623) Bacon insisted on the importance of what is now known as 'scientific method'. He explained how knowledge is to be got by observation, and not merely by authority. IN NEW ATLANTIS (1626) Bacon set out to write something like a Utopia.

When Bacon wrote the essays – 58 of them marked for their essential brevity – he thought of them simply as 'certain brief notes, set down rather significantly than curiously. He had a wonderful talent in Macaulay's words' "for packing thought close and rendering it portable. It is this plain, meaningful, readable prose, which makes his ESSAYS such an important landmark in the history of English literature. Bacon showed that the essence of good writing is to have something to say, and to say it as shortly as possible. So well indeed did he say what he wished to say that many of his sentences have become almost part of the English language. Here are a few examples:

No pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of TRUTH

Wives are young men's mistresses; companions for middle age; and old men's nurses.

A friend may speak as the case requires, and not as it sorteth with the person.

The Fruits of Unity are two; the one towards those that are without the church, the other towards those that are within.

Fame is like a river, that beareth up things light and swollen, and drowns things Weighty and solid.

Money is like muck, not good except it be spread.

Bacon described some of his essays as 'civill' and some as 'morall'. Indeed it is the great variety of Bacon's essays which makes them so interesting and so impressive. Bacon was very much a man of his time. Much of what he wrote on political matters shows an admirable common sense. On each of the ordinary human problems – love, marriage, anger, sickness and death – he has intelligent things to say, things which are well worth repeating in the twentieth century. On love and marriage his opinions were practical and not romantic. The same careful and unromantic note is sounded in the essay OF MARRIAGE AND SINGLE LIFE. We have to admit that the tone of Bacon's ESSAYS is often lordly and dictatorial. The essays of ABRAHAM COWLEY (1618 – 1667) are very different; and it was Cowley rather than Bacon who gave the English ESSAY the friendly conversational tone it was to keep in the work of Addison and Steele, Lamb and Hazlitt, Belloc and Chesterton.

When Bacon first published his ESSAYS in 1597, discerning readers could see that the Englishman's manner of writing was quite different from that of the great Frenchman Montaigne. Where Montaigne's prose produced widening circles around one, creating an atmosphere of subdued animation, Bacon's prose gave a series of a quick knocks as if alerting one to follow a serious demonstration

"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 judgement and Disposition of Business".

According to K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar and Prema Nandakumar, "Bacon seems to hesitate as little as a computer hesitates, and he is generally as right as a computer too. In some of his later more expansive essays, however, Bacon is less like Minerva dictating or a computer functioning, and more like a super – subtle super sophisticated vastly learned Elizabethan talking of men and affairs, of princes and politics, of simulation and dissimulation, as a rule unbending, yet unquestionably a man speaking, not a God, not a machine".

According to Edward Albert, in Bacon we have the miscellany of theme and the brevity, but we lack the intimacy of treatment and of style. His ESSAYS are rather the musings of the philosopher than the personal opinions of the literary executant. His ESSAYS provide a practical everyday philosophy of the life of his own world. In its three versions this work shows the development of Bacon's English style. In the first edition the style is crisp, detached and epigrammatic conveying the impression that each essay has arisen from some happy thought or phrase around which other pithy statements are agglomerated. In the later editions the ideas are expanded. In choice of subject and approach, they reveal his breadth of intellect, his worldly wisdom, his concern with public life and material advancement. They are impersonal, objective and orderly in thought, and reflect a cool, scientific detachment, which makes them rather formal and cold. They are written in the language of ordinary men and the imagery is that of everyday life. The essays are brief and full of condensed, weighty, antithetical sentences which have the qualities of proverbial expressions, and are notable for their precision and clarity of phrasing.

In an age when men were busy with romance and philosophy, Bacon insisted that the first object of education is to make a man familiar with his natural environment; from books he turned to men, from theory to fact, from philosophy to nature. He was able to reconcile the claims of both Science and Religion to his own satisfaction. Though his nature was cold and governed by intellect, in general, he was kindly and humane is disposition. He tried to be a peace-maker in an age of violence and strong feelings. He strove to be moral in an age that was swept by violent passions. He found to his cost that he could not reconcile the ways of the evil world with the ultimate moral law.

3.16. Bacon's Style

Like Marlowe's Dr Faustus, Bacon looked upon knowledge as potent instrument of power. This beneficial knowledge was to be gained by patient and systematic observation of nature. Bacon wrote fifty-eight essays out of which eight essays are prescribed for our study. They are **Of Death**, **Of Marriage and Single Life**, **Of Parents and Children**, **Of Revenge**, **Of Envy**, **Of Simulation and Dissimulation**, **Of Unity in Religion** and **Of Love**. These essays are in the nature of precepts and instructions, which he imparts to his readers. The seriousness of Bacon's intent is illustrated by the aphoristic style, which is the most prominent feature of the early essays.

"Of Marriage And Single Life" possesses a popular appeal dealing with some of the most common experiences of human life. He takes a balanced view of both the married and the single life, as there are advantages and disadvantages in both. This essay is a good example of Bacon's fondness for allusions, quotations, Latin phrases, and expressions and figures of speech. There is a reference to Ulysses and we have a quotation from an ancient Greek philosopher, Thales who said, in reply to a question when a man should marry: "A young man not yet, an elder man not at all". This essay is an excellent example of compression and condensation. Some of the sentences in this essay have an aphoristic quality and they have become proverbial, "Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants; but not always best subjects".

The central thought of this essay "Of Unity In Religion" is, of course, that religious dissension are harmful to faith, charity, and peace, and should therefore be avoided. Neither persecution nor rebellion is desirable in the name of religion. The ideas in this essay are logically presented and developed. Most of the quotations in this essay are taken from the Bible (Vulgate) weighty ideas are presented in the fewest possible words, "The truth and falsehood in such things are like the iron and clay in the toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image: they may cleave but they will not incorporate". Bacon's argument in favour of unity in the Church is dispassionate, cogent, and thought provoking. This essay has a universal appeal: its wisdom has validity even in our age of science when fanaticism, even religious fanaticism at that, is by no means rare in private as well as in public sphere.

The essay "Of Reverence" is brief and austere. It is devoid of the sensuous beauty of style as well as the weight of well-ordered thoughts. It has suggestive flashes, which kindle curiosity. This essay is an excellent example of Bacon's tendency to dilute high ideals with expediency and a utilitarian approach to life; when Bacon says that a man, who pardons his enemies, reveals a noble heart, he certainly aims at a high level. He justifies a revenge that is taken for a wrong for which there is no legal remedy. He shows his wordly wisdom when he cautions a man wishing to take revenge by saying that the revenge should be such as there is no law to punish. This essay is more or less a lesson in morality. It is a didactic essay and is an intelligent study of human nature.

In his essay on Simulation and Dissimulation Bacon says that the practice of dissembling is the policy or wisdom of a weak man, for the strong minds and hearts are possessed of power to tell truth and act truly as the occasion demands. This essay is more psychological or scientific than literary. Apart from Bacon's characteristic brevity and precision of expression, it has no literary excellence. By observing that Dissimulation is a poor substitute for policy or wisdom, Bacon proves to us that he is a man of sagacity. However, this essay, like many others from Bacon's pen, is a masterpiece so far as the style is concerned. Once again we find Bacon's genuis for condensation in expression. The greatest merit of the style lies in its compactness and pregnancy. Once again many of the sentences have an aphoristic or epigrammatic quality – example, "For he that talketh what he knoweth, will also talk what he knoweth not".

Bacon very suavely comments that the joys, sorrows and fears of the parents in respect of their children are personal and private, not to be shared with others. In his essay Of Parents And Children Bacon discusses a subject involving a sentimental approach in his characteristic unsentimental and

dispassionate manner. "Without importing the least touch of emotion Bacon prepares a balance sheet of the advantages and disadvantages which fall to the lot of the parents". The most remarkable feature of the style in this essay is the structure of the sentences. From the beginning to the end the majority of the sentences is cast in the characteristic Baconian mould of the balance and antithesis, and the brevity of expression is carried to the maximum. It is very wisely remarked that parents find their labour sweet because their labour will benefit their children, but they find their misfortunes more bitter because of the thought that these misfortunes will adversely affect the happiness of their children. This essay belongs to the category of those in which Bacon views men in relation to the world and society. The subject treated in the essay is of common and widespread interest. Of the many pithy sayings in this essay we may quote the one from Solomon, "A wise son rejoiceth the father, but an ungracious son shames the mother". Certain expressions that Bacon uses in this essay are peculiar because the meanings must be understood clearly.

'Proof'	=	result
'Sort with'	=	associate with
'Sorteth to'	=	leads to.

LOVE is, according to Bacon, more prominent and occupies a larger room on the stage than in the life of man. Man is naturally gifted with a secret tendency towards "love of others" which may embrace the whole mankind and become universal charity and benevolence. Bacon's treatment of love is a signal example of his practical, rational, and unemotional nature. It is surprising that Bacon does not comment on the ennobling effect of love, love even for a woman, under which a man is impelled to face death and danger. Bacon in the beginning of the essay Of Love remarks that love plays a greater role in the theatre than in the actual life of man. In this essay we see Bacon the rationalist. He speaks of the negative side of love as he dwells on the disadvantages of love. It sometimes plays the role of a SIREN and sometimes of a FURY. Bacon speaks like a moralist and a Puritan and observes that no great and worthy person of ancient or modern time has ever been transported to the mad degree of love. Love may be the child of folly but it is a many-splendoured thing. Bacon's fondness for allusions, quotations, and the use of Latin phrases is well illustrated in this essay.

In the essay "Of Envy" Bacon considers such details as the kinds of persons who are apt to envy others or those who are most subject to envy, and the distinction between public and private envy. "Love and envy are the two passions noted for their power to bewitch or cast spell upon their objects. They are marked by violent desires and thick-coming wild fancies and suggestions, and they affect the eyes which enchant as they encounter their objects". His treatment of envy is sufficiently elaborate and yields full satisfaction to the readers interested in the exposition of a human passion, which is quite common in the business of life. He leaves us in no doubt about the fact that envy is the attribute of the Devil who is said to be busy "sowing tares among wheat at night" meaning that the operation of the enemy is secret and mischievous and as a human passion envy is harmful to the individual and dangerous to the peaceful life of the Commonwealth. The manner throughout is scientific and analytical and the texture of the essay is close and dense.

Bacon can rightly be called a modern Aristotle. He was a true son of the Reformation. He was religious in his belief but he played a conciliatory role. His early style is characterised by crisp short sentences packed with meaning. In all the essays he views man in relationship to himself, his fellowmen, or his God. "His method is to give to the reader matter for his meditation and thought. So he is profound, and stately and distant, in his approach. Bacon's style is "a style for all seasons. His essays show a strong organic unity of structure, like a tree with its various branches. He adopts this method to present a convincing argument, and to persuade the reader of his point of view".

3.16.5 Sample Questions

1) Evaluate Bacon's Contribution to English Prose based on a study of the Prescribed Essays.
2) Attempt A Critical Assessment of the Prescribed Essays
3) Bacon's Essays are inspired by the Ethos of the Age Substantiate
4) What are the Salient Features of Bacon's Essays. Explain.
5) Critically comment on Bacon's style

3.16.6 Suggested Reading

1) Bacon's Essays Ed. By Selby
2) The English Essay And Essayists By Hugh Walker
3) Bacon – An Account Of His Life And Work By Abbott
4) Francis Bacon & Renaissance Prose – B.Vickers.

Prof. S.N. Kulandaisamy

Lesson 17
Augustan Satire

Contents

3.17.1 Objectives

The Objectives of this Lesson are to:

i. attempt a definition of satire
ii. find out the proper meaning of Augustan.
iii. analyse the literary history of satirical writing –prose and verse—till the 18th century.
iv. consider the purpose of this genre.

3.17.2 The Purpose Of Satire

Satire is a term applied to any form of literature whose manner is a blend of criticism, wit and ironic humour and whose immediate aim is the ridicule or rebuke of some one or something. The target may be a philosophical system (Voltaire's *Candide)* or a social evil like hypocrisy (Moliere's *Tartuffe*), or an individual person (Dryden's *Macflecknoe*). The ultimate purpose of satire is to reform society by exposing its vices.

Satire can take almost any literary form and use various approaches and techniques. A sharp line can always be drawn between invective or mere insult and satire. The difference lies in the wit of the presentation, which is an essential quality of satire. We may defy or curse things that we fear but we do not laugh at them. Satire is not funny; it may be bitter, as in Swift's *A Modest Proposal*. Satire appears in every period of literature – among the Greeks in Aristophanes, among the Romans in *Martial, Petronius*, and the greatest of them Horace and Juvenal. The picaresque novel *Praise Of Folly* by Erasmus, the novels of Rabelais and Cervantes are striking examples of Renaissance satire. The re-classicism of the 17th and 18th centuries that marks a high water mark are the verse satires of Dryden, Boileau and Pope's *Rape Of The Lock* and *Dunciad*. Satires appear also in the writings of Steele, Addison, Swift, Fielding and Voltaire. During the 19th century the most

famous satirists were Byron in England, Mark Twain in America and Anatole France in France. During the 20th century Sinclair Lewis, James Thurber, E.B. white and C.S.Lewis are satirists.

3.17.3 The Augustan Age

With the Restoration, we enter upon a literary period of roughly 150 years, which is generally called the Augustan Age. It comprises, according to professor R.D. Trivedi, the Restoration period proper or the Age of Dryden and almost the whole of the 18th century- the Age of Queen Anne, the Age of Pope and the Age of Johnson. The term Augustan originated in Dr Johnson's use of it in his praise of English poetry embellished by Dryden ——" he found it brick and left it marble". The poets and critics of the 18th century really believed that as the Age of Augustus, who ruled as Caesar from 27B.C to A.D. 14. It is important that Augustus's reign not only saw the glory of Virgil, Horace and Ovid, but was considered one of relative success in administration and political stability. In polities as well as literature the conservatives and progressivists felt themselves in a new age. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 was widely hailed as a heaven – sent opportunity for peace and stability. The tone and temper of thought about human activity tended to emphasize useful measures and practical policy. Myth and metaphor lost their ancient poetic primacy, and history and realism became significant poetie modes, combined with a bent towards didacticism. In poetry, the Augustan temper required restraint, tradition, a cool, calm music aptly symbolized by, "through deep, yet clear, though gentle, yet not dull /strong without rage, without ore- flowing full."

Poetry of this order was inspired by man's life in its public aspects, political, secular and active. It neglected the private springs of human force, mystical, religious and visionary. The poets aimed to appeal to the "general sense and Taste of Mankind", As such Augustan poetry is a poetry of tone. Augustan poetry, according to Angus Ross, is often concerned with ethics where we would expect personal morality or the power of private emotion. Augustan literature is often a literature of allusion.

Some of the best and most powerful poems written during the Augustan era were satires and in this form the poets of that time reach the best and most fruitful fusion of a number of ideals. The satirists were generally spokesmen for society's official views, or at least expressed views, which were justified as being the normative beliefs of the "true" society.

3.17.4 Features Of Augustan Poetry

The terms urbane and polite are among the most usual applied to Augustan poetry, and if pastoral is the kind of poetry which relates these ideals to the country and to rural nature, satire is the poetry of the town and of action. It presents, as Northrop Frye says, a militant attitude to experience. It allows full reign to the age's taste for didactic writing. We wonder whether a satirist should in his anatomy of conduct use types or real persons, Swift ironically says of himself,

"Yet Malice never was his Aim;

He lashed the vice but spared the Name"

The realism of satire required a flexible attitude to convention. Swift's poem THE PROGRESS OF BEAUTY raises another theory in Augustan satire; that is the propriety Sand indeed the requirement of wit in poems of attack and realistic presentation. In this poem Swift stresses the earthiness of human beauty. The comparison broadens into a moralist's contemplation of illusion and reality,

"When first Diana leaves her bed
Vapours and steams her looks disgrace,
A frouzy dirty coloured red
sits on her cloudy wrinkled face"

Satire with its realism and wit gave scope for 'characters' verse essays on conduct and ethics taken from real or realistic situations, which were a popular feature of Augustan poetry.

Renaissance – Impact

The literary patriotism of the Renaissance flared up when Dryden described "Man, who has done my best to improve the Language and Especially the poetry". When Pope defined the task of the poet as the expression of "what oft was thought, but never so well expressed" he was repeating a Renaissance commonplace to which Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton would have given their assent. Pope believed that no writing is good that does not tend to better mankind some way or other. The poets then believed that like a speech, a poem must be written with attention to the effect it will have on its audience. Thus a poem is a calculated attempt to arouse emotion in its readers. Pope had always shared the Renaissance ambition to write one supreme poem comparable to the great classical epics.

3.17.5 Augustan Satires

Hudibras, Mac Flecknoe, Absalom And Achitophel, The Rape Of The Lock, The Dunciad And The Vaniity Of Human Wishes

a. Hudibras

None of these belongs to a genre with a classical prototype. A poet's style varies according to the sort of poem he is writing, and the influences, which come into play, depend on the nature of the work. As Virgil was the best model for heroic poetry, and Horace for epistolary satire, so amongst English poets Ben Jonson was the model for certain sorts of epigram and epitaph and Donne, on occasion, for the more extended type of funeral elegy. Samuel Butler took the name of his hero Sir Hudibras from Spenser—in Book II of *The Faerie Qeene* is concerned with Temperance, sir Guyon reaches a castle inhabited by three sisters. The youngest loves pleasure the second moderation, while the third is a sour hater of all delights. Sir Hudibras, who is contrasted with Sans-loy, the wooer of the youngest sister, makes his suit to the eldest. In a stanza, which throws a great deal of light on *Hudibras*, he is described as

- - - an hardy man;
yet not so good of deeds, as great of name,

Which he by many rash adventures wan;
Since errant armes to sew he first began;
More huge in strength, the wise in works he was,
And reason with foole – hardize over ran;
Sterne melancholy did his courage pas,
And was for terrour more, all armd in shining bras

Butler's Hudibras resembles Spenser's in being more famous than he deserves, in having more strength than wisdom, and in being inspired less by true courage than by melancholy (in this context, madress). By giving his hero this name Butler does not only indicate the main traits of his character but also states his own attitude to the civil wars and the discontents which led up to them. The parallel between the adventures of Sir Hudibras and those of the hero of each of the Books of *The Faerie Queene* seems to be deliberate. Like one of Spenser's. Spenser's knights Butler's hero is involved in continual disputes and adventures, and woos a lady. Butler was familiar with the Renaissance doctrine of the heroic poem and it has a bearing on *Hudibras*. Spenser's knights represent one of the cardinal virtues, or the striving for that virtue; Sir Hudibras represents one of the basic vices. Dennis suggested that *Hudibras* is a satire on hypocrisy. Sir Hudibras is hypocrisy embodied. In the beginning of the poem, the reader is told that hypocrisy and nonsense are in control of Sir Hudibras's conscience. Hypocrisy is satirized with particular intensity throughout. Parodying the confessional dialogues and self – communing of the Dissenters, in which Ralpho scares Hudibras into thinking him a supernatural "voice" he asks him,

"Why didst thou chose that cursed sin,
Hypocrisies, to set up in?"

To which the knight replies, without demur:

"Because it is the thriving'st calling,
The only saints – Bell that rings all in"

Throughout *Hudibras* great emphasis is laid on the difference between profession and performance, outer seeming and inner reality. In this poem every species of human folly and rhyme is represented as a species of hypocrisy. Political satire is the most abvious 'end' of *Hudibras*. His satire relates obviously to a political party but he attacks lawyers, women the Royal Society, and pedantry of every kind.

Satire is like a shot fired at sea; when it hits its target, it causes a series of rings to radiate outwards towards all other follies and vices whatever. One finds in *Hudibras* wide application:

———"Most men carry things so even
Between this world, and Hell and Heaven,
Without the least offence to either,
They freely deal in all together."

No passage in *Hudibras* is more familiar than that in which Butler ridicules his hero's addiction to rhetoric:

For rhetoric he could not ope
His mouth, but out their flew a Trope:
And when he hapPed to break off
I' the middle of his speech, or cough,
H' had hard words, ready to shiew why,
And tell what Rule he did it by.

Such satire was thoroughly conventional: what is satirized is not rhetoric itself but the pedantic affectation of rhetoric, fine words and elaborate figures. What is particularly remarkable is the rushing vigour of HUDIBRAS, the unfailing energy of the verse. In the hands of Butler rhyme is frequently part of the satire.

There is a greater number of lines in *Hudibras* than in *Paradise Lost* — the style varies considerably from passage to passage; but the staple of the idiom is a personal development of the least elevated of the three styles distinguished by Renaissance and Augustan rhetoricians, the 'low' style appropriate to the base sort of satire. The characteristic mode of satire in *Hudibras* is the opposite of the mock heroic, that of describing everything in the most undignified manner possible:

"When civil fury first grew high,
And men fell out they knew not why,
When hard words, Jealousies, and Fears,
Set Folks together by the Ears,
And made them fight, like mad or drunk
For Dame Religion as for Pink,
Whose honesty they all durst swear for
Though not a man of them knew wherefore"

Satire and the sympathetic feelings are absolutely incompatible. Butler's object is to kill any sympathy, which the reader may feel for the subject of his satire, moving him instead to amusement and contempt. The reader is told that the quarrels, which led to, the civil war were
of no more account than a brawl for a whore. Butler ridicules writers of romantic epics like Ariosto, Spenser, and Davenant. The literary satire finds expression in perpetual allusions throughout *Hudibras*. Odd words interested Butler as much as odd ideas. Another form of pedantry common among the Dissenters and parodied in *Hudibras* is the affected use of terms from formal logic.

Finally *Hudibras* is a masterly satire in three parts. Its narrative form is that of a mock romance, derived from *Don Quxote*, in which a grotesque Presbyterian knight sir Hudibras and his sectarian squire Ralpho set out on horse back and encounter a bear – baiting mob, who, after a comic skirmish,

imprison them. A widow whom Hudibras hopes to marry agrees to release them; the knight undergoes a whipping for her sake. Butler has a dig at academic pedantry, the politics of the civil war period, the ethics of oath breaking, witchcraft, alchemy, astrology and the nature of marriage. Butler treats all erudition with contempt. His most powerful satirical weapon is his style and comic rhymes of which render absurd every subject to which they are applied.

b) Macflecknoe

The immediate occasion of Macflecknoe is uncertain. No doubt Dryden felt that he had been "notoriously abused". We learn that during the year 1678 something acted as a match to the heaped-up straw of Dryden's contempt for Shadwell and set him writing the only poem in his work, which is wholly devoted to satirizing a private enemy. It is noteworthy that Dryden confines himself to Shadwell's literary character; nothing is said of Shadwell's religious or political opinions; nor is his moral character seriously attacked. Dryden confines himself to portraying him as a literary dunce. The words 'wit', 'sense', 'art', 'nature', 'nonsense', 'tautology', and 'dullness', which had been the current coin of Dryden's prolonged critical warfare with Shadwell, sound through the poem like a fanfare.

Dryden considered this poem as a Varronian Satire, a category for which its primary qualification seems to be that it is based on a story of the poet's invention. Should *Macflecknoe* be thought of as a lampoon, it will be proper to classify it as a mock-heroic. Faced with the task of making Shadwell ridiculous, Dryden chose as his method the ironical politeness of the mock epic. The skilful manner in which Dryden mingles direct and oblique attack is particularly clear in Flecknoe's speeches. The following lines

"The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
But Shadwell never deviates into sense"

illustrate the qualities of a lampoon. They are rendered lethal by being altered as an encomium. Dryden is very successful in his delineation of the 'low' quarters of the town; brothel houses; and the haunts of the saburban muse'. The whole background of the poem is reminiscent of the setting of a low comedy or farce. The joyful business of comparing small men to giants and making pygmies of them,

"Like Augustus, young was call'd to
Empire and had govern'd long".

The unfortunate Shadwell is compared in turn to Arion. There are signs and omens, which foreshadowed Shadwell's coming. The manner in which the mantle of Flecknoe falls on the shoulders of Shadwell recalls the case of Elijah, who left the earth saying, "My mantle I bequeath ye". Direct satirical imagery is found notably in the latter part of Flecknoe's speech. Appreciation of this devastating satire of *MacFlecknoe* should not be allowed to blind us to its sheer comedy. It is one of the few poems that Dryden wrote for his own satisfaction. His delight is evident everywhere, in the brilliant imagery lavished on Shad well.

"His goodly Fabric fills the eye

And seems design'd for thoughtless Majesty
Thoughtless as Monarch Oakes that shades the plain,
And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign" –

Or the hilarious couplet of advice, which Flecknoe bestows on his successor:

Let Father Flecknel fire thy mind with praise
And uncle Ogle by thy envy raise

Macflecknoe is not only a satire: it is also a comedy. Mere scorn withers. It is also ironic sympathy; in Dryden's poem, the mischievous joy in contemplation that gives life to a creature of the comic imagination. Shadwell takes his place as a member of the same company as sir John Falstaff himself (Ian Jack)

c) Absalom And Achitophel

Absalom and Achitophel is a party poem. In 1681 a crisis occurred in the conflict between Shaftesbury and his followers who wished to exclude the catholic Duke of York from succession to the throne. There were those who stood with the king himself in favour of "true succession". This poem is the most important of Dryden's satires. It is not easily understood or appreciated by a reader who is ignorant of the historical events it describes or the names of people from the Bible he uses. Lord Shaftesbury (Achitophel in the poem) was trying to persuade parliament, against the urish of Charles II, to prevent the Duke of York from succeeding to the crown on the grounds that he was a catholic. Shaftesbury's group wanted to ensure that the next king would be Charles's illegitimate son, the Duke of Monmouth (Absalom in the poem). Dryden's purpose was to persuade the reading public that Shaftesbury and his friends were not to be trusted. Disguising his characters under Old Testament names he drew a clever parallel between the situation of Charles II and that of king David, distressed by the rebellion of his son Absalom. The English (disguised in the poem as the Jews) are shown as being endlessly difficult and quarrelsome about religion:

" The Jews, a headstrong, moody, murmuring race
As ever tried that extent and stretch of Grace
God's pampered people whom, debouched with ease
No king could govern nor no God could please"

Shaftesbury is described in a famous piece of invective as leader of those who opposed the king, and were therefore (in Dryden's royalist eyes) ungrateful and evil men:

Of these the false Achitophel was first:
A name to all succeeding ages curst.
For close designs and crooked counsels fit;
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit:
Restless, unfix in principles and place;
In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace.

A fiery soul, which working out its way
Fretted the pigmy body to decay;

For the modern reader the whole poem has none of the news like quality, which made it so successful when it appeared. It can still be enjoyed as one of the most powerful verse satires in the English language. Dryden wrote it when he was fifty years old, by which time he had complete mastery over heroic couplet. Verse of this sort, which seems to be the perfect medium for satirical wit and invective, was also used in Dryden's later satires, *Macflecknoe* and *The Medal* and *The Hind And The Pather*.

The verse of *Absalom and Achitophel* is marked by what Dryden called the smoothness, the Numbers and the turn of Heroic poetry. Sometimes his verse rises to that " long majestic march, and energy divine" (as Pope said). What Dryden had done was to perfect a new heroic idiom. He was helped by fifteen years practice in the theatre and had a life-long familiarity with the music of Virgil's verse. When such characters as Corah and Shimmei are described the style is necessarily lowered. Nothing in *Absalom and Achitophel* is more remarkable than the skill with which Dryden varies his treatment of the different characters who are introduced. The description of Achitophel is a reminder that satire can exist without humour. Serious scorn distinguishes the characters of Shimei and Corah. The portrait of Corah, that " Monumental Brass", is a similar compound of direct name – calling and devastating irony;

" Sunk were his eyes, his voice was harsh and loud,
Sure signs he neither cholerick was nor proud".

Dryden once declared that satire was undoubtedly a species of heroic poetry; Dryden called this poem a satire in the preface to the poem. Yet it has practically nothing in common with the classical Satura and it is as a Satire that it has always been considered. Luttrell once wrote that it is the prominence of the element of attack in *Absalom and Achitophel* that makes it a satire in the English sense of the word.

d) The Rape of The Lock

As for Alexander Pope, the incident on which the poem is founded has caused a breach between the two families of the Peters and the Fermors and it was suggested to Pope that he should help " to make a jest of it and laugh them together again". Mock heroic was a genre and the writing of a witty narrative was one of the most obvious methods. Modern critics often think of a mock epic; the Augustans laid the emphasis elsewhere. A mock-heroic poem is a" parody" of the epic, but a parody in the Augustan sense, not in the modern. The 1712 version of *The Rape Of The Lock* consists of no more that 334 lines and takes over only a few of the characteristics of the epic makes it clear that Pope's concern was less with Homer and Virgil than with Miss Fermor and Lord Peter.

Alexander Pope's life (1688-1744) was a series of skirmishes with rivals for poetic fame, many of whom, though beneath his contempt, he treated with a coarseness and violence which are

none the less objectionable. He combined sensitiveness to criticism and pride in his own artistic gifts, with an eye, which saw clearly the weaknesses of his enemies and a cold calculation which gave to his satirical portraits a vigour and incisiveness which have made them immortal. By a stroke of luck and genius Pope hit on the notion of basing his machinery on the Rosicrucian spirits. He found in the Rosicrucian doctrine many hints, which he could develop but then the supernatural agents of *The Rape Of The Lock* are essentially his own creation. Look at the opening lines for the pomp and lustre of the idiom,

"What dire offence from am'rous causes springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial things"

Passages and when the single line, Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, Billet – doux"
emphasize the topsy-turvy chaos of values in Belinda's world. When Pope writes of Belinda:

"Belinda smiled, and all the world was gay"

the poet is drawing our attention to the comparison of a little girl to the sun (This is incongruous). In so far as *The Rape Of The Lock* is a satire, it opposes not a person but a moral fault: immoderate female pride. Its satire is not directed against Arabella Fermor but against a weakness which she shares with half the world.

e. The Dunciad

The original motive of Pope's *Dunciad* was to satirize the incompetence in matters of "wit" and taste of the official, bourgeois mind or that of the Government. Like Dryden's poem, *The Dunciad* of 1728 describes the succession of one dunce to another on the throne of Dullness. The poem is bad writing but it is also Pope's pessimistic commentary on the levelling down of literary standards. Pope seems to have been doubtful whether Theobald was a suitable hero for his poem. The last Book of *The Dunciad* of 1728 concludes with a prophecy made by the ghost of Settle. First the nation shall be overrun with farces, operas, shows, and the throne of Dullness advanced over both the theatres. Then her sons shall preside in the seats of arts and sciences, till in conclusion all shall return to their original chaos".

The structure of the poem is a parody of an Oxford degree ceremony. Dullness mounts her throne. Among the captives all around are not only Wit and Rhetoric, but also Science, Logic, and Morality. All her subjects are summoned: they include flatterers of dullness in great men, bad judges, and bad patrons as well as bad writers. *The Dunciad* is a mock-heroic satire. Theobald was made hero of the poem in its earliest form but in the final edition Colly Cibber was enthroned in his stead. The satire is directed against Dullness in general and in the course of it, all the authors who have earned Pope's condemnation are held up to ridicule. But the work is not confined to personal abuse, for literary vices receive their share of exposure. In Book I the reign of Dulness is described. Bayes, that is, (Cibber) is shown debating whether he shall betake himself to the church, or gaming, or party

writing, but is carried off by the goddess and anointed King in the place of Eusden, the poet laureate, who has died.

f) The Vanity Of Human Wishes

Ian Jack thinks Samuel Johnson's poem *The Vanity Of Human Wishes* was written in imitation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal. It owes its success to its moral seriousness and to its weighty but well-illustrated generalizations. Johnson comments on the vanities of various ambitions – for power, learning, military glory, and beauty – and cites the examples of Wolsey, Clarendon, Laud and others. Edward Young points out that the term satire is applicable even to graver compositions. Ethics, Heathen and Christian, and the Scriptures themselves, are, in a great measure, a satire on the weakness and iniquity of men. *The Vanity Of Human Wishes* a poem of the moral and didactic species, is in many ways more reminiscent of the Book of Job. It is a discourse without a plot, a pessimistic survey of human life in which the poet enforces his lesson with a series of exempla in the manner of a preacher.

It is the prominence of the element of attack which makes this poem, like its Juvelian original, a satire in the English sense of the word. Johnson's concern, like Juvenal's, is to underline the insecurity of man's existence and the futility of selfish ambitions. In Juvenal, Johnson found a perfect model. Johnson was also influenced by Juvenal's magnificent rhetoric. Johnson is in the pulpit throughout, addressing a congregation. As the thoughts of Juvenal are 'much more elevated' than those of Horace, they are fittingly expressed in a style akin to that of tragedy. Hence the title *Tragical Satire : The Vanity Of Human Wishes.* The abstract generality of idiom noticeable in some degree in all Johnson's writing is used with great skill to contribute to the elevation of the style of his "tragical satire". In many passages abstractions and personifications are the key-words:

"In full-blown dignity, see Wolsey stand
Low in his voice, and fortune in his hand:
To him the Church, the realm, their pow'rs consign,
Through him the rays of regal bounty shine,
Turn'd by his nod the stream of honour flows,
His smile alone security bestows:"

Such verse is the manifestation and embodiment of concentrated meaning and a weighty seriousness.

In the work of many poets, there is some characteristic of style which becomes most evident when they are writing at the top of their bent, says Ian Jack in his commentary on *The Vanity Of Human Wishes.* This unusual fondness for abstract personifications is Johnson's characteristic. Just as Donne's images tend to become more and more daring as his inspiration catches fire, so the better Johnson is writing the more prominent abstract personifications become. It is when he has

gathered all his powers and is deploying his poetic rhetoric with supreme effect that he makes the fullest use of abstractions and personifications.

"Are these thy views? Proceed,
And virtue guard thee to the throne of Truth!
Yet should thy soul indulge the gen'rous heat,
Till captive Science yields her last retreat;"

Johnson belonged to an age which found generalizations about human life exciting. Nothing is more characteristic than the frequency of such-phrases as the vassal, the lord, the kind, the needy traveler, the toiling statesman, the insidious rival and the gaping heir, the glittering eminence and the plundered palace. Johnson took for his model one of the most sombre of Juvenal's satires, and the quality which he was most concerned to reproduce was not the wit of his original but its grandeur. In his hands the Juvenalian satire became a sermon of incomparable weight and authority. Like the idea of Tragedy and Comedy, the idea of Horatian and Juvenalian satire acted as an inspiration to poets. It is fitting that the great age of verse satire in England-Augustan satire – should have drawn to a close with a poem – *The Vanity Of Human Wishes* – in which the greatest man of letters of the century found in Juvenal as perfect a model as the greatest poet of the period had found in Horace (Dr Johnson was called the literary dictator of 18th century England).

Yet Johnson's debt to Juvenal should not blind us to the originality of his achievement. The peculiarity of Juvenal is a mixture of gaiety and stateliness, of pointed sentences, and declamatory grandeur. Ian Jack, however, remarks that the first step towards an understanding of Augustan satire is to realize that it is not, in the specialized sense, a poetic kind. It is a temper of writing, unsusceptible of any but a very wide definition, which may find an outlet in any of a number of different kinds and in correspondingly diverse styles. *Absalom And Achitophel*, and *The Vanity Of Human Wishes* – to adopt Johnson's definition of satire – "poems in which wickedness of folly is censured, and they were all known as satires in their own age. *Absalom And Achitophel* is a heroic or 'historical' poem, shot through with wit and irony, describing the progress of a political plot, while *The Vanity Of Human Wishes* is a formal indictment of human folly. The last book of *Dunciad* is richer in imagery than anything Pope wrote at any other time. Dryden confirmed the view that contemporary life was the best subject for an Augustan poet. Implicit in the discovery that contemporary life was the best field for the Augustan poet was the discovery that the satiric must be one of the principal modes of the poet's vision. Satire is seldom decried. Augustan poetry deals with the artificial compared with those of to-day. The poetry of Dryden, Pope and Johson is hardly more conventional than that the Chaucer, Spenser or Milton. It is conventional simply because it was written by men living in the last age of the Renaissance.

3.17.6 Conclusion

In the development of literary forms during the last quarter of the 17th and the first half of the 18th century, we find that the satiric type of poetry to be common in England and of high quality. The

best examples are very many. The satirist's weapon is his ability to amuse and entertain or according to Samuel Johnson satire is a poem in which wickedness or folly is censured. Satire is a sort of glass, wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own. Pope praises satire thus, "Yes, I am Proud; I must be proud to see Men not afraid of God, afraid of me". The tones of a satiric spectrum use as weapons and the invective. It is a literary mode expressing an attitude.; It is an overflow of the writer's indignation at people or society. Therefore some of Chaucer's most effective satire is directed against ecclesiastical personages. There are satirical touches in Shakespeare's plays. His *Love's Labour's Lost* is an amusing satire on "the sex war". *As You Like It* satirises various fashionable features of the 1590's. The most notable satirists of the Augustan period are Samuel Butler and Dryden. Dryden used his poetic genius to become the most productive of all English writers – he was nicknamed 'Glorious John' – and Rees calls him a poet-journalist – a type of writer unusual in the history of English Literature. In the eyes of the royalist Dryden the description of Shaftesbury is a famous piece of invective as a leader of those who opposed the king. Through the medium of heroic couplet Dryden wrote two satires *Macflecknoe* and *The Medal* (both published in 1682 – poems with satirical wit and invective). Pope's influence on future poetry, was often neglected in spite of Samuel Johnson's indctment, "If Pope be not a poet, where is poetry to be found?" Pope brought heroic couplet to perfection, and showed, that if it is properly handled, it will suit any kind of poetry.

Alexander Pope's *The Rape Of The Lock*, is a true masterpiece of light satire – satire that is amusing and good tempered yet not without an element of serious social criticism. The society we are shown, rich fashionable and idle – was the smart London society of Pope's time, with the court at its centre. By writing about it in the elaborate style of the classical epic, he reduces it to absurdity. The hours spent by the heroine, Belinda, at her dressing table are described in the sort of language used by the Roman poet Virgil to describe a hero preparing for battle. The satire in *The Rape Of The Lock* is cool, witty and detached. "Dunciad" the satire by Pope is directed against Dullness in general, and in the course of it all the authors who have earned Pope's condemnation – Theobald, Colly Cibber – are held up to ridicule. Jonathan Swift's satirical writing, whether in prose or in verse, is inspired by a general hatred of mankind. Pope's *Dunciad* was the product of an offended artistic conscience as well as of personal malice. Johnson's *The Vanity Of Human Wishes* is a poem of the moral and didactic species – it is reminiscent of the *Book Of Job*. It is a discourse without a plot, a pessimistic survey of human life. It is the prominence of the element of attack which makes it a satire. Johnson is in the pulpit throughout addressing a congregation on the art of living well. Thus the true end of satire is the amendment of vices or reformation. *Hudibras, Macflecknoe, Absalom And Achitophel, The Rape Of The Lock, The Dunciad,* and *The Vanity Of Human Wishes* were poetic exercises (by Samuel Butler, Dryden, Alexander Pope and Samuel Johnson) which were developments in which a modern poet blended originality with tradition to create a poem adapted to his precise purpose. On the whole, according to Bonamy Dobree, "Augustan satire had something

positive to say – it went deep into the structure of society; it penetrated to the basic assumptions by which men live. It is great poetry".

3.17.7 Sample Questions

1. Describe the features of any one satirical poem.
2. Among English satirists Alexander Pope belonged to the school of Juvenal – Elaborate.
3. Dryden's *Absalom And Achitophel* is a political satire – Discuss.
4. What is meant by Augustan Temper? Give Examples.
5. *Absalom And Achitophel* is a narrative poem in which an old Testament allegory is used – Comment.
6. Write a brief note on Horatian and Juvenalian satire.

3.17.8 Suggested Reading

1. Ian Jack, Augustan Satire.
2. Angus Ross. (Ed.), Poetry of the Augustan Age.
3. Leslie Stephen, Alexander Pope.
4. John Butt, The Augustan Age.
5. Basil Willy, The Eighteenth Century Background.
6. W.K.Wimsatt, The Augustan Mode in English Poetry.
7. Samuel Johnson, Lives of English Poets.
8. W.Graham (Ed.), Absalom And Achitophel.
9. James and Helen Kinsley (Ed.), Absalom and Achitophel.
10. S.Ramaswami and V.S.Seturaman, The English Critical Tradition.
11. George Watson, John Dryden: Of Dramatic Poesy and Other Critical Essays. Introduction

Prof. S.N. Kulandaisamy

Lesson - 13

John Milton: Paradise Lost - Book IX

Contents

3.13.1 Objectives

i. to project the Renaissance and Reformation elements in the poem
ii. to expose the puritanical strain
iii. to explicate the blend of Hellenism and Hebrewism in the works of Milton especially in Book IX of Paradise Lost.

3.13.2 Introduction

"Book IX is the key-book of Paradise Lost, for it is concerned with the basic theme of Milton's epic", as suggested by the poet in the opening lines of Book I

"Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden", ……. (lines1- 4)

That is, "the Fall of man, consequent upon the temptation and seduction of Eve by Satan. This central theme is of cosmic significance, and by his masterly treatment of it the poet has raised it to the level of a high-wrought tragedy. Such is Milton's art that the reader's involvement in the awesome tragedy of the fall is total. Mathew Arnold's title of Grand Style to his composition is never artificial and removed from human speech. Raleigh rightly says that Milton may be called the inventor of the "poetic diction" of the eighteenth century. The mighty power of poetry and art is generally admitted. This power at its best resides chiefly in the refining and elevation brought on us by the high and rare excellence of the great style. In English poetry and art the Englishman's grand source is Milton. Admiring Milton's construction of the epic and the poet's avowed purpose of justifying the ways of God to man Samuel Johnson in his Life of Milton says, "Before the greatness displayed in Milton's poem, all other greatness shrinks away.

3.13.3 Critical Summary

Invocation Lines 1-47

The poem opens with the poet saying that he must change the joyous note, arising out of the friendly talk between the Man and the archangel to the tragic one. The angels sit in the company of man as his friends and guests, indulging in cordial talks and sharing in their pastoral pleasures. The poet must tell us of the disobedience and revolt and the consequence of it namely the Fall,

> "Disloyal on the part of man, revolt,
> And disobedience: on the part of heaven,
> Now alienated, distance and distaste,
> Anger and just rebuke, and judgement given,
> That brought into this world a world of woe,
> Sin and her shadow death, and misery
> Death's harbinger"….(lines 7-13)

Writing on the Fall of Man is a lamentable task; but the subject matter or theme of it is more heroic than those of the fierce fight between Hector and Achilles. Milton says that his poem has an advantage over the three great classical epics, The Iliad, The Odyssey and The Aeneid in Homer's The Iliad, Achilles, the Greek hero chased the Trojan Hector thrice round the walls of Troy before killing him. In Virgils's the Aeneid, Aeneas took to wife Lavinia who was to have married Turnus. In Homer's The Odyssey the anger of Poseidon (Neptune) prevented Odysseus for ten years from reaching his home after the fall of Troy. Aeneas was the son of Cytherea and a mortal Anchises. Juno, the Queen of the Gods, was his enemy. These actions perplexed the Greek and Cytherean people. Milton prays his celestial patroness to bless him with proper language and style to meet the great need of that difficult stage in the development of his epic. This celestial patroness favoured him with nightly visits without being requested and dictated his verses to him in his sleep, or inspired him to write his poems unpremeditated. The Muse inspired him to a fluent language so that the composition of the epic was made easy and spontaneous. This Muse had been inspiring him ever since he took up his great theme for his epic which he took a long time to choose and so have begun it so late. Milton had originally planned to write on Arthurian legend but later he changed to the Biblical theme. The poet speaks caustically of the long, detailed descriptions of the wounds of the Knightly combatants in the classical and romantic epics. The ancient poets found subjects like wars and adventures adequately grand for ambitious poetic achievements. These poets presented these actions with great analytic powers, patiently narrating the heroic exploits and destructive battles of their imaginary Knights and heroes. They left unsung the patient endurance and heroic martyrdom which are much more important, and of which the poet intends to sing in his epic. These poets also sang about the different races and the heroic games, the antique furniture, their carved shields, heraldic devices, their well-decorated and saddled horses, their armoured skirts and golden trappings. In this way they described magnificent Knights engaged in duels and tournaments, and excellent feasts given by Marshals in medieval halls and castles, served in fabulous utensils and crockery by several attendants and stewards. Such artificial devices and low achievements cannot give real glory and honour to these persons and poems. Milton has neither the skill nor the inclination to deal with such trivial subjects. To his share, has been left a higher and nobler theme, which by itself is sufficient to bring honour to a poet,

…….. "Me of these
Nor skilled nor studious, higher argument
Remains, sufficient of itself to raise
That name"……..

To write such subjects, inferior skill of craftsmanship is enough. Milton wants to win the laurel of the epic poet inspite of his blindness and age and the cold climate of his politics.

Lines. 48-98

The sun had set and Venus, the evening star whose function is to cause twilight on earth had risen in the sky. A little later the earth, from the Northpole to the south was covered with darkness. In Book IV we read how narrowly Satan escaped a trial of strength with Gabriel, the guardian angel of Man. Driven out of Eden by the threats of Gabriel, under the veil of darkness of night, Satan "fearless returned" to Paradise;

……now improved
In meditated fraud and malice, bent
On Man's destruction, maugre what might hap
Of heavier on himself, fearless returned" (ll 54 – 57)

He fled night by midnight, after circling the Earth, he(Satan) returned to his place of confinement. He cautiously avoided the day, because URIEL, the Archangel of the Sun had earlier observed him entering the world and had cautioned about it the angels who guarded the earth. Satan who had fled away in anguish, had circled the earth seven times. On the eighth night he came and stealthily entered the world by cleverly avoiding the eye of the guardian angels,

……. "and on the coast averse
From entrance or Cherubic watch, by stealth
Found unsuspected way" …….. (ll 67 – 69)

Satan, decided to hide in the form of the serpent to convey his evil designs. The serpent is a crafty creature, so his cunning could go unnoticed; while, if he was to hide in some other creature they might arouse suspicion that some demonic power beyond the capacity of the beast was at work.

Lines 99 – 178

Satan in his soliloquy poured forth his inward grief and passion. Satan observes that the Earth is better than Heaven, since God had created Earth after Heaven. Earth appears to be the centre of the universe and the sun and the stars seem to be shining just for man's benefit on Earth. If Satan has a mind to enjoy anything, he could enjoy walking on the Earth. But the more pleasures, he sees around him, the more hatred he finds in himself. A feeling of torment causes him to find ease only in destruction,

……. "and the more I see
Pleasures about me, so much more I feel
Torment within me, as from the hateful siege
Of contraries" …….. (ll 119 – 122)

Satan is suffering from the conflict of hateful opposites, delights outside him, torment within at the sight of them. All good becomes to him only a curse, his state would be still worse in heaven where the even greater delights would cause him correspondingly greater torment. Satan seeks to live neither here nor in Heaven unless he could conquer the Supreme Master of Heaven. Satan does not in any way desire to make his position less miserable, but he wants to make others as miserable as he is, even though in doing so he may have to suffer a worse fate. His thoughts which relentlessly torture him can be eased only by destroying others. Satan for a while, dwells upon the protest of spoiling the earth for man and turning man against God. He says that he has robbed God of almost half the number of angels. In his opinion, God's energy has already been spent and He could create only men and not angels. God is determined to replace the lost angels with a creature made of dust and God has made the angels serve man

…… "What he decreed
He effected; man he made, and for him built
Magnificent this world, and earth his seat,
Him lord pronounced, and O indignity !
Subjected to his service angel wings
And flaming ministers to watch and
Their earthly charge"…….. (ll 151 – 157)

Satan is afraid of the vigilant eyes of these angels, and in order to elude their eyes, he has stealthily entered Paradise in the form of midnight vapours. He is compressed into a beast and is compelled to brutalise his airy substance. He feels humiliated to think that he who was an angel who aspired to be God is forced to take the form of a beast. Ambition and the desire of revenge can make one to descend to any level. He who aspires must fall low in the same proportion as the height to which he aspired to rise, becoming the lowest and the basest of creatures. Jealousy is one of the motives that animate Satan against man, but the strongest is "to spite the great creator",

"Since higher I fall short, on him who next
Provokes my envy, this new favourite
Of Heaven, this man of clay, son of despite,
Whom us the more to spite his Maker raised
From dust : spite then with spite is best repaid" (ll 174 – 178)

Lines 204 – 225

Eve says that they cannot keep up with their pleasant work unless they have more hands. The work is becoming too unwieldy. The plants that they prune by day overgrow by night. All their labours in tending, pruning and binding the plants become useless in a day or two, for there is such luxurious growth. Therefore she asks for Adam's suggestion or she will unfold her proposal. She wants that they should divide their labours by going to the place of his choice whether it be to wind the woodbine creeper round that bower or to set the direction of the ivy creeper. She offers to go to the spot of rose bushes where they grow intermixed with myrtles and do the necessary work there till noon. When they work near each other the whole day, the tendency is to waste their time in looking and smiling at each other or in talking when they see some new object. These interventions check

their progress and they turn out little work even though they begin their work so early and the supper hour comes unearned. Therefore, Eve suggests that they work apart that day – the fatal day.

Lines 226 – 269

Adam tells her that she is the only companion and partner of his life and she is dearer to him than all living creatures. She has mentioned it well and has used her thoughts well how can they best do the work assigned to them by God. He is bound to appreciate and praise her suggestion, for, nothing is more lovely in a woman than her devotion to her household work and her encouragement to her husband to do good acts. God has not imposed labour upon them so as to debar them from life's pleasures, food, rest, sweet conversation, and exchange of pleasant looks and smiles. Pleasant smile issues from reasoning faculty which is denied to the brutes and these smiles are the food of love, and it is the noble motive of life. They could prune everything till the time they are assisted by younger hands who will soon come to their help. If she is tired of too much conversation, "to short absence I could yield" says Adam.

Adam has a foreboding that the wiles of Satan may bring them to grief and shame by cunning tricks. Satan might be waiting for a suitable opportunity. If they work jointly Satan will be powerless. Their married love and life provokes the envy of Satan. Hence he advises her not to leave the faithful arm of security of her husband, from whom she was born, and who constantly covers and protects her. He advises Eve,

……. "where danger or dishonour lurks,
Safest and seemliest by her husband stays,
Who guards her, or with her the worst endures" (ll 266 – 268)

Lines 320 –341

Eve does not seem to think seriously protecting herself from the impending calamity. Adam spoke "in his care and matrimonial love". Instead of taking the advice of her husband, Eve feels as though she is hurt by his remarks. She asks a basic question. How can they be said to be happy if they live unequipped under the threat of a foe? She argues perversely that if she is harmed it does not lead to her sin; on the other hand it recoils upon the doer. If one of them gains honour by resisting temptation, the unsuccessful tempter would only dishonour himself. She adds further that faith, love and virtue are not worth anything, if they are not tested. They need not fear that their happy condition has been left so imperfect by God that one of them could not stand alone. Paradise were no paradise if they are exposed to the cunning of Satan.

Lines 342-377

Adam says that all things are best as they are ordained by God. But he has given a free will and so, if at all there is any defect, it lies in man himself. Although man is sound in reason, he needs to be cautious and alert on this score that man's will may be misinformed by false beings appearing to be good,

"But God left free the will, for what obeys
Reason is free, and reason he made right,

But bid her well beware, and still erect,
Lest by some fair appearing good surprised
She dictate false, and misinform the will
To do what God expressly hath forbid" (ll 351-356)

The real source of danger in any man is the weakness of his own will and this is an 'internal' and not an external danger. If one acts in accordance with the dictates of his Reason, he will always find himself safe. They are firm in their loyalty to God. If they do not keep a strict watch evil might happen at any time. It is better to avoid the circumstances of temptation and this is possible if Eve does not separate from him. If she wants to prove the constancy of her faith, she should first prove her obedience. How would he approve of her firmness, unless it is tested? If she really believes that unsought trial may find her in a more secure position than with this warning, then she is free to go. Her stay there without her free will, shall be as good as absence. So let her go in all her natural innocence. He tells her to depend on her own virtue, let her call forth all the virtue that she has to help her, because God has done for her whatever was possible and she has to do her part. In this way Adam, the father of Mankind spoke, but Eve persisted in having her own way. "Eve appears submissive but she has the last word. In the past her submissiveness had been of a very different character. "My author and disposer, what thou bid'st unargued I obey…."(Book IV)

Lines 377-472

Even though Eve is submissive, she is still persistent. She takes the hint given by Adam. She has her own way but she flatters her husband that she is going away by his permission. She goes off thinking of Adam's last words that their trial unsought may find them less prepared. She does not expect that their enemy will stoop to tempt the weaker sex; in that case his repulsion by the weaker one will put him to greater shame. Thus saying,

…….. "from her husband's hand her hand
Soft she withdrew, and like a wood nymph light
Oread or Dryad, or of Delia's train
Betook her to the groves, but Delia's self
In gate surpassed and goddess-like depart" (ll 385 - 389)

(when Adam and Eve forst appeared in the epic, they were hand in hand; now Eve withdraws her hand; and pays the penalty very soon; at the end of the poem, reconciled and reunited, hand in hand they depart from Paradise into the world) Going about in the consciousness of her new born sense of freedom, amidst the groves and orchards of Eden, she is compared to the classical nymphs and woodland goddesses. She moved about gracefully like any Oread or Dryad. Eve is also compared to one of those agile and fleet footed virgins who formed the train of the classical goodess Diana, the huntress. Eve was walking alone among the gardens and orchards of Paradise and is compared to the Pastoral goddesses of Greek and Roman antiquity. She is likened to Pales,(goddess of the pastures) to Pomona(goddess of the fruit trees) and to Ceres(goddess of agriculture)

Lines ll 412-493

A mere serpent would not be suspected of such treacherous designs as Satan really had. If there had been more men and women, the temptation and fall of just one man and woman among them would not have vitiated the whole race at the source. Satan sought both of them –Adam and Eve- but wished he could find Eve alone, and so he was very much pleasantly surprised when he found her alone. He spied her hidden in fragrant flowers, and, therefore, only half seen. The luxuriant roses so thickly covered her that she was not fully visible. She often stooped to support the tender stalk of a plant, whose head, bearing a beautiful flower, purple, blue or speckled with gold, hung low without any support. She supported these drooping plants gently with the twigs of myrtles. In the mean while she was oblivious of herself, that she was the fairest of all the unsupported flowers, for her best support her husband was far away, while the storm of danger was so near. Satan disguised as a serpent drew nearer through beautiful avenues of majestic cedar, plam or pine. Sometimes hidden, sometimes visible, through the thick foliage, he approached near Eve, voluble and bold. A more beautiful place than these Gardens could hardly be imagined. It was the handiwork of Eve. The artistic garden of the Greeks or those of Alcinous or Laertes bore no comparison with them,

"Or of revived Adams, or renowned
Alcinous, host of old Laertes' son
Or that, not mystic, where the sapient king
Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse"

[Adonis = the gardens of Adonis at the time of his yearly revival or coming back to live on earth. He was a handsome youth and the beloved of Venus.

Aleinous, King of Phaecia, treated Ulysses with loving hospitality when Ulysses was thrown on the Phaecian coast on his return voyage from Tory. His gardens are described in Homer's Odyssey.]

The garden is more delicious than the garden of Solomon, the sapietn King who entertained his Egyptian spouse, the daughter of Pharaoh. Satan admired the place very much, and the person of Eve even more. He felt like the inhabitant of a populous city, habituated to living in a suffocating and foul smelling atmosphere of closely built houses and bowers, suddenly moving out on a summer morning to breathe beautiful and fresh agricultural farms and pastures spread over a large area. Satan felt delighted with everything that he saw. The smell of rice crops, rural sight and sound, thrilled him. The serpent enjoyed intense pleasure by looking at this flowery spot. In appearance Eve was like a heavenly angel, though more tender and feminine. His malice seemed to be drowned in her graceful innocence; with sweet repentance he regretted the fierceness of his intention. Satan stood still, disarmed of all enmity, guile, hate and revenge. But the hot flames of hell continually burning within him, very soon ended his delight. The more pleasures he saw around him, the pleasures that had been denied him, the more unhappy he felt. Soon he recollected all his fierce hate and all his thoughts and himself on finding Eve alone, he encouraged himself thus. Satan thinks that he should seize this opportune moment; Eve is alone, her husband is far off; after his recent Fall, Satan lost certain powers. Therefore, Satan feels that he is not a match to Adam's intellect, strength, courage and heroic built physique.

Further Adam is invulnerable whereas Satan is not so now. Satan decides to bring about Eve's fall by disguising his hate under a show of love. Satan comments,

"She fair, divinely fair, fit love for gods
Not terrible, though terror be in love
And beauty, not approached by stronger hate,
Hate stronger, under show of love well feigned,
The way which to her ruin now I tend" (ll 489 – 493)

Lines 532 – 612

Adam and Eve were the lords of the animals in Paradise. Perhaps, Satan's flattery reflects this acknowledged true lordship. Satan flattered her with smooth talk and his introductory speech struck the right note. ("Satan's ingratiating style, the careful repetition of key words, the sinuous rhythms stealthily flowing up to the concluding climax are all a part of the tuning"). The words of Eve made way into Eve's heart though she greatly wondered at the power of speech of the serpent. With great surprise she answered Satan in the form of a serpent. Eve began to wonder, "What does this mean? The language of man is being spoken by a beast who is expressing human thoughts and feelings". She thinks that beasts were denied the power of speech for God created them dumb on the day of creation, that is, without the power of articulate expression. She accepted hesitatingly that in their looks and actions the beasts showed much reason. She says that the serpent is the most cunning of all animals but she never even thought that it had the power of speech. She wants to know from the serpent how the latter came to acquire the faculty of speech and how it has grown so friendly to her, more friendly than the other beasts. Such a wonder claimed her attention. To this doubt, Satan says,

"Empress of this fair world, resplendent Eve,
Easy to me it is to tell thee all
What thou command'st and right though should'st be obeyed".

Satan tells Eve that at first he was as dumb as the other beasts of the field that move on the grass and are capable only of abject and low thoughts, and take low food. It looked for nothing else but food and sex and had no higher thoughts. Then one day, roving in the field he happened to see a beautiful tree at a great distance laden with the most attractive ruddy golden fruits. He drew nearer to look at them, when from its branches and boughs came a pleasing fragrance, which added to his appetite. That fragrance was more pleasing than the sweetest smell of all herbs or of the milking goats and sheep dropping milk every evening being unsucked by lambs or kids that move in company with them. Satan in Serpent's guise spoke thus,

"To satisfy the sharp desire I had
Of tasting those fair apples, I resolv'd
Not to defer; hunger and thirst at once,
Powerful persuaders, quick'n'd at the scent
Of that alluring fruit, urg'd me so keen".

At once he went to the mossy trunk of the tree; he climbed up as the fruit laden branches stood much above the ground, beyond the reach of any creature, including Adam too. All other beasts looked at

those fruits with great longing and envy, but could not reach them. He climbed up the tree; seeing so many fruits hanging around him and tempting him; with the result he plucked so many of them so that he could eat to his fullest satisfaction. He had never found such pleasure in feeding and drinking before; suavely he adds,

"Sated at length, ere long I might perceive
Strange alteration in me, to degree
Of reason in my inward powers, and speech
Wanted not long, though to this shape retained.
Thenceforth to speculations high or deep
I turned my thoughts, and with capacious mind
Considered all things visible in heaven
Or earth, or middle, all things fair and good:" (ll 598 – 605)

But in Eve's divine form the serpent finds the combination of all things that are fair and good, and he sees in her beauty heavenly light. It is this realization that has prompted the Serpent to gaze at Eve and worship her, because she has been rightly declared to be the sovereign of all living creatures and Eve is the Universal Mother.

"So talked the spirited sly snake; and Eve
Yet more amazed unwary thus replied" (ll 614 – 615)

Lines ll 613 – 624

Being more surprised and suspecting no danger Eve addressed the Serpent and wished to know where that tree grew and how far was it from that place. She had seen many trees in Paradise, trees of different kinds that were still unknown to them. There was an abundance of choice and store of fruits that many of them had neither been touched nor tasted.. They would remain so until there would be more hands in proportion to the trees. Fearing that Eve may reverse her opinion if the tree is far off, Satan says that the tree is just near. Satan says that if Eve allows herself to be conducted by the Serpent, he will take her to the spot in no time.

…… "If thou accept
My conduct, I can bring thee thither soon"

To which Eve replies,

"Lead then", said Eve. He leading swiftly rolled
In tangles, and made intricate seem straight,
To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy
Brightens his crest, as when a wandering fire,
Compact of unctuous vapor, which the night
Condenses, and the cold environs round…." (ll 631 – 645)

The Serpent at once rolled leading Eve. "The serpent's winding guidance makes the intricate path to the forbidden tree easy to follow. His hope of bringing about the Fall of Man elevates and the consequent

thought of joy brightens his crest. With his crest thus brightened, he is like the ignis fatuus, the wandering light sometimes produced by ignited marsh gas. Lines 635 – 637 – "the image refers to the phenomenon of ignis fatuus, a phosphorescent light to be seen flickering over marshy ground, though rarely, at night caused by the spontaneous combustion of inflammable gas given off by decaying substances". It was believed that it heralded the arrival of evil spirits. It misled the confused night wanderer from his path into bogs and mires through ponds and pools into which he sinks and perishes, being far away from any help or succour. The crest of the serpent shone bright and he led Eve 'our credulous mother' to the Tree of Prohibition, and her temptation proved to be the root cause of all our suffering, 'root of all our woe'. When Eve saw the tree she spoke to the serpent thus.

Lines 646 – 732

Eve is led to the tree by Satan and she says they may have spared the trouble of coming over there, because their labours are wasted, though fruits are found to be in abundance there. The credit of the virtue of those fruits lies with Satan; it is wonderful indeed, if their talents are really the effect of that fruit. But they may not touch or taste that fruit. God so commanded them and that is the sole command issued to them prohibiting the eating of the fruit thereof from the said Tree of knowledge.

Satan asks her if God has said they must not eat of this particular tree in the Garden, how could Adam and Eve be declared to be the supreme masters of all the earth and air. Eve replied thus,

"But of the fruit of this fair tree amidst
The garden, God hath said, 'ye shall not eat
Thereof, nor shall ye touch it, lest ye die'".

"No sooner does Eve close her lips after explaining than Satan assumes the posture of one who is indignant at the wrong committed by God to man in forbidding the fruit and of one who has fathomless love for the human beings". Satan elevated his voice to new heights of eloquence, as if he were about to speak on some important matter.

Public speaking is an art. The primary quality of an orator is that he should be a good and wise man. Satan's oratory is an art of words only. Milton compares him with a reputed orator in Greece or Rome because of the outstanding importance of the occasion to which he is addressing himself and because of his skill in the arts of language and acting.

By the power of that fruit he (Satan) has acquired more perfect life than fate assigned him by venturing higher than his lot. Satan belittles God and at the same time tried to make Eve concentrate on the mere act of eating the fruit, without any thought of disobedience to God, which it involves. If the knowledge is of good, how could God justly punish Eve for acquiring it. It is in no way wrong to know the good.

God cannot punish you and still remain just. Satan tells her that God's imposition on that fruit was to keep them in awe, to keep them low and ignorant. God knows that the day Eve eats that fruit, her eyes, which seem to be clear but actually dim, will become very clear and bright, and then they will be as gods, knowing good and evil as they know. Satan adds,

Satan declares that God is not the creator. If he is the creator, why should He create such a tree and should forbid it too. If he has the power of creation, he would not have created that tree at all, putting in the knowledge to discern between Good and Evil. Satan argues further, that if man can attain wisdom, by eating that fruit, then how could eating that be an offence. If Man attains wisdom how could that hurt God?" Satan says that it is sheer envy on the part of God, to forbid it for Man. Satan's persuasive argument finds an easy entrance into the heart of Eve. She stares fixedly at the beautiful fruit. It appeals to her much because it is noon and she is hungry. Milton comments thus,

"He (Satan) ended, and his words replete with guile
Into her heart too easy entrance won
Fixed on the fruit she gazed, which to behold
Might tempt alone, and in her ears the sound
Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregned
With reason, to her seeming, and with truth:" (ll 733 – 738)

Lines ll 745 – 779

Eve is inclined to touch and taste the fruit. Her senses rouse her appetite and desire. On the brink of eating the fruit, Eve muses on the great virtues of the best of fruits whose taste gave the power of speech to the mute serpent. God has forbidden the fruit for human beings. The serpent identifies the Tree of Knowledge, which will giver her knowledge of both good and evil. She says that knowledge of good will come to them, which is wanting in them. For good, if unknown, cannot be acquired, or if acquired but still remaining unknown would be as if not acquired at aLines Eve concludes that God forbids them to have knowledge thus to be good, to be wise. Such prohibitions cannot be binding. If the threat of death, which binds them, is there, there is no use of any internal freedom. If they taste the fruit of the Forbidden Tree they will die, how is it possible that the Serpent continues to live even after eating the fruit. Moreover the serpent lives, knows, speaks, argues and understands everything. She asks if death was invented only for human beings or was that intellectual food (Fruit of that Tree) denied to them and reserved for beasts. The one beast that has tasted it does not envy: he rather tells them with joy what good the fruit has brought to him. The Serpent has no suspicions, he is friendly to man and free from all deceit or guile. She has therefore nothing to fear. She wonders how can she know what to fear under ignorance of good and evil. She can know nothing of God or Death, law or penalty.

Lines 780 – 792

It is now self-evident that Eve's irrational senses have now become her authority; and her rational faith is gone. Eve thus was convinced and plucking rashly the fruit she ate it in that evil hour. There was no gap between her plucking and eating "she plucked, she ate". The logic of Satan has so befogged the mind of Eve that she does not for a moment suspect the words of Satan, though she suspects the words of God,

"So saying, her rash hand in evil hour
Forth reaching to the fruit, she pluck'd, she ate:
Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat

Sighing through all her works gave signs of woe;
That all was lost"…… (ll 780 – 794)

Milton is here expressing the philosophical idea that the whole created universe fell with man, the lord of it. He is also referring to the popular tradition that great disasters in the human world are accompanied by unnatural signs and portents in the external world. This act of Eve is felt as a wound by the earth. Nature sighed that the entire natural world was ruined; because Eve has undermined the law of obedience where the whole hierarchical system is governed

Lines 795 – 833

Eve satiated at the level of belly, soliloquises as one intoxicated by wine. She addresses the tree with all her praise for it. She thinks that the Tree of knowledge is very virtuous and the most precious of all other trees in Paradise, having the blessed quality of giving wisdom, hitherto unknown and thought to be injurioes. She would like to sing songs every day morning in praise of that tree. She thinks that she will be a regular visitor there and she will be a regular visitor there and she will consequently grow mature in knowledge like the gods who know all things. The tree will be her best guide. If she had not come there, she would have remained ignorant. The tree has opened the way of wisdom and given her access to secrets of wisdom and knowledge. She tells herself that Heaven is high, high and remote to see clearly everything which happens on earth. Other cares might have diverted the attention of God. Perhaps she is hidden she is sinned, Eve thinks of God in purely negative terms. The guardian angels are now spies to her. She wonders,

…….. "But to Adam in what sort (ll 816 – 817)

She asks herself if she can keep the odds of knowledge in her power. In that way she can add and supplement what is lacking in the female sex and thereby draw more love from him, and make herself equal to him, or even superior, for who can be free if inferior. She questions herself what if God has seen her and death follows. After her exit Adam will be married to another Eve; he will enjoy all pleasures with her after her death. Therefore she resolves to herself that Adam shall share with her in her blessing or woe. She loves him so dearly that she can endure all death with him and life without him is no life at all for her,

…….. "Confirmed then I resolve,
Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe. (ll 830 – 831)

Lines 834 – 855

Idolatry is made the first result of eating the forbidden fruit. She who thought it beneath her dignity to bow to Adam or to God, now worships a vegetable. After paying her reverence to the tree with its potential nectar, she turned her steps from the Tree. Eve hastened towards Adam, and in her face there appeared an expression of apology as an introduction to something mysterious that she was going to say.

Lines 856 – 916

An apologetic expression comes on her face, before she offers any excuse. She is prepared to make a speech excusing herself. She starts addressing Adam with a note of apology. Eve feels guilty for having eaten the fruit without Adam's knowledge. Eve's guilty demeanour is apparent here. She

missed him so much and had been thinking of him so long. Being separated from Adam, Eve says that she felt so much agony and therefore resolved not to repeat it a second time. Never again will she try to do what she did that morning out of rashness; but her experience had been wonderful which Adam will wonder when he hears all about it,

> "This tree is not as we are told, a tree
> Of danger tasted, nor to evil unknown
> Opening the way, but of divine effect
> To open eyes, and make them gods who taste:
> And hath been tasted such." …… (ll 863 – 867)

She tells him that the Tree is not dangerous but divine; making gods of those who taste and relish its fruit. She says further that the serpent has eaten and has become human. She too has eaten and become godlike. She concludes by saying that she did it only for Adam and he should also eat so that she will not be his superior in wisdom. As she says his her cheek glows with a guilty blush. Eve invites Adam to follow her example. Adam is dumbfounded at the report of Eve. The garland, which he has made for Eve, falls down from his hands and all the faded roses are scattered. He stands speechless and his face becomes pale because of a premonition of danger,

> "The fatal trespass done by Eve, amaz'd,
> Astonied stood and blank, while horror chill
> Ran through his veins, and all his joints relaxed," (ll 888 – 891)

Eve now calmly accepts Adam's remonstrances about her leaving him but remains oblivious of wherein her rashness really lies. Eve attempts an explanation of the serpent alone having tasted the fruit, which they had refrained from approaching. Eve was previously associated with roses. The faded petals now symbolize her mortality and also remind us that in the fallen world the rose will be a symbol of transience and of love. Tillyard, a great critic of Milton observes that the roses faded in sympathy with Adam's horror thus foretelling the effect that Eve's crime will have on nature. (This is an example of the figure of speech called Pathetic fallacy). Adam did not care to explore any alternative course involving chastisement of Eve and interceding with God on her behalf.

Adam clearly sees now that Eve is fallen. He describes her as the fairest of creation, last and best of all God's works, a creature in whom there is perfection of all that can be seen or imagined, holy, divine, good, charming or sweet. He asks her finally "How are thou lost!"; he says that she stands now lost 'defaced' and 'deflowered'. Adam detects the work of Satan and declares his sharing of Eve's fate. He fails to see how she agreed to violate the strict forbiddance of God and how she ate that Forbidden Fruit. She has ruined him also with herself for he is resolved to die with her. He cannot live without her; he cannot forego neither the pleasure of her sweet company nor the love, which has so dearly united them, and he cannot live alone in that wild forest. Even if God creates another Eve his heart can never forget her. She is the flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. He shall never be parted from her either in weal or woe. Adam is thus resolved to partake Eve's doom,

I feel
The link of nature draw me: flesh of my flesh'
Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy state
Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe" (ll 913 – 916)

Lines 917 – 989

Adam collects calmness, gathers strength after the shock, submits to the situation, resigns to peace after an inner turmoil. He felt like a man who receives comfort after great sorrow. He speaks to her and reminds her that she has done a bold deed and provoked great peril as she had dared to transgress God's command. The fruit is so covetous to the eye and more so to the taste but God forbade them to touch it. But her past deed cannot be undone. Neither the Omnipotent God nor Fate can do so. Probably the act of transgression is not serious now; the serpent lives even after tasting it; according to her the brute has risen to the level of man, to a higher degree of life. This may be a strong inducement to them; they may also rise higher in the scale of life; they may become gods or angels or demi-gods. Adam hopes that God, the wise creator, will not in fact destroy them who are His supreme creations, so highly dignified. Adam determines to share Eve's fate. He begins complimenting Eve on her daring and adventurous spirit. He appreciates the bold deed of Eve and in his opinion Eve is much daring to taste the fruit when it lay under a curse. Eve is extremely happy but says that she is not as perfect as Adam. Eve concedes at last that she is Adam's inferior. She is proud of having sprung from his ribs, and gladly listen to his talk about their inseparable union. There is one soul and one heart between them. That day Adam has given good proof of his sincere love for her. He is prepared to embrace death or any other worse evil for her sake.

Lines 990 – 1033

Eve embraced Adam and "for joy tenderly wept" as she had proved his love to be so noble. On account of this love Adam chose to incur divine displeasure for her sake and even death. In recompense for his compliance she gave him that enticing fruit with a liberal hand. We have Milton's comment in the following lines,

…….. "He scrupled not to eat
Against his better knowledge, not deceived,
But fondly overcome with female charm.
Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan:
Sky loured and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal sin
Original"…… (ll 997 – 1004)

When Adam took the fruit, which was offered by Eve, he did not hesitate to take in the fruit – it was rather a case of his foolish surrender to a woman's beauty. Then the whole universe shook with horror, and thus lodged an emphatic protest, in its own way. Earth shook from its foundations – there was a terrible earthquake. This was a mild expression of the great Mother's birth pangs, giving birth to that universal monster, sin. She gave out a second groan; the first groan had been given when Eve ate the fruit. There was a rumbling of thunder followed by a downpour; universal wrath bitterness and weeping,

that Man should have completed the Sin started by Woman and brought death into the world, and all our woe. The subversion of cosmic order by Adam and Eve is thus effectively described. All the while Adam took no notice of these things and ate to his fill nor was Eve afraid to repeat her former sin and tried to soothe him more with the pleasure of her company, which Adam loved. Now both of them felt as if they had been intoxicated with new wine of pleasure and mirth. They felt as though a new spirit of divinity had penetrated into them that raised them heavenwards. As a result, he began to cast lustful eyes on Eve and she too responded with equal passion. They burned in lust, till Adam began to play with Eve with lustful passion. He saw her exact in taste and elegance. Adam feels that of all human senses the sense of taste is the most judicious. He praised her overwhelmingly for having brought to him a fruit of rare taste, the pleasure of which they had lost so far. If there is such pleasure in things forbidden, God should have forbidden at least ten such trees. Since the day he first saw her and married her, her beauty had never been adorned with full perfection. That is the gift of that virtuous tree. (Eve became a tree-worshipper as soon as she ate the fruit that the tree gave and Adam becomes a woman-worshipper as soon as he takes the fruit that the woman gives). "For the first time Adam and Eve experience a carnal desire for each other. Adam finds that Eve's beauty is stimulating. He feels sorry that until then they had lost much pleasure by abstaining from eating that delightful fruit. Adam leads her to a shady bank and indulges in amorous acts. Their sexual indulgence is followed by shame. Even before that, their grosser sleep was not pleasant but burdened with conscious dreams of guilt and they wake up in a bad mood. Their innocence is gone and with it righteousness, confidence and honour. They are conscious of their nakedness.

They rose from their bed in great emotional disturbance and they looked at each other and found their eyes opened but mind darkened. They found themselves naked. It was this same feeling of guilt and shame that assailed strong Samson when he rose from the bed of the Philistine harlot, Delilah, discovering that all his strength had disappeared.

Adam accused Eve for her yielding to the temptation of the serpent who has truly led them to their fall by false promises of their rising higher. They really find their eyes open but only to the knowledge of good and evil. They had lost good and got evil. It is a bad fruit of knowledge, which made them realize that they are naked, devoid of all honour, innocence, faith and purity which were their ornaments. These higher virtues stand impaired and stained. Signs of guilt and shame are on their faces. He can never behold the faces of God or Angel, which he always saw with great rapture and joy. He cannot look at those bright angels. He would like to live in seclusion as a savage in some obscure valley. He calls on the pines and cedars to cover him up with their innumerable boughs; they should at least hide those parts of their bodies, which are unseemly. When they are conscious of their nakedness,

"So counseled he, and both together went
Into the thickest wood: there soon they chose
The fig tree, not that kind for fruit renowned,
But such as at this day to Indians known
In Malabar or Deccan spreads her arms" (ll 1099 – 1102)

Our first parents gathered leaves of this tree, which were as big as Amazonian shields, and they sewed them as skilfully as they could and wrapped them round their waist to hide their guilty shame. C.M.Bowra observes that this simile shows the degree of the FaLines From their old dignity Adam and Eve have become like the lowest of mankind conscious only of their human shame. Though they hid their shame in part, they were torn within by relentless and mental agitation, and shaken by winds of uncontrollable passion, they sat and wept. This was unlike their former naked glory. In this state Columbus found the aboriginals of America who also sought to cover their nakedness with feathers and leaves, otherwise naked and wild living on islands and woody shores. According to mediaeval thinking man was a microcosm, a little universe, containing within himself everything in the macrocosm outside him. Adam and Eve's ordered harmonious inner world has become a turbulent reflection of chaos, just as the outer world is shortly to become.

Lines 1134 – 1189

For the first time Adam was very angry with Eve and asked her, "Is this your love, is this the reward of my devotion to you, ungrateful Eve?" He remained calm when she was lost though he was unstained; even after her fall, he could have lived in immortal bliss, yet willingly chose to die with her. And she can never upbraid him as the cause of her FaLines He was not very severe in restraining her, but he did not know what more could he have done. He sufficiently warned her; he foretold her danger and the lurking enemy lay in wait for her. Beyond warning her, if he had done anything, it would have been force and the use of force has no place in Free WiLines She was ruled and dominated by self-confidence, that either she was sufficiently secure against any kind of danger, or else she expected to find possibility of glorious trial. He had also over-assessed and over-rated her seeming worth because apparently she seemed to be perfect and capable of resisting evil. He feels sorry for his mistake in judgement. He concludes by saying that this will be the fate of every man who trusts a woman and allows her to have her wiliness. A woman will not like to be restrained; and left to herself, she will succumb to evil and then accuse her man of weakness in allowing her to have her way. In this way Adam and Eve wasted their time in quarrelling and accusing each other, but neither examined their own behaviour and conduct. There seemed to be no end to their futile quarrel and discussion.

3.13.4 <u>Paradise Lost</u> as an Epic

(The Essays below are supplement to the ones found at the end of Paradise Lost (Book I)
Paradise Lost is a long objective narrative poem about the great persons of God and his son, on the subject of justifying the ways of God to man; comprising great deeds and events: Homer's Iliaad and Odyssey are about Achilles and Ulysses. Virgils Aeneid is on the destiny of Rome. Camoe's Lusiads is on the glory of Portugal. Dante's Commedia is on the mediaeval thought of the pilgrimage of the soul. Tasso's Jerusalem delivered is on the unifications of the Christians against the Heathens; and Milton's Paradise Lost is on the Fall of man.

Homer's Epics, Beowulf (the Anglo Saxon poem) and the French Song of Roland…….were intended for recital and hence primary epics.

The secondary epics are meant for reading Paradise Lost has both the qualities of a primary and secondary epic.

The sheer length of the poem (Book I to XII) is 10,565 lines written on an elaborate scale and in a dignified manner, treats of Heroic deeds-the poem is rendered in grand style. The Invocation in each book is on the lines of Homer and Virgil. Milton's invocations are a humble prayer to God Almighty.

The list of rebel angels in Book II resembles the catalogue of ships in the Iliad. The pandemonium assembly is like a parallel to the meeting of the Greek leaders. To Milton the Bible is a kind of divine epic. Milton's scholarship and immense industry helped him largely to choose and write on a universal theme of the Fall and Redemption of Man. The adoption of the Homeric simile is another attribute of Milton's epic.

3.13.5 Epic Simile or Miltonic Simile

Milton's style - characterised by a kind of allusive, detailed, decorative- that is a language of similes. Such a simile makes some idea clear and provides illuminating information. The clarity of the comparison depends in part on the degree of resemblance. Only long tailed similes are traditionally associated with an epic. Ferry observes "without disturbing the desired unity of structure, epic similes could be used to add variety to the poem to widen its range of reference and to ornament its poetic surface. In similes the poet could claim his relationship to a wealth of literary tradition, by their formal conventionality and by their allusions to other learning".

A traveller in a road side park relaxes, refreshes, renews his interest recoups his energy, reviews his progress and renews his journey - In the same way a reader of an epic is led to a simile.

There are nine Homeric similes in Book IX – of which four are distinct:-

On man's revolt and disobedience	ll 13-19.
Eve separating herself from Adam	ll 386-396.
Description of the beautiful Garden	ll 439-444.
The serpent looks lovelier	ll 505-510.
The grest of the serpent allures Eve	ll 634-645.
The serpent speaks out boldly	ll 670-678.
Fallen Eve and Adam compared to Samson and Dalila	ll 1059-1062.
Adam and Eve go near a fig tree	ll 1100-1110.
Dressed in fig leaves Adam and Eve appear	ll 1115-1118.

3.13.6 Representation of Adam and Eve in Book IX

In Book IV we read their "nobler shape, erect and tall, godlike erect, with native honor clad in naked majesty, seemed lords of all". Raphael, an angel, instructs them as to how they should be grateful to their maker and should not eat the forbidden fruit. The fall takes place in Book IX, "Eve fell through pride. Adam fell by luxuriousness". In earlier Books Adam is projected as having insight into the mysteries of the soul and can give Eve a full explanation of the phenomena of dreams. He is Eve's Author and Disposer. He for God and she for God in him. Eve in Book IX becomes a fore-runner of human tragedy in spite of her grace, beauty and knowledge - They begin as a loving couple with faith in God and faith in each other and finish up with mutual recrimination – gardening, their relaxation

and work – Eve's suggestion of better work in separate areas – Together they look at each other, smile and converse - separately they could turn out more work - Adam warns her of lurking danger – Eve persists rather than making her unhappy, he permits her – This is what Satan wanted – Satan's fine moment, at Eve nearing the forbidden tree – use all arts of oratory Eve falls an easy victim to the Serpent's wiles - when she eats he slinks away- Fallen Eve convinces Adam – Thinks that the fruit has made her a goddess- does not care for death – she does not want another Eve for Adam – In contrast Adam is altogether selfless and sacrificing – He eats the fruit out of female charm – Both are filled with a sense of shame – nakedness stares on their faces and the fig leaves cover their nakedness. There is a moral degradation in both.

3.13.7 Sample Questions

1. Milton Exhibits Rare skill and Understanding of Human Nature – Explain with Reference to Book IX
2. Do you find a Degraded Satan in Paradise Lost, Bk IX? Elaborate.
3. Consider Book IX of Paradise Lost As the Climax of the Whole Poem.
4. The Actual – Temptation in Paradise Lost in Book IX is a Masterpiece of Persuasion – Discuss.
5. Bring out the Dramatic Elements in Paradise Lost Book IX
6. Comment on the Epic features Illustrated in Book Paradise Lost, Book IX
7. Explain Milton's use of Epic Similes in Paradise Lost, Book IX.
8. Comment on the Scene of the amputation of Eve in Paradise Lost, Book IX
9. Write a note on the Life of Adam and Eve in Paradise
10. Write an Essay on the Theme and Structure of Paradise Lost, Book IX

3.13.8 Selected Reading

1. John Milton & Modern Critics – Adams R.M.
2. From Virgil To Milton – C.M.Bowra
3. Lives Of The English Poets – Johnson
4. A Preface To Paradise Lost – C.S.Lewis.
5. Paradise Lost And The Seventeenth Century Reader – B.Rajan
6. Paradise Lost Book IX – A.Fowler (ED)
7. Milton – E.M.W.Tillyard.
8. Milton – David Daiches.