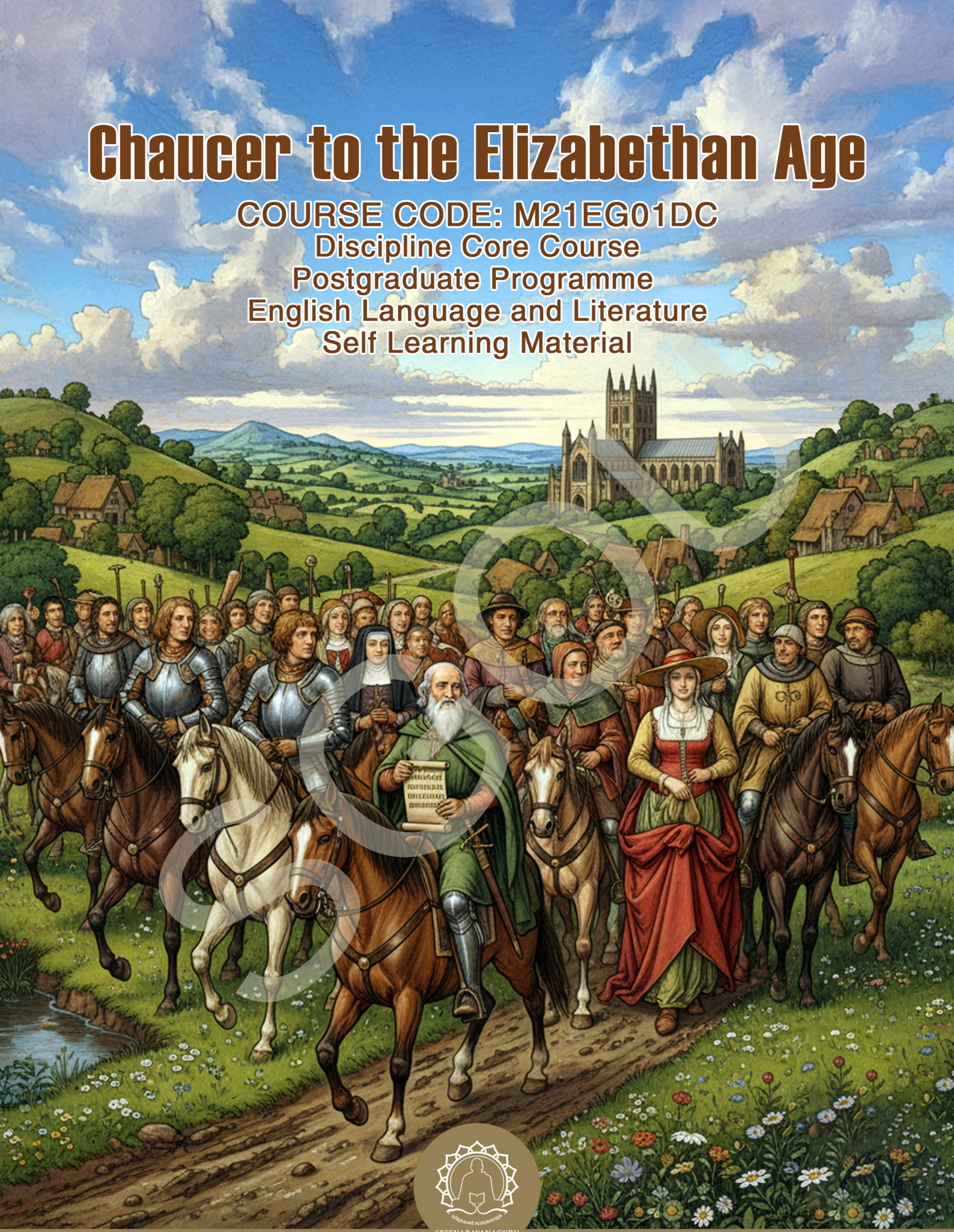
Chaucer to the Elizabethan Age

COURSE CODE: M21EG01DC

Discipline Core Course
Postgraduate Programme
English Language and Literature
Self Learning Material



SREENARAYANAGURU
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The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala

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Access and Quality define Equity.

Chaucer to the Elizabethan Age

Course Code: M21EG01DC

Semester-I

Discipline Core Course

Postgraduate Programme in English

Self Learning Material

(With Model Question Paper Sets)

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CHAUCER TO THE ELIZABETHAN AGE

Course Code: M21EG01DC
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MESSAGE FROM VICE CHANCELLOR

Dear learner,

I extend my heartfelt greetings and profound enthusiasm as I warmly welcome you to Sreenarayanaguru Open University. Established in September 2020 as a state-led endeavour to promote higher education through open and distance learning modes, our institution was shaped by the guiding principle that access and quality are the cornerstones of equity. We have firmly resolved to uphold the highest standards of education, setting the benchmark and charting the course.

The courses offered by the Sreenarayanaguru Open University aim to strike a quality balance, ensuring students are equipped for both personal growth and professional excellence. The University embraces the wide-ly acclaimed "blended format," a practical framework that harmonious-ly integrates Self-Learning Materials, Classroom Counseling, and Virtual modes, fostering a dynamic and enriching experience for both learners and instructors.

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Rest assured, the university's student support services will be at your dis-posal throughout your academic journey, readily available to address any concerns or grievances you may encounter. We encourage you to reach out to us freely regarding any matter about your academic programme. It is our sincere wish that you achieve the utmost success.

Regards,
Dr. Jagathy Raj V. P.

01-10-2025

Contents

Socio-political and Literary Background

BLOCK-01

Block Content

Unit 1 Socio-political Background

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- acquire an understanding of the different socio-political aspects from the Norman Conquest to the English Renaissance.
- detail the impact of the Crusades on the people of England
- describe the various revolts, reformations and movements in England after the Norman conquest
- familiarise themselves with the influence of Caxton's printing press in England

Background

Originally from Denmark, Norway, and Iceland, the Normans were paganic and barbarian pirates who started their destructive plundering attacks on coastal settlements in Europe in the eighth century. Their raids on the northern and western coastlands of France increased in size and frequency in the latter part of the ninth century. The Normans kept a lot of the characteristics of their Viking pirate predecessors, despite eventually converting to Christianity, adopting French, and switching from maritime roaming to Frankish cavalry warfare in the decades after their establishment in Normandy. They showed extraordinary restlessness and recklessness, a passion for combat paired with nearly reckless bravery, and craftiness and cunning coupled with spectacular treachery.

Keywords

Norman Conquest, the Church, Crusades, Revolts, Renaissance, Reformation

Discussion

1.1.1 The Norman Conquest and its consequences

- Impact of the Norman Conquest

The Norman Conquest was an epoch-making event in British history. It was far more than the introduction of a new line of kings. It was the last successful conquest of Britain and in importance, it is second only to the Anglo-Saxon conquest. It brought about far-reaching changes in various fields including social, political, and linguistic spheres.

- French influence

The rulers of Normandy had originally been Scandinavian Vikings. They occupied parts of Northern France (Normandy) and in the early 10th century AD, they were recognized by the French Crown. By the middle of the 11th century AD, they lost their Scandinavian speech, instead spoke French and were essentially French in culture.

- Rise and fall of Harold

During the reign of the English king Edward the Confessor, Harold the Earl of Wessex visited Normandy. William, the Duke of Normandy, had a hope to become the king of England after the death of the childless Edward; Harold offered to help him in this matter. But the Witan (Body of elders), in obedience to the dying words of Edward, elected Harold as the King. The infuriated William landed in England with a mighty army in 1066 AD. Harold could not get the wholehearted support of all the nobles. So, in the historic Battle of Hastings fought in 1066 AD, Harold, the last of the Saxon kings, was defeated and William the Conqueror became the new king of England. Since William also continued to be the duke of Normandy, there was a steady flow of people between England and Normandy.

1.1.1.1 Results of the Norman Conquest

The following are some of the results of the Norman conquest of England:

(1) With the Norman conquest, the entrance to England of the races who populated it today was completed. With this, the region witnessed the end of migratory invasions and forced entry using the weapons. But the conquest made racial, social and cultural changes.

(2) The Norman Conquest closed Britain to Scandinavian invasions. The Battle of Hastings was not only a great English event but also a great European event. With this, Latin culture became supreme in the whole of Western Europe.

(3) The instinct for political unity and administrative consolidation, which distinguished the Normans, was the most valuable of the Conqueror's many gifts to England.

(4) Feudalism of the Norman type was imposed.

(5) The Normans also brought in new ideas as to how the church should be governed i.e., the Norman church organisation was more prominent than that of the loosely organised Anglo-Saxon Church.

(6) One outcome of the Norman conquest was "the making of the English language". The clergy spoke Latin and the gentry spoke French, while Anglo-Saxon became the peasant's jargon. During the next three centuries, English was enriched by many French words and ideas, even as it remained a peasant's dialect which acquired suppleness and adaptability.

▶ Impacts of the conquest

1.1.2 Crusades

Crusades were a series of wars fought by the Christian princes of Europe to liberate the holy land of Jerusalem which had been captured and occupied by Muslims ever since 635 AD. The Arab occupation of Jerusalem did not pose any threat to Christian pilgrims until the advent of the Seljuk Turks in 1055. The Turks started robbing and ill-treating the Christian pilgrims, and a monk called Peter the Hermit exhorted all good Christian men to fight and redeem the Holy Land. Pope Urban II supported the call, and, at the Council at Clermont in 1095, he declared that it was the duty of every Christian man, lord and serf alike to defend the Holy Land. Consequently, three bands of knights organised a campaign for the purpose, but were destroyed by the Turks.

▶ Attack of Seljuk Turks

The first crusade took place in 1097 and was led by Duke of Normandy, Robert, the son of William the Conqueror. They captured Jerusalem in 1099, and Geffrey de Bouillon was made the king of Jerusalem. Terror was let loose upon the Muslim population. For almost a century the Holy

▶ First and second crusades

city was protected by Christians. A second Crusade was led by Louis VII of France in 1147 to capture the rest of Jerusalem, but it turned out a failure. In 1187, the powerful Sultan Saladin captured Jerusalem.

▶ Preparations for the Third Crusade

The Pope again called upon the princes of Europe to fight for the liberation of the Holy Land. The Third Crusade was led by Philip Augustus, King of France, Leopold, Duke of Austria, Frederic Barbarosa, Emperor of Germany, and Richard I, King of England. A quarrel ensued among these arrogant princes and all, except Richard, returned without fighting. Richard boldly marched forward and captured Acre and proceeded towards Jerusalem. Realising that a victory against the Sultan was not possible, Richard arranged a treaty with him and returned to England.

▶ Heavy taxation

The people of England looked at the Crusades as a waste of property for the taxes they had to pay were heavy. But the Crusades opened the gates to the East and paved the way for increased trade. The velvets, muslins, damask, oranges and other luxuries that began to pour in gave the West the impetus to explore new routes to the East by the sea when the land route was closed by the Turks.

1.1.3 Black Death

▶ Disastrous effects of the Black Death

Black Death is the name given to the terrible outbreak of bubonic plague that killed millions of people in Europe during the Middle Ages. It was carried and spread by the fleas of the black rat. It is known as the black death for its appalling effect and the black scars it left on the body. A high fever, terrible thirst, lumps on the skin, a rapid and agonising death - these were its symptoms. It spread like fire through the crowded, unsanitary cities of Europe. There was no cure, and most who contracted it died. It reached London in November 1348, and the North Country in the following year. It came not in a single violent burst, but in a series of outbreaks, some widespread as that in 1361, and others local but just as lethal. It has been estimated that by the end of the fourteenth century it had destroyed a half of the population in England. Some villages were wiped out altogether. The worst affected were the priests whose duty made them move from house to house. All over Europe, the story was the same. The black death not only killed thousands but destroyed the economy and changed the conditions of life in unforeseen ways.

1.1.4 Peasants' Revolt

Peasants' Revolt of 1381, during the reign of Richard II, like the Lollard Movement of Wycliff, was one that shook England. The revolt was led by a young man called Wat Tyler. The movement was initiated by the sufferings of the peasants who earned very low wages and many of whom were thrown out of the land by landlords who turned to sheep farming which was less labour-intensive and more lucrative than farming. The Statute of the Labourers was another blow that forbade them from demanding any rise in the wages that was prevalent before the Black Death. The Poll Tax of 1377 was another measure which compelled the labourers to pay almost half their wages as tax. As the landlords had no mercy, the peasants decided to appeal directly to the king. So, they organised a march to meet the king and present their grievances.

▶ Sufferings of peasants

In a great uprising, the peasants marched towards London. Violence broke out in Essex, Kent and other places. Archbishop Simon Sudbury of Canterbury, and Sir Robert Hales, treasurer to the king, were dragged out of their houses and beheaded. The palace of John of Gaunt at Savoy was burnt down. The peasants who trusted the king headed to the palace to present their grievances directly to him and get them redressed. King Richard, who was only a boy then, showed the courage to meet the crowd of peasants. He rode to Smithfield and heard their complaints, and promised to do all he could to lighten their misery.

▶ Protests of peasants

The peasants withdrew hoping that the king would fulfil his promise. But the king's advisers decided to wipe out the organised strength of the peasants. They caught and killed their leader Wat Tyler, on the pretext that he was threatening the king. Jack Straw, another leader of the peasants, tried to continue the movement. But all the leading men were rounded up and punished. The movement was put down, and none of the peasant's demands was accepted.

▶ Wiping out of the movement

Though the revolt did not produce any immediate result in favour of the peasants, it proved to be a warning to the landed gentry that the Peasants had an organised strength that could no longer be ignored.

▶ Strength of Peasants

1.1.5 War of the Roses

War of the Roses was a long series of civil wars fought roughly between 1455 and 1487 and fought among the Yorkist and Lancastrian branches of the Royal family, rival contenders for the English throne. The name derives from the colour of the badges worn by the warring factions - the House of Lancaster had a Red Rose as its badge and the House of York a White Rose. The factions met in battle at St. Albans in 1455. The Yorkists were better organised and managed to capture and kill the Regent, Duke of Somerset. Richard of York swore loyalty to the king and became Regent. The Queen and her son found safety in the church. The Lancastrians rallied around her. An uneasy peace existed for four years. In the battle of 1460, the Lancastrians were defeated and the king was forced to name Richard his successor. The Queen directed another war and the Yorkists were defeated at Wakefield and Richard of York was killed.

▶ Yorkists and Lancastrians

Edward, the son of the slain Richard, continued the war but was defeated. The king reunited with his Queen Margarette and their son. Margarette preferred to remain in Berwick. This did not please the Londoners who welcomed Edward of York, who marched to London to proclaim himself as the king and declare the Lancastrians as traitors. Edward defeated the Queen's army and put her to flight, this time into Scotland. Edward was crowned king of England in 1461. In 1462, the Queen led another army but was driven away. Finally, she sought refuge in the court of the Duke of Burgundy.

▶ Edward's win and the Queen's flight

1.1.6 Decline of Feudalism

Feudalism saw the beginning of its decline during the late Middle Ages. As a system based on land, feudalism declined due to its inherent weaknesses. The factors which contributed to the decline of feudalism were as follows:

1. ***Growth of Trade and Commerce:-*** During the 12th and 13th centuries, the use of money, rather than goods, as a means of exchange led to a revival of commerce. A merchant class developed, renting land in places suitable for trade. These settlements often became thriving marketplaces for all sorts of goods. For a fee, a commercial settlement could obtain a charter from the local lord, establishing it as a town and giving

▶ The flourishing of commercial markets

it the authority to govern itself. Many lords were willing to grant charters to ensure a market for agricultural products nearby. Subsequently, this weakened the feudal system.

2. ***Decline of Serfdom:-*** The revival of commerce and the widespread use of money altered the relations between feudal lords and serfs. Lords began to rent out their lands to tenant farmers. Engaging in trade, some serfs were able to substitute a money payment for their feudal obligations and became tenant farmers. The labour shortage and the rise in wages caused by the Black Death in the 14th century led some nobles to temporarily forbid the substitution of money payments for feudal obligations. By the end of the Middle Ages, however, many serfs had become able to purchase their freedom and most feudal lords had become landlords.

▶ Change in landlord-farmer relationship

3. ***Rise of Royal Power:-*** As stability and security in Europe was gradually restored during the Middle Ages, the demand for military assistance and service from feudal lords declined. At relatively lower costs, monarchs were able to assemble large mercenary armies, which they used to conquer feudal domains and to re-establish royal authority.

▶ Military assistance

1.1.7 Renaissance

Renaissance is the great movement of cultural, artistic, political and economic revival that occurred between the 14th and 17th centuries, which ushered modernity into Europe. The word means "rebirth", and it was the rebirth or revival of interest in classical knowledge and the world in which man lived. For centuries religion had forced men to believe that the spiritual world is the reality and the physical world an illusion. Renaissance brought the realisation that this world was the reality that man had before him, and the philosophy of revival inspired him to explore the beauty and truth of this material world. Hence started the revolution in literature, art, architecture, exploration and scientific discoveries.

▶ Realisations during the Renaissance

The Renaissance movement was at first an intellectual awakening and a revival of learning. It was the revival of ancient Greek and Latin learning. The classics opened a new line of inquiry against blind belief. Renaissance Humanism, centred primarily on the human being, influenced man to turn away from God and look within himself and the world around him. The all-encompassing spirit of knowledge

- Intellectual revival during Renaissance

and inquiry typical of the Renaissance prompted man to develop his aesthetic and intellectual faculties and give expression to them. The ideal figure of the Renaissance was the versatile Leonardo Da Vinci, whose various faculties were developed to the utmost.

- Literary production during Renaissance

In literature, the influence of Greek and Latin resulted in the translation of classics and the adaptation of classical literary genres and conventions. The epic, romance, lyric, pastoral drama, comedy and tragedy began to produce masterpieces. This widened the world of man's creative expression beyond all boundaries.

- The artistic spirit of the age

Italy was the centre of the Renaissance where it flourished mainly in the field of art, architecture and sculpture. Renaissance art proclaimed the beauty and strength of the human body. The works of Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Raphael, Titian and Botticelli glorify the strength, perfection and beauty of the human body. Nature was the inspiration of these great masters.

- Status of scientific discoveries

The development of science is even more important. Copernicus discovered that the earth is not the centre of the universe but rather a planet in the solar system, and it goes around the sun. It was confirmed by the discoveries of Galileo. Discoveries in the physical world gradually led to the exploration of other properties of matter and the world.

- Geographical exploration

The geographical discoveries were also another aspect of the Renaissance, which led to a pervasive interest in the exploration of the world. It led to the discovery of America and sea routes to the East as it proved to be instrumental in starting a revolution in trade and commerce.

- MIddle class instead of noble class

The whole of England was profoundly stirred by the Renaissance to embrace a new and more energetic life, but not the least was this true of the Court, where literature was to occupy great significance for quite a long time. Since the old nobility had mostly perished in the wars, both Henry VII, the founder of the Tudor line, and his son, Henry VIII, adopted the policy of replacing it with able and wealthy men of the middle class, who would be strongly devoted to themselves.

The court, therefore, became a brilliant and crowded circle of unscrupulous but unusually adroit statesmen,

and a centre of lavish entertainment and display. Under this new aristocracy, the rigidity of the feudal system was relaxed, and life became somewhat easier for all the dependent classes. Modern comforts, too, were largely introduced, and with them, the Italian arts; Tudor architecture, in particular, exhibited the originality and splendour of an energetic and self-confident age.

▶ Reflections of splendour

Further, both Henries, though perhaps as essentially selfish and tyrannical as almost any of their predecessors, were political and far-sighted, and took genuine pride in the prosperity of their kingdom. They encouraged trade; and in the ensuing peace, which was their best gift to their people, the well-being of the nation as a whole increased by leaps and bounds.

▶ Properity of the Kingdom

1.1.8 Humanism

Humanism is a key intellectual movement that emerged during the Renaissance, marking a departure from medieval scholasticism and its focus on divine matters and theology. At its core, humanism emphasised the importance of human beings, their potential, and their capacity for reason, creativity, and achievement. Unlike the medieval mindset, which saw man primarily as a servant of God, Renaissance humanism placed man at the centre of the universe, viewing human experience as worthy of study in its own right. The term "humanism" broadly refers to the study and celebration of human beings, particularly in the context of their intellectual, artistic, and cultural endeavours.

▶ Humanism: focus on human potential

In this framework, the focus shifted from understanding man as merely a reflection of divine will, to understanding him as an autonomous and capable individual. Humanists believed that by studying the classics Greek and Roman philosophy, literature, and art, they could uncover insights into human nature, ethics, and society, which in turn could improve the present and guide future generations. This new human-centred approach also impacted the study of religion. Even though many humanists were devout Christians, they sought to liberate religious study from the constraints of medieval theology, which was dominated by the Church's interpretation of scripture. They advocated for a more direct engagement with religious texts, encouraging individuals to read and interpret the Bible for themselves, rather than relying

solely on the clergy. This was a revolutionary shift, as it not only democratised religious knowledge but also led to the translation of the Bible into vernacular languages. Such translations made religious texts more accessible to the common people, challenging the Church's control over spiritual knowledge and contributing to the Reformation. Humanism thus represented a profound shift in thinking that celebrated human dignity, reason, and autonomy. It promoted the idea that people should seek knowledge, not only for spiritual growth but also for personal and social improvement, laying the foundation for many of the intellectual and cultural advancements of the Renaissance.

- Shift from divine to human-centred knowledge

1.1.9 Reformation

The Reformation was the great modernising movement in religion which took place in many countries of Europe in the 16th century. It was the child of the Renaissance. The critical outlook and spirit of enquiry of the Renaissance inspired, awakened the minds of people to become aware of the evils which had crept into the Catholic Church over the centuries. This led to a critical examination of superstitions and false beliefs in religious matters.

- Religious reforms

Besides the Renaissance, several other factors contributed to the Reformation. There was great degeneration in the Catholic Church. Many priests had become worldly and selfish. There were among them unholy men in holy attire. Many superstitions had crept into the theory and practice of the church.

- Corrupted church

The new wave of nationalism and the growth of trade and commerce also helped the Reformation. In the 14th century, John Wycliffe preached in England against the luxury of the clergy. He wanted people to lead a simple life and attacked the abuses of the church and desired to reform the church. John Wycliffe can justly be called 'The morning star of Reformation'.

- Simplicity in life

The Renaissance reformers like Erasmus, Moore and Colet also tried to reform the Catholic Church without breaking it. However, both the Pope and the King felt that there was no urgent need to reform the church. On the contrary, they joined hands in persecuting the unorthodox preachers and reformers as heretics. The English King of the time, Henry VIII could not see the necessity of reform. He denounced the reformers and supported the Pope at first. But later, he fell out with the Pope on the issue of his

divorce and remarriage. Soon he became the greatest enemy of the Pope in Europe. He separated the English church from Rome and ended all papal interference in England. Church properties were seized and monasteries were dissolved. Henry made himself supreme Head of the English church and thus began a new era in the history of the church in England.

▶ Denouncement of the Reformation leaders

As a result of the Reformation, Christian churches were divided into Protestant and Catholic sections. Reformation enhanced the power of the monarchs in Europe. Reformation had its effect on the language as well. The religious controversies gave birth to numerous words expressing disapproval. Words such as 'papist', 'papistical', 'Romish,' etc., became popular pejoratives.

▶ Impacts of the Reformation

A very important outcome of the Reformation was the various translations of the Bible, the chief being Tyndale's in 1611. The Bible was responsible for standardising the English Language. It was the people's book for the next three centuries, and hence, its words, phrases, idioms and parables became part and parcel of the English language.

▶ Translation of the Bible

1.1.10 Caxton and the Printing Press

English language and literature are immeasurably indebted to William Caxton who introduced the art of printing into England in 1476. Printing was the greatest invention of the Renaissance Age. It helped to spread New Learning and profoundly influenced human progress. It was Gutenburg, a German, who set up the first printing press at Mainz in 1453. Caxton was a prosperous English merchant of Flanders. He heard of Gutenberg's invention of printing and went to Germany to learn the art. He returned to England and set up the first printing press near Westminster Abbey. Among his publications were the works of Chaucer, Malory's *Morte D'arthur* and many others.

▶ Caxton's contributions

Caxton made twenty-four translations from French, Dutch and Latin texts. T*he Recuyell of the Histories of Troy (1471), The Game and Play of the Chesse (1474), Reynard the Fox*, translated from the Dutch, and *The Dictes and Sayings of Philosophers* are his famous works. He re-edited Trevisa's Chronicle in which he "changed the rude and old English." Caxton was conscious of his limitations as a literary artist but was conscious of the greatness and

▶ Translations by Caxton

wide-reaching power of his press.

For the first time, books came within reach of the ordinary man. Henceforth, the press would be a weapon of political and religious controversy though Caxton himself never thought of such consequences. He did a great service to the English language by fixing the form of the type and language which came to be widely used by the educated. Building on Chaucer he made the London dialect the literary language of all of England. He gave it not only circulation but also permanence. The educated Englishmen came to have a common dialect which very much corresponded to the literary English of the day. Gradually it became the common language of all people in England.

- Role of press in New Learning

1.1.11 The Growth of Education

The period following the Renaissance, Reformation, and the introduction of the printing press by William Caxton in 1476 saw significant growth in education in England. These three major events collectively transformed the intellectual and educational landscape of the country. The Renaissance, which reached England in the late 15th and early 16th centuries, emphasised humanism and the study of classical texts. This revival of learning encouraged a broader curriculum in schools and universities, moving beyond purely religious studies to include literature, science, history, and philosophy. The humanist influence led to the founding and reform of many grammar schools, which aimed to educate not only the clergy but also the sons of the emerging middle class. The Reformation, triggered in England under Henry VIII in the 16th century, further expanded access to education. The dissolution of the monasteries initially disrupted traditional centres of learning, but the Protestant emphasis on personal Bible reading led to a push for widespread literacy. Religious reformers advocated for the establishment of schools to enable people to read the Bible in English, increasing the demand for vernacular education.

- Renaissance: Humanism & broader curriculum

The introduction of the printing press by William Caxton revolutionised the availability of books. Before printing, books were scarce and expensive, limiting education to the elite. Printing made books cheaper, more plentiful, and more accessible to a wider audience. It also standardised texts, improved learning materials,

- Caxton's press: Affordable, accessible books, Standardised texts & spread of ideas

and supported the spread of new ideas. Together, these developments laid the foundation for a more literate and educated society in England. By the late 16th and early 17th centuries, education was increasingly seen as a means of personal advancement and national progress, setting the stage for future educational reforms and the rise of public schooling.

1.1.12. The Rise of England as a Maritime Power

- Exploration, science, geography

Following the Renaissance and Reformation, England experienced a significant transformation that contributed to its rise as a maritime power. The Renaissance brought renewed interest in exploration, science, and geography, encouraging advancements in navigation, shipbuilding, and cartography. Inspired by the voyages of other European nations like Spain and Portugal, English explorers began to seek new trade routes and colonies. The Reformation, particularly under Henry VIII and later Elizabeth I, helped consolidate national identity and reduce the influence of Catholic Spain and the Pope. With the establishment of the Church of England, England distanced itself from Catholic Europe, especially Spain, which was then the dominant maritime power. This religious and political rivalry motivated England to challenge Spanish control of the seas. The decline of monastic institutions during the Reformation freed up wealth and land, some of which was invested in trade and exploration.

The government and private individuals began funding overseas expeditions. Prominent figures like Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh, and John Hawkins emerged, leading voyages that brought wealth through trade, privateering, and colonisation. A turning point came with the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. This event not only marked the decline of Spanish naval dominance but also boosted England's confidence and credibility as a naval power. England's navy became more organised and better funded, laying the groundwork for future dominance. Additionally, the growth of maritime trade and the establishment of trading companies like the East India Company (1600) expanded England's global influence. The combination of advanced naval technology, political determination, economic ambition, and religious motivation drove

- Key explorers: Drake, Raleigh, Hawkins

England's rise as a major maritime power. By the early 17th century, England was firmly on the path to becoming one of the world's leading seafaring and colonial powers.

Summarised Overview

The Norman Conquest witnessed its French influence and the rise and fall of Harold, the Earl of Wessex. "The making of the English language" was a major outcome of the Norman Conquest. The Crusades led to heavy taxation among the people of England. The Peasants' Revolt emerged out of the sufferings of farmers under their monarchs and landlords. Though it was wiped out, the revolt proclaimed the strength of peasants as an important group. The War of Roses witnessed the conflict between Yorkists and Lancastrians, Edward's win and the Queen's refuge in the court of the Duke of Burgundy. The great effects of the Renaissance, Humanism and Reformations reflected on various stages of life in England. Also, Caxton's printing press made a big impact on the New Learning spread throughout England.

Assignments

1. What were the consequences and results of the Norman Conquest?
2. Write a short note on the Crusades
3. What do you know about the impact of the Renaissance, Humanism, and the Reformation upon England?
4. Narrate the sufferings of farmers in The Peasants' Revolt of 1381.

Suggested Readings

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5. Kaal, Harm, and Daniëlle Slootjes, editors. *New Perspectives on Power and Political Representation from Ancient History to the Present Day: Repertoires of Representation*. Brill, 2019.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

Unit 2

Poetry

Learning Outcomes

This unit will lead the learner to know

- the evolution of poetry including its style, form and theme from Chaucer to the Elizabethan Age.
- various types of romances and their derivations.
- the influence of Chaucer's poetry on other poets.
- the arrival of sonnets into the English poetry.
- the complex style of metaphysical poetry and its leading figures.

Background

It is believed that Caedmon (fl. 658–680), an uneducated herdsman who composed improvised poetry at a monastery in Whitby, is the author of the earliest recorded English poem, a hymn on the creation. It is universally believed that this represents the start of Anglo-Saxon poetry. Many pieces of this era's poetry are hard to date or even organise chronologically; for instance, claims for the composition of the great epic *Beowulf* spans from AD 608 to AD 1000, and there has never been a sense of consensus.

The majority of Anglo-Saxon poetry, however, is categorised by the manuscripts in which it has survived the time it was written. The *Beowulf,* the *Vercelli Book*, the *Exeter Book*, and the *Caedmon* are the four major poetical works from the late 10th and early 11th centuries that are considered to be the most significant manuscripts. Although the amount of poetry that has survived is small, it is diverse. The only complete heroic epic is *Beowulf.*

This is a short outlook on the history of poetry before its fall into the age of Chaucer.

Keywords

Poetry, romance, Chaucerians, Metaphysical, style, form, theme

1.2.1 Discussion

The Metrical Romances usually dealt with kings and nobility, and the themes of love, chivalry, daring adventures, and religion. Narrated as poems or series of poems, they were pervaded by the spirit of romance, marvel, adventure, and courtly manners. By the thirteenth century, France had become the centre of lyric poetry and romance. The heroic deeds of Charlemagne and his knights formed the basis of most of these romances. These romances were originally short songs which celebrated the deeds of familiar heroic characters. Later, the various songs were added to new compositions and gathered together.

▶ Metrical Romances

Geste (for heroic deeds accomplished) became an epic, such as the early French epic, the *Chanson De Geste*. The *Chanson De Roland* is one of the most popular romances, centred on the heroic deeds of Charlemagne and his knights. The popularity of these romances in England, in turn, inspired the production of a great number of romances dealing with the heroic figures of France, events and heroes of ancient classical civilization as well as Celtic and English legacies. The form of the romance was invariably centred on a quest undertaken by a knight or knightly hero.

▶ France as the origin of lyric poetry and romance

The division of subject matter distinguished the romances from each other. Thus, a French subject matter often consisted of romances dealing with the exploits of Charlemagne and his knights. Likewise, Roman romances were concerned with the deeds of the classical heroes—the two great cycles of these romances dealt with the exploits of Alexander, the great warrior of the Trojan war and the characters of Ovid. Similarly, English romances had Arthurian legends as their main focus, and its many cycles included the stories of Merlin, the quest for the holy grail, the death of Arthur and the legendary Sir

▶ Romances in diverse languages

Gawain and the Green Knight.

The romances of England deal with the stories of English heroes like Robinhood and Guy of Warwick. All English romances were initially either copies or translations of French versions. However, the later English romances became more concerned with native incidents or actions rather than simple courtly love which predominated in French romances. In spite of these, English Romances were truly romantic in the sense that they maintained their remoteness from reality, and like all other romances, they were only concerned with the ethics of mediaeval chivalry. It creates a wall that is populated by knights who considered it their moral obligation to aid supplicants who approached them with their problems and defend beautiful ladies and weaker persons. The women who figured in the romances were always beautiful and virtuous while the villains varied from giants, dragons, and evil magicians, to all enemies of the church and state.

- Nature of English romances

The general form of romance is straightforward and linear, though the stories would be intricately woven. Its emphasis is on love, religion and duty as defined by the codes of chivalry. It depends upon exaggerated descriptions of things and situations, often providing long catalogues. The common man and his life do not find their place in them. The original French romances were composed in a specific verse form where the meter was exact, and rhymes and assonance were used to achieve a musical effect and metrical clarity. In England, this metrical system came in contact with the uneven lines of the Anglo-Saxon versification tradition with its strong accent and alliteration. In due course of time, a gradual union of French and Saxons brought about an amazing change in the English language making it capable of employing a variety of verse forms. Romances reworked legends, fairy tales, local tales and historical incidents and personages. Later, Miguel de Cervantes wrote his proto-novel, *Don Quixote*, burlesquing the conventions and form of popular romances.

- Verse forms and content of English romances

1.2.2 Middle English Romances / Metrical Romances

Mediaeval English Romances were basically French in origin. The romances were written in simple diction and melodious versification, and they were largely woven

- French elements in English Romances

around the available 'matters'. Ultimately they became so popular among the English and expressed the romantic temper of the age so much that they ceased to be foreign and became fully native.

Features of English Romances

The story of romances is usually long, with many intricacies of the plot; above all, the emphasis is on the incident; martial exploits play a large part and are exaggerated in description (which often appear ridiculous for the modern reader) of battle upon battle, exploit upon exploit, that establishes the hero as a superman; the element of the supernatural is often introduced, again sometimes with ridiculous effect; the style is often simple and direct but lacks artistic finish, though again the best examples must be absolved from such strictures. In spite of the exaggerations, extravagances, and ridiculous elements of the worst, the best of the romances provide a rich treasure-house of wonderful tales.

- Exaggerated nature of stories in Romances

1.2.2.1 The Matter of France

The Matter of France deals basically with the exploits of Charlemagne and his twelve peers. It starts with the celebrated heroism of Ronald in his last fight against the Saracens at Ronceval. Other romances of this group are *Rauf Coilyear, Sir Ferumbras, The Sowdone of Babylon, The siege of Milan, Ronald and Otincls,* etc. Scholars agree that the 'Matter of France' romances show little literary value composed as they are along a rigid unvarying conventional pattern with the heroes borrowed from France.

- The Matter of France and its components

1.2.2.2 The Matter of Rome

The Matter of Rome deals with largely the tales from Greek and Roman sources (from Homer, Virgil, Ovid etc.) and the two great cycles of these romances deal with the deeds of Alexander, and the Siege of Troy, with which the Britons thought they had some connection. Other romances of this group are – *The Siege of Thebes, The adventures of Aeneas, The Destruction of Troy,* etc. Regarding the Alexander Sage, it has very little of the historical Alexander, and much of romantic wonder fiction and magic come from Arabian legends.

- Heroic and legendary nature of tales from the Matter of Rome

1.2.2.3 The Matter of England

The romances of this cycle are purely based on English history and were very popular and recited by native bards and Minstrels. "Most of the romances of English Subjects seem to have depended mainly on oral transmission. The English Writers of romance seem to have been dependent on French Originals; only when they come across the French varies of the English Tales would they write them down …." (Wilson). Remarkable romances of this group are – *King Horn, Havelock the Dane, Guy of Warwick and Bevis of Hampton.*

▶ Popular themes of the Romances of English

1. ***Havelock the Dane:*** It is based on Scandinavian legend. It narrates the story of Havelock, a young Danish Prince, who is kept out of his royal right by his wicked guardian. His guardian plots to murder him but he escapes with the help of an old fisherman called Griem. He escapes to England where he serves in the kitchen of Goldsborough, the Princess of England, who is also menaced by her wicked uncle. Finally, Havelock wins back the two kingdoms and puts both the cruel guardians to death.

▶ The plot of Havelock the Dane

2. ***King Horn:*** It is also based on a Scandinavian legend. The hero, King Horn, was captured in his childhood by the Saracens. He then was set adrift in a sail-less and oar-less boat. He landed safely on Westerners. In the course of time, he develops a love relationship with a princess named Rymenhild. The king discovers their secret and Horn is chased away, though he manages to obtain a promise from Rymenhild that she will wait seven years for him. After seven years, Horn returns in the guise of a poor pilgrim and finally gets married to her.

▶ The plot of King Horn

1.2.2.4 The Matter of Britain

'The matter of Britain' mainly deals with king Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. All these romances are from Celtic sources and deal with the matters of ancient Britain and Wales. The romances of this group are loosely connected with one another by the towering personality of king Arthur. So, they basically belong to the cycle of Arthurian Romances.

▶ Arthurian Elements in the matter of Britain

Evolution of the Arthurian Cycle

▶ Nennius in his 'Historia Britannia' (800 A.D.)

represents Arthur as a historical figure – as a military leader who defeated the Saxons in the battle of Mount Badon and retained the independence of his territory Wales.

- Next, in the imagination of early Welsh poets, Arthur turned into a mythological figure –a kind of demi-god- with heroic deeds and a band of followers almost as wonderful as himself.
- St. Gildas in 'Chronicle' also refers to Arthur and his achievements.
- William of Monmouth is the first author who made Arthur the Romantic Arthur, the incarnate spirit of chivalry. Here Arthur is described as a mighty king pro-tected by supernatural power.
- Wace in his 'Roman de Brut' records the adventures and achievements of the Knights of the Round Table. He speaks of Arthur as a living force, still alive –'the Hope of Britain'.
- In his 'Brut,' Layman presents the story of the Round Table and narrates the passing away of the mighty monarch.
- Walter Map, a Chaplin to Henry II, introduces the story of the Holy Grail, infusing the Arthurian legends in a spiritual light.

- The plot of the Arthurian romance

- Examples of the Arthurian romances

Of the Arthurian romances "Arthur and Merlin", "Sir Gawain and Green Knight", "Ywain and Gawain", "Sir Orfeo", "Sir Tristrem", "Sir Launfal", "Sir Libeas", "Sir Thopas" and "Sir Launcelot" deserve special mention.

1.2.3 Miscellaneous Romances

We get a class of miscellaneous romances centred on various themes and of equally varying quality. 'Amis and Amiloun' is a touching love story. Also, 'Floris and Blauchefleur' is about the all-absorbing passion of two lovers - a king's son (Floris) and a captive maid (Blauchefleur) who overcome difficulties and desperate perils, and are united in the end. Edward states that -"It would take a volume to comment in detail upon the romances. The variety of their metre and style is very great, but in general terms, we may say that the prevailing subject is of a martial and amatory nature; there is the additional interest of the supernatural, which enters freely into the story; and one of the most attractive features the modern reader of this type of literature is the frequent glimpses obtained into the habits of the times".

- Theme of Miscellaneous romances

1.2.4 Ballad or Folk Poetry of the 15th Century

The term "ballad" is loosely applied to any narrative poem in the ballad metre, i.e., in a quatrain or four-lined stanza with alternate rhymes, the first and the third lines being eight-syllabled and the second and fourth six-syllabled. The ballad was originally oral literature and it was folklore. Ballads were passed on orally from generation to generation and in the process, they were much "altered, modified or suppressed and new circumstances suggested opportune additions". The oral tradition changed the form of the ballad. The exact fact to which a ballad owed its origin grew misty with the passing of time. Gradually, the ballad became romantic and acquired the charm of the remote.

- Folklore nature of the ballad

The ballads had been very popular since the earliest times, but the balladeering impulse became strongest in the 15th century, and it is also to this century that the earliest written specimens belong. Not only were numerous ballads of a very high quality made and sung, but two of the finest English ballads were recorded in writing for the first time in this period.

- 15th-century influence in the ballads

1.2.5 Two Most Popular Ballads

The first of these remarkable ballads is the ballad of "The Nut-Brown Maid." A lady, who is also supposed to be the poet, plays the part of the nut-brown maid and the other speaker takes up the part of her lover, who pretends to be an outlaw in order to test her love. The dialogue imparts to this ballad a heightened dramatic interest and animation and these qualities, along with its sincerity and primitive simplicity, go a long way in explaining its popularity and the fascination it has exercised in all those who have read it. This piece shows that the essence of poetry existed in the disinherited 15th century.

- Features of "The Nut-Brown Maid"

"Chevy-Chase" is the other remarkable ballad. Its subject is the war between Percy of England and Douglas of Scotland. It extols the heroism of the two as well as the generosity and chivalry of the victor Percy, who weeps over the body of his enemy and admires his heroism. The ballad is primitive in its simplicity and there is a minimum ornament. As it is realistic, it betrays sincere emotion in every line, and for this reason, it moves the readers and

wins their hearts. It is one of the so-called Homeric or epic ballads, its theme being the heroic exploits of Percy, and it deals with its subject with Homeric impartiality. The poet is an Englishman and his English patriotism is visible in every line and yet the courage and warlike qualities of Douglas have been impartially brought out.

▶ The theme of heroism in *Chevy-Chase*

This simple moving ballad has fascinated not only the lay readers but also the learned. It charmed Sir Philip Sidney, and in the 18th century, Addison admired it for its just style and natural feeling. It was included by Bishop Percy in his "*Reliques*" (1765). It is one of those mediaeval poems which did much to cause a revival of Romanticism. Its primitive simplicity inspired the tone of Coleridge's "Christabel" and "The Ancient Mariner."

▶ Lovers of *Chevy-Chase*

1.2.6 Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400)

Geoffrey Chaucer was born in 1340. His father John Chaucer was a well-to-do wine merchant. In 1357 Chaucer was in the service of the Countess of Ulster and by 1359 in the army in France with Edward III, who had to ransom him after he was captured by the French. Chaucer became a diplomat soon after and travelled extensively in France, Flanders and Italy on royal business. He also served for some time as Controller of Custom. His last years were mostly devoted to literature.

▶ Chaucer's professional biography

Chaucer is the greatest literary figure of his age. W. J. Long calls him "our first modern poet" and E. Albert describes him as "the earliest of the great moderns". His poems are divided into three stages: French, Italian, and English.

French poems- *The Book of Duchesse* (1369), "The Compleynt unto Pite", and "The Compleynt of Mars".

Italian poems- "Anelida and Arcite", "Troilus and Criseyde", "The House of Fame", and "The Legend of Good Women."

▶ Chaucer's poetic stages

English poems- "The Canterbury Tales", and short poems like "The Lack of Steadfastnesse", "Compleynte of Chaucer to his Empty Purse" and "Origines upon the Maudelyne."

Chaucer's poetry falls into three rather clearly marked periods. First is that of French influence, when, though

writing in English, he drew inspiration from the rich French poetry of the period, which was produced partly in France, and partly in England. Chaucer experimented with the numerous lyric forms that the French poets had brought to perfection; he also translated, in whole or in part, the most important of mediaeval French narrative poems, the thirteenth-century Romance of the "Rose of Guillaume de Lorris" and "Jean de Meung", a very clever satirical allegory of mediaeval love and mediaeval religion.

▶ French influence in Chaucer's poems

Chaucer's second period, that of Italian influence, dates from his first visit to Italy in 1372-3, where at Padua he might perhaps have met the fluent Italian poet Petrarch, and where at any rate the revelation of Italian life and literature must have aroused his intense enthusiasm. He made much direct use of the works of Petrarch and Boccaccio and, to a less degree, those of their greater predecessor, Dante, whose severe spirit was too unlike Chaucer for his thorough appreciation. The longest and finest of Chaucer's poems of this period, 'Troilus and Criseyde' is based on a work of Boccaccio. In this poem, with compelling power, Chaucer details the sentiment and tragedy of love, and the psychology of the heroine who had become a central figure in the tale of Troy.

▶ The Italian influence in Chaucer's poems

Chaucer's third period, covering his last fifteen years, is called his English period, because at last his genius, maturity and self-sufficiency, worked in essential independence. First among his poems of these years stands "The Legend of Good Women", a series of romantic biographies of famous ladies of classical legend and history, whom it pleases Chaucer to designate as martyrs of love; but more important than the stories themselves is the prologue, where he chats with delightful frankness about his own ideas and tastes.

▶ English period

He was a keen observer of human nature and was good at descriptions. Most of his poems stand as examples of his powerful description of human behaviour. The poems also display his great strength and humour. At the same time, he has also used subtle amounts of pathos in his works. Thus most of his poems are narrative in nature, telling interesting stories of human behaviour with humour and pathos.

▶ Themes of Chaucer's poetry

The great work of the period, and the crowning achievement of Chaucer's life, is *The Canterbury Tales*. The plotline of the story is how Chaucer, the narrator, finds himself one April evening with thirty other men and women, all gathered at the Tabard Inn in Southwark (a suburb of London and just across the Thames from the city proper), ready to start next morning, as thousands of Englishmen did every year, on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas a Becket at Canterbury. The travellers readily accept the proposal of Harry Bailey, their jovial and domineering host, that he can go with them as their guide and leader and that they enliven the journey with a story-telling contest (with two stories to be recounted by each pilgrim during each half of the journey) for the price of a dinner at his inn on their return. The next morning, therefore, the Knight begins the series of tales and the others follow in a hierarchical order. This literary form, a collection of disconnected stories bound together by a fictitious framework, goes back almost to the beginning of literature itself. Chaucer may well have been directly influenced by Boccaccio's famous book of prose tales, *The Decameron* (Ten Days of Story-Telling) in forming his fables.

- The plot of *The Canterbury Tales*

In his famous *Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer introduces various characters in his drama. The twenty-nine characters are carefully chosen types who represent various segments of contemporary society. Even though each type represented a social class or sector, Chaucer also individualised his characters.

- Introduction of characters in Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*

It may be said that Chaucer founded the English language and poetry. Albert calls him "the earliest of the great moderns". It is through his poetry "that its free and secular spirit first expresses in poetry." He was rightly recognised during the Renaissance as "the father of English poetry."

- Modern elements in Chaucer's poetry

1.2.7 English Chaucerians

The poverty of English poetry during the 15th century is clearly brought out by a consideration of the work of the English and Scottish imitators of Chaucer. They follow Chaucer's dream convention, allegory, the idea of prefacing a work with a *Prologue* which allows them to apologise for their deficiencies, the metric pattern, the verse form and the diction of Chaucer. There is much servile imitation, but no originality, freshness, or vigour.

- Imitation of Chaucer's poetry

1.2.7.1 Thomas Occleve (1370-1454)

Thomas Occleve is the earliest of the Chaucerians. His works are interesting not for their artistic or literary merits, but for the light they throw on the life of the times. He is also known for some lines on Chaucer in which he pays moving tributes to the former poet and acknowledges him as his master. His important works are:

(a) "A Letter of Cupid", an allegory in the manner of the "Legend of Good Women." But instead of Chaucer's humour, imagination, and realism, we get too much dry reasoning.

▶ Thomas Occleve and Chaucer

(b) *The Regimen of Princes*. It is his most important work written to win the favour of Henry V, then Prince of Wales.

1.2.7.2 John Lydgate (1373-1450)

Lydgate, like Occleve, was a close contemporary of Chaucer and he might have actually known the latter in person. He was a great scholar, monk and the most voluminous poet of mediaeval England. Most of his works are translations. His most popular work is the short and lively "London Lickpenny" which describes the misery of a poor rustic who visits London in quest of justice. His other works "Troye Book", "The Story of Thebes", "The Fall of Princes" and "The Temple of Glass" are merely a servile imitation of Chaucer and repetitions of themes already used by the earlier poet.

▶ Lydgate and Chaucer

1.2.7.3 Stephen Hawes (1475-1530)

Stephen Hawes is an allegorist. He writes allegories in the manner of Romant de la Rose and acknowledges Chaucer, Gower and Lydgate as his masters. *The Example of Virtue and The Passetyme of Pleasure*, his chief works, are moral and didactic allegories.

▶ Stephen Hawes' allegories

1.2.7.4 Alexander Barclay (1474-1552)

Barclay is hardly more than a translator, though an imaginative translator. He has also no grasp of versification. But he is historically significant for two reasons: (1). He was the first English poet to choose a German subject. His *Ship of Fools* is a translation from a German poet, and it enjoyed immediate and immense popularity. The poet is a fellow passenger on a ship full of fools, and in this way, he is enabled to review every kind of folly. The humour is lively and pleasant. (2). He was the first to

▶ Barclay and Eclogues

write Eclogues: pastoral poems in which shepherds are introduced to conversing with each other in England. He thus introduced a genre which was to reign supreme in times to come.

1.2.7.5 John Skelton (1460-1529)

John Skelton is the most vigorous and original poet of the 15th century. He was a learned poet, very well acquainted with the ancients. But he does not care for poetic beauty or beauty of versification. He writes verses like a buffoon but breaks new ground both in theme and versification. He broke new ground in more than one way. First, he had the courage to discard the hackneyed measures. He found English verse, the heroic measure, outdated, and proceeded to undertake new experiments in versification. Second, he begins as an allegorist but ends with writing satires. He exposes with brutal frankness the corruption in high places. His chief works are:

1. "The Book of Colin Cloute:" Colin Clout is a peasant who, like Piers the Plowman, chastises the corrupt clergy of the times.
2. "Why Come You Not to Court" is a violent denunciation of Wolsey, the all-powerful minister of Henry VIII.
3. "The Book of Philip Sparrow" is an elegy on the death of a sparrow. It shows that Skelton, who could be so coarse and brutal, could also be tender and pathetic when the occasion demanded.

▶ John Skelton's writing styles

Through his metrical experiments, he prepared the way for the verse innovations of the Renaissance.

1.2.8 Scottish Chaucerians

The Scottish poetry of the period also reveals the influence of Chaucer at every step. The allegory, the dream convention and the seven-lined Chaucerian stanza, are used by the poets of Scotland as they are used by the poets of England. But Scottish poetry reveals greater freshness, vigour and artistic beauty. It stands out in sharp contrast as a thing of beauty, and so also a thing of pleasure.

▶ Artistic beauty in Scottish poetry

1.2.8.1 King James I (1394-1436)

At the head of the Scottish Chaucerians stands James I, who was a prisoner in England for nineteen years. He fell in love with the niece of Henry IV, and his reputed work *The King's Quair* (book) commemorates his love. The young prisoner had read Chaucer avidly, and the poem is full of Chaucerian reminiscences. It is written in the Chaucerian stanza, which is also called the Rhyme Royal from the king's use of it; there is also the traditional dream, the waking in a spring garden and the allegory, but there is also much that is realistic. The beauty, charm and vigour of the poem arise from the fact that it is an expression of personal emotion.

▶ Chaucerian influence on King James 1

1.2.8.2 Robert Henryson (1425-1500)

Robert Henryson, a retired schoolmaster, is another of the Scottish Chaucerians, who shows great independence and originality even while imitating Chaucer. Warm humanity infuses all his works. His more important works are:

1. *The Testament of Cressied*. It is a natural sequel to Chaucer's *Troylus and Cressied* and shows the pathetic and tragic end of the fickle Cressied after she has deserted Troylus. The versification is pure and harmonious. He handled the Chaucerian stanza with the felicity of Chaucer.
2. *The Fables*, thirteen in number, in the manner of *Aesop's Fables.*
3. *Robene and Makyne* is a delightful pastoral. The poet is at his best in painting rustic scenes and in rendering dialogues between shepherds and shepherdesses.

▶ Robert Henryson's important works

1.2.8.3 William Dunbar (1460-1520)

Dunbar is rightly reputed as the greatest of the Scottish Chaucerians, a sort of Poet Laureate of Scotland. He has more than a hundred poems to his credit. Dunbar is great for three reasons: (1) He is an artist, first and last, a great artist. Praising the colourfulness of his pictures and his melody, Legouis remarks, "He dazzles the eyes and ravishes the ears." (2) He has firm command over style

and versification: no one had ever added so much colour to his pictures, and no one had ever given such swing to his lines and stanzas. (3) His humour is as rough and as vigorous as that of Burns, and this lends a peculiar charm to his satires, which are often boisterous, brutal, coarse and indecent. His chief works are:

1. "The Thrissil and the Rose", an allegory celebrating the marriage of Princess Margaret, daughter of Henry VII of England and King James IV of Scotland. It was a union of two countries. The form is traditional, but the treatment is original. There is an amazing wealth of colour and the movement of the allegory is rapid. The Chaucerian stanza has been used with great skill.

2. "The Golden Targe" (or shield) is an allegory of the Chaucerian kind but in a nine-lined stanza with two rhymes. Thus he discards the traditional metre and breaks new ground.

3. His Satires: "The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins" is a coarse satire in twelve-lined stanzas. It is full of rough jests and jovial invective in the manner of Rabelais. "The Two Married Women and the Widow" is another coarse satire. The verse used is a union of Langland's alliteration and Chaucer's metre.

- William Dunbar's chief works

1.2.8.4 Gawain Douglas (1475-1522)

Douglas was a cultured and well-read Bishop who also took an active part in the politics of his country. He began by writing conventional allegories and ended by being a precursor of the Renaissance. "The Palace of Honour", inspired by Chaucer's "House of Fame", is the most important of his allegories. He occupies an important place in the history of English literature because he was the first to translate the whole of Virgil into English verse. The translation is throughout in heroic couplets.

- Gawain Douglas' Allegoric and translated works

1.2.9 Contemporaries of Chaucer

1.2.9.1 John Gower:

John Gower was the exact contemporary of Chaucer, though he died eight years later in 1408. His writing of three different works in three different languages shows that English was not yet considered a suitable instrument for literature then. Besides certain love ballads in the "courtly style", his chief works are:

1. *Speculum Meditantis* (30,000 lines), a French work, a long sermon in verse. It is an allegory, an exposition of the corruption, vice and immorality of the age. The exposition is frank and thorough. Chaucer called him the "moral Gower", and this work justifies the epithet.
2. "Vox Clamantis": The work is in Latin couplets. It is inspired by the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. It expresses the fear and terror of the rich landed class at the popular uprising.
3. "Confessio Amantis (1384): It is written in English (East Midland dialect) probably under the influence of Chaucer. "It is an encyclopaedia of the art of love," says Ker. It is his only work in English. It is a collection of over one hundred stories and runs into more than 40,000 lines. The poem is allegorical. Each of the stories illustrates some moral.

▶ John Gower's usage of different languages in verse

He is the typical average poet of the age.

1.2.9.2 William Langland (1332-1400)

William Langland was a great poet and a contemporary of Chaucer and Gower. He is a much more important poet than Gower. He stands next only to Chaucer. We do not know much about his life. Whatever little we know is gathered from the manuscript of his only extant poem, *The Vision of William Concerning Piers, the Plowman*. It is an allegory of human life and a picture of fourteenth-century England. It gives a remarkably vivid account of the suffering of the peasants. The poem is original and outstanding. In this poem, Langland attacks the abuses of his period, the greed and hypocrisy of the clergy, and the avarice and tyranny of the ruling classes. The dissatisfaction behind the Peasants' Revolt found its most moving expression in this poem. Piers became, for the rebels of England, a symbol of the righteous fearless peasant. He upheld truth, love, and duty. The poor plowman is in the end identified with St. Peter. The poem is frankly moral and didactic, and in this respect, it excels over the other poems of the period. In his reformatory and moral zeal, Langland is bitter and

▶ Langland's *Piers, the Plowman*

sarcastic, and in this respect, differs from Chaucer, who is kind, considerate and humane.

1.2.9.3 Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-42) and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1516-47)

▶ *Tottle's Miscellany*

Wyatt and Surrey, widely travelled in Italy, brought to England, Italian and classical influence. They were the first harbingers of the Renaissance and the first modern poets in England. Their poems, Songs and Sonnets, were known as *Tottle's Miscellany* (1557).

▶ Wyatt's sonnets

Wyatt brought to English poetry grace, harmony and nobility. He attempted a great variety of metrical forms-songs, sonnets, madrigals, and elegies. He was the first poet to introduce the form of the sonnet in England. He strictly followed the Petrarchan form of the sonnet. Wyatt also introduced personal or autobiographical notes in his poetry. His lyrics are noticeable for the rare simplicity, spontaneity, and melody of the mediaeval minstrels, as well as the courtly grace and refinement of a man of learning and culture. He also introduced to English, the Italian Terza Rima and Ottava Rima.

▶ Surrey's invention of blank verse

Surrey, a disciple of Wyatt rather than an independent poetical force, modified the sonnet form and made it typically English. The Petrarchan form is more impressive, and the modified English form is more expressive. Shakespeare followed the English form of the sonnet introduced by Surrey. Surrey was the first to use the ten-syllable, unrhymed verse, which is now known as blank verse, in his translation of the second and fourth books of Virgil's *Aenied*.

1.2.9.4 Edmund Spenser (1552-1599)

▶ Spencer's place as a poet

Edmund Spenser, a typical representative of his age, has been hailed by Charles Lamb as "the poets' poet" because all great poets of England have been indebted to him. "Spenser," Rickett remarks, "is at once the child of Renaissance and Reformation. On one side we may regard him with Milton as 'the sage and serious Spenser,' on the other, he is the humanist, alive to the fingertips with sensuous beauty of Southern romance."

Spenser's main works are *The Shepherd's Calendar* (1579), a pastoral romance; *Amoretti,* a collection of eighty-eight Petrarchan sonnets; "Epithalmion" (1595), a magnificent ode commemorating his marriage with

Elizabeth Boyle, "Prothalamion" (1596), a marriage poem commemorating the double weddings of the daughters of the Earl of Worcester, which is memorable for its musical quality, particularly in the refrain "Soft Thames, run softly till I end my song", "Astrophel" (1596), an elegy on the death of Sir Philip Sidney, *Four Hymns* (1576), glorifying love and honour; and his magnum opus *Faerie Queen* (1589-1609).

▶ Spencer's main works

Spenser's poetry is characterised by sensuousness and picturesqueness. He is a matchless painter in words. His contribution to poetic style, diction and versification is memorable. He evolved a poetic style that the succeeding generations of English poets used. The introduction of the Spenserian stanza, which has been adroitly used by almost all poets, is his most remarkable contribution to poetry. He is great because of the extraordinary smoothness and melody of his verse, the richness of his language, and the golden diction which he drew from every source—new words, old and obsolete words.

▶ Spencer's poetic styles

Spenser is 'the poets' poet' in the real sense. All great poets have been influenced by him. Dryden acknowledged that Spenser had been his master in English. Thompson referred to him as 'my master Spenser.' Wordsworth praises him as the embodiment of nobility, purity and sweetness. Byron, Shelly and Keats are his worthy followers. The Pre-Raphaelites were inspired by his word-painting and picturesque descriptions.

▶ Writers influenced by Spencer

The Faerie Queene: It is considered the most important of Spencer's works, which was published in instalments with the first three books appearing in 1589, and the next three books in 1596. After his death, a few parts of book seven were published and the rest of the work is believed to have been destroyed in a fire in Ireland. Heavily allegorical, the work deals with the adventures of twelve knights with each one representing a virtue (like Holiness/ Temperance/ Chastity/ Friendship, and so on). The chief among all the twelve knights is Prince Arthur, who, in the end, marries the Queen of Faerie Land, Gloriana. Queen Elizabeth, who is excessively flattered by the poet is allegorized as Gloriana. Many other political and religious persons such as Queen Mary of Scotland, the Pope and Lord Grey, are believed to be allegorized as well. His diction (the way words are used) was called 'archaic diction' by Ben Jonson because he

▶ Composing of *The Faerie Queene*

was very inventive with words or word forms like 'blend' for 'blind'. But, this suited the old-world atmosphere his poems represented.

1.2.10 The Metaphysical Poets

The word, 'Metaphysical' was used in References to the poetry of the English poets of the first half of the seventeenth century. The chief poets of this group are John Donne (1571-1631), George Herbert (1593-1633), Henry Vaughan (1622-95), Andrew Marvell (1621-78), and Richard Crashaw (1612-49). T. S. Eliot remarks, "Not only is it extremely difficult to define metaphysical poetry, but difficult to decide what poets practise it and in which of their verses."

▶ Chief Metaphysical Poets

The term, 'Metaphysical' is primarily used in philosophy. Hence it was applied to poetry that expresses a comprehensive view of the world. Sir Herbert Grierson in his book, *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century*, says, "These poems have been inspired by a philosophical conception of the universe and the role assigned to the human spirit in the great drama of existence". But in common literary usage, it refers to the poetry of John Donne and his followers who either copied his style or were influenced by him in the early seventeenth century.

▶ The concept of 'Metaphysical'

It was Dryden who named the Metaphysical poets, in his remark on Donne in 1693: "He affects the metaphysics, not only in his satires, but in his amorous verses, where nature only should reign; and perplexes the minds of the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy, when he should engage their hearts, and entertain them with the softness of love." However, the term was popularised by Dr Johnson in his 'Life of Cowley' (1779). He writes, "About the beginning of the seventeenth century appeared a race of writers that may be termed the metaphysical poets... they were men of learning and to show their learning was their whole endeavour." Johnson's observation thus identifies the peculiarity of the style as well as the philosophical context. He further noted its metrical harshness as well as the sheer variety of its wit.

▶ Popularising the term 'Metaphysical'

The Metaphysical poets lived at a time of intellectual excitement and shared the interests of the educated men and women of the day, reading about medicine, psychology, scientific discovery, and geographical

exploration. They showed an interest in the way men live, and relate to one another and to God. Metaphysical poetry is predominantly intellectual and analytical. The poet's intellect dominates his or her feelings. The intellectual bias affects not only the choice of words and images but also the form and rhythm of their poems.

▶ The intellectual quality of Meta-physical poetry

The metaphysical poetry is full of far-fetched similes and metaphors, commonly known as 'Conceits,' which Johnson described as a "combination of dissimilar images or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike". The conceit is a particular form of wit. An image is explored and developed at length, demanding great control and precision on the part of the writer. Marvell's *Drop of Dew* is a typical example. There is just one logically patterned and extended image. The dew drop on the rose petal is analogous to the soul and to the sacred Manna. Donne's metaphor of the compass provides another example of metaphysical conceit.

▶ Conceit in meta-physical poetry

Heterogeneous ideas and thoughts are brought together by force, so to say. In Donne's poem, *Anniversaries*, there is the celebration of love which is one year old. Then he suddenly shifts to the idea of the lovers' death and their rotting in the graves. Then he comes back to the idea of eternal love. Further, the images and ideas of these poets are often found to be absurd and hyperbolical. They wanted to write something strange, new and startling. So Johnson says, "They left not only reason but fancy behind them and produced combinations of confused magnificence." The poems had the stamp of the poet's scholarship and learning, as pointed out by Johnson: "The metaphysical poets were men of learning and to show their learning was their whole endeavour." Thus they drew their conceits from the recesses of learning rather than from common usages. This is especially true of Donne and Cowley. They parade their knowledge of geography, science, medicine, navigation, warfare, and classical mythology. Thus they have been charged with obscurity. It is a result of their wanting to say too much. One thought succeeds another in a dazzling and confusing manner. As a result, we may fail to grasp its full and complex meaning. They have myriad points of view but only give a hint to each, and demands a similar energetic response in the reader. The intellectual complexity and dense diction of metaphysical poetry indeed had its appreciation by immediate contemporaries and readers and remained

▶ Scholarship and complexity of metaphysical poems

so until it was rediscovered in the twentieth century, and received great regard from modernist critics and poets.

1.2.10.1 John Donne (1537-1631).

Donne, the founder of the Metaphysical School of Poetry, is the greatest poet of this school. He was a great scholar and theologian. When he was imprisoned for his clandestine marriage he subscribed his letter to his wife, as "John Donne, Anne Donne, un-done." His famous works are the *Pseudo Martyr* (1610), *The Progress of the Soul* (1601), *An Anatomy of the World, An Elegy* (1611), *Epithalamium* (1613) and *Satires, Songs and Sonnets, Elegies*, which were published posthumously about 1633.

▶ John Donne's famous works

His poetry falls naturally into three divisions:

(i) Amorous Poetry: Donne's love poetry was written in his brilliant and turbulent youth. His *Songs and Sonnets* is a collection of love poems which are intense and subtle analyses of a lover's moods, expressed in vivid and startling language, which is colloquial rather than conventional. An undercurrent of satire runs even in his love poetry. His best-known love poems are *Aire and Angels, A Nocturanall Upon S. Lucies Day, A Valediction: Forbidding-Mourning* and *Extasie.* Donne "is essentially a psychological poet whose primary concern is feeling. His poems are intensely personal and reveal a powerful and complex being."

▶ Donne's love poems

(ii) Religious Poetry: Donne's religious poetry was written after 1610. "Holy Sonnets" and lyrics, such as "A Hymn to God the Father" are his finest religious poems. His religious and devotional poems are in the form of confessions or prayers.

▶ Holy poems

(iii) Satirical Poems: Donne wrote satires, such as the *Progress of the Soul* (1600), which reveal his cynical nature and keenly critical mind. They show his dissatisfaction with the world around him. They were written in the couplet form, which was later adopted by Dryden and Pope.

▶ Donne's dissatisfaction and satirical poems

Donne's poetry is scholarly. His images are far-fetched, obscure, unusual, and striking; for example:

So doth each tear

Which thee doth wear,

A globe, year word by that impression grow,

Till thy tears mixed with mine do overflow

This world, by waters sent from thee, my heaven dissolved

so.

▶ Donne's usage of images in poetry

Donne immensely influenced both the courtly and the religious poetry of the seventeenth century, as well as poets like Eliot. All metaphysical poetry, directly or indirectly, reflects Donne's influence.

1.2.10.2 George Herbert (1593-1633)

George Herbert, whose poems were collected in *The Temple* (1633), is a religious poet who showed an ardent interest in the Church of England. His poetry is distinguished by clarity of expression, concrete imagery, and intelligible conceits. He preferred simple, homely, racy language and naturalness of expression; for example,

He that forebears

To suit and serve his need,

Deserves his load

But as I rav'd and grew more fierce and wild At every word

▶ Herbert's religious poetry

Me thought I heard the callings childe

And I reply'd, My Lord.

1.2.10.3 Henry Vaughan (1622-1695).

Vaughan's work includes *Poems* (1646), 'Olor Iscanus' (1657), 'Silex Scintillans' (1650) and 'Thalia Rediviva' (1678). He is a mystic at heart. His poems, which are religious in nature, are conspicuous for fantasy, intellectual power and originality. Edward Albert writes: "His regard for nature, moreover, has a closeness and penetration that sometimes suggest Wordsworth."

▶ Vaughan's religious poetry

1.2.10.4 Andrew Marvell (1621-78)

Andrew Marvell is generally considered the last of the metaphysical poets. Many qualities in his poetry associate him with this school of poetry. But certain critics do not consider him a metaphysical poet in the strict sense of the term. According to such critics, one of them being Helen

C. White, "Marvell followed no tradition in writing his poems. On the other hand, he made use of various trends." In the words of Joan Bennet, "Marvell is a true poet, not conforming to any tradition but making use of several to write poems that are unmistakably new and his own." Joseph H. S. Summers found Marvell nearer to Jonson than to Donne. Dalglish noticed in his poetry a blending of the "passionate, probing intellectuality of Donne and the clarity and poise of Jonson." Anyway, Marvell was greatly influenced by the great metaphysical poet John Donne.

▶ What they say about Marvell?

Marvell's variety of compositions

Andrew Marvell's works are generally classified as follows:

(a) Poems which belong to the period 1650-1652

(b) Satires, which he wrote on public figures and public affairs during the reign of Charles II.

(c) Newsletters, which he regularly wrote to his constituents in Hull after he was elected Member of Parliament in 1659 and continued till his death in 1678.

▶ Marvell as a versatile writer

(d) Controversial Essays on religious questions, written between 1672-1677.

Marvell's reputation rests mainly upon his poems. His poems were published in 1681 by Mary under the title *Miscellaneous Poems*. The more important poems were written between 1650 and 1652. Several of his poems were circulated in manuscripts, as it was a contemporary practice. They were read by Milton and other friends. Most of them were available to the reading for public only after the death of the poet. However, Marvell's poetic output was not very big. He wrote about forty poems in English and a few in Latin. His well-known poems are "An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland", "The Bermudas", "The Nymph", "To His Coy Mistress", "The Garden" and the miscellaneous poems falling under the title "Mower."

▶ Marvell's well-known poems

1.2.10.5 Richard Crawshaw (1613-1649)

▶ Metaphysical capacity in Crashaw's poetry

Crawshaw's best work *Steps to the Temple* (1646) is both secular and religious. His poetry is noticeable for striking and fantastic conceits, religious fire and fervour. It is emotional rather than intellectual, and mainly lyrical.

Summarised Overview

France is considered the origin of lyric poetry and romance, though later on, the poetry started to appear in diverse languages. Among the metrical romances was the Matter of France, Rome and English, and other Miscellaneous lyrics, all of which dealt with different themes and forms. Ballad also saw its flourishing stage in the 15th century. Chaucer's poetic career included elements of French, Italian and English influences, and his career witnessed the epic work of The Canterbury Tales. Chaucer's poetic diction and content also influenced many other poets both in his time and later periods. The poetry of other writers like Edmund Spencer and the Metaphysical poets of the age placed English poetry in a great position.

Assignments

1. Discuss the main characteristics of the Age of Chaucer.
2. Discuss Chaucer's contribution to the development of English poetry.
3. Write an essay on Metaphysical poetry.
4. Discuss the contribution of Wyatt and Surrey to the development of English poetry.
5. What did Spenser contribute to the development of English poetry?

Suggested Readings

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1. Johns-Putra, Adeline, et al., editors. *Literature and Sustainability: Concept, Text and Culture.* Manchester University Press, 2017.
2. ALLEN, MARK, and STEPHANIE AMSEL, editors. *Annotated Chaucer Bibliography: 1997–2010*. Manchester University Press, 2016.
3. Brantley, Jessica. *Mediaeval English Manuscripts and Literary Forms*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022.
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5. Kaal, Harm, and Daniëlle Slootjes, editors. *New Perspectives on Power and Political Representation from Ancient History to the Present Day: Repertoires of Representation.* Brill, 2019.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

Unit 3

Drama

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, the learners will be able to:

- acquire the early history of English drama and its gradual changes
- identify various types of drama including comedy, tragedy and tragi-comedy
- describe concept of 'Comedy of Humours' in drama
- critically analyse writing style, theme and form of drama by University Wits
- recognise major contributions of Jacobean dramatists

Background

A drama is a literary work that is performed in front of an audience on stage (or in a theatre) by a professional actor. It covers disputes, actions, and certain subjects. Live performances are distinguished by striking makeup, expressions, and body language from the performers. Although there are several types of art in various nations, the drama in Britain deserves special consideration because of its connections to several famous playwrights, including William Shakespeare.

Romans brought drama to Britain from Europe, and theatres were built all around the nation for this reason. However, England did not come into the scene until several centuries after the Romans left.

Keywords

Plays, early drama, classical, tragedy, comedy, humour, University Wits, style.

1.3.1 The Beginnings: Mystery and Miracle Plays

- Religious background of early English drama

The English drama had its origin in religion (like drama elsewhere); it grew out of the Liturgy (a religious ceremony) of the Church. These early plays were, broadly, of two types: The Mysteries based upon subjects taken from the Bible, and the Miracles dealing with the lives of saints. The best of the extant groups of Miracle and Mystery plays belong to the 15th century. *Abraham and Isaac* is one of the most remarkable of these early plays.

- Gradual change in the staging of drama

To begin with, the Church had this early drama under complete control. It was written by the clergy and acted by the clergy within the Church; and its language was Latin, the language of the Church service. But as its popularity increased, and larger and larger crowds thronged to the Church, the place of performance was first shifted to the Church porch, then to the front yard, and then to some village field. Laymen now began to take part in the performances and write the plays; while Latin was replaced by English, it was the native who spoke a variety of the English tongue that was generally used. The increase in the number of fairs, and the increase in wealth, power and prestige of the merchant guilds who sponsored the plays did much for the development of the drama as a popular genre.

- Platforms and duration for staging drama

When the drama was freed from the hold of the clergy, it was staged in the form of pageants. Pageants were originally platforms on which plays were staged. Sometimes, the audience would move from one platform to another to see the whole play, and at other times the plays would be mounted on moving platforms and brought to them. At times, the performances continued for several days. However, the growth of the genre was hampered as there were no professional actors and playhouses, and the authors had little freedom of invention. They could introduce only brief comic episodes here and there. They had to follow closely their source. As the story was known, the effect depended entirely on spectacle. These early plays were, of course, poor in literary quality, but they lasted well into the 16th century.

1.3.2 Morality Play

The Morality Plays mark the next stage in the growth of drama in England. These plays were also moral and religious in nature, but the characters were not drawn from the Bible or the lives of saints but were personified abstract qualities, mostly moral values. Through such personifications, conflicts in the human soul were represented. All sorts of virtues and vices were personified, and there was generally a place for the Devil as well. A character introduced at a later stage was the Vice, the humorous incarnation of Evil and the recognised mischief-maker of the piece. This character is especially interesting, for he is the direct forerunner of the Shakespearean clown. Everyman (1490) is the finest extant example of this type of play.

▶ Personifications in Morality Plays

1.3.3 Interludes

Interludes or farces (humorous plays) mark the next stage in the development of English drama. They are the forerunners of the artistic comedy which was soon to appear. They are brief comic dialogues without any action or development. The best of them are the *Four P's* which is primarily organised around competition among four characters: the Palmer, the Pardoner, the Pothycary and the Pediar, as it looks for who would tell the biggest lie. There is no plot but the characters are lifelike and interesting.

▶ The comic element of Interludes

1.3.4 The Artistic Drama

The influence of classical drama, too, was felt in the middle of the century. *Ralph Roisier Doister* (1533) by Nicholas Udall enjoys the credit of being the first English comedy of the classical school. It is the first English play to be divided into Acts and Scenes. *Gammer Gurton's Needle* (published in 1575), from the pen of an unknown writer, is another comedy of the Classical style. It marks further development. Its characters are all real English rustics; its aim is purely recreative.

▶ Comedy and classical drama

The first classical tragedy to be written in England is *Gorboduc* or *Ferrex and Porrex* (1562) by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton. With the main features of the Senecan tragedy, it is the direct forerunner of Thomas Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*. It was the first play to use blank

▶ Tragedy in classical drama

verse for dramatic purposes, though the variety of the blank verse is rigid and stiff, and lacks the flexibility necessary for its success on the stage.

1.3.5 Thomas Sackville (1536-1608)

Sackville was a great humanist, one who gave England her first classical tragedy. However, his contribution to English poetry is the 'Induction' (or introduction) he wrote for *The Mirror of Magistrates*, a compilation of a series of stories narrating the misfortunes of great figures in English history. The work is an expression of the increasing patriotism of the English people, and their desire to explore and record their past.

▶ Sackville's contribution to classical tragedy

In his 'Induction', Sackville returns to the mediaeval tradition. There is the same allegory, the same dream convention, and the Chaucerian stanza. However, it is the excess of misery and gloom which constitutes the chief novelty of the poem. Never since Dante's *Inferno* had there been such a sinister poem, and it has the credit of inspiring the gloom of Spenser's 'Cave of Despair' in *The Faerie Queene*. Versification at the time was in a chaotic state and Sackville is one of those few poets who were faithful to scansion. In a way, he may be called the connecting link between Chaucer and Spenser.

▶ Sackville's upholding of older styles

1.3.6. Thomas Norton (1532–1584)

Thomas Norton was an English poet, dramatist, and political figure, best known for his work in early English tragedy and his collaboration with Thomas Sackville in writing *Gorboduc*, one of the first English plays written in blank verse. Gorboduc is considered a landmark in the development of English drama, particularly in establishing the form of tragedy influenced by classical models, notably Seneca's tragedies. The play was groundbreaking for its use of blank verse, a style that would later be perfected by Shakespeare. Norton's literary contributions were not limited to drama. He was also involved in the political life of his time, serving as a member of Parliament. His works reflect the influence of the Renaissance, as well as his concerns with issues of governance, justice, and the human condition. Though *Gorboduc* is his most famous work, Norton was also involved in translating works and writing poetry. His collaboration with Sackville in creating Gorboduc was a significant achievement in the early development of English Renaissance theatre. While

▶ Member of Parliament, poet. Co-wrote Gorboduc, early tragedy

his literary career was relatively short, his role in shaping early English drama, especially through his tragic plays, remains an important part of the Elizabethan cultural landscape.

1.3.7. Nicholas Udall (1504–1556)

Nicholas Udall was an English playwright, schoolmaster, and scholar, best known for writing *Ralph Roister Doister*, often regarded as the first full-length English comedy. A significant figure in the early development of English drama, Udall's work reflects the influence of classical Roman comedies, particularly the works of Plautus, yet with a distinctly English style. *Ralph Roister Doister* is an energetic, farcical play that showcases Udall's ability to blend humour, satire, and character-driven comedy, marking a departure from the more serious, morality-based plays of the time.

Udall was also a prominent educational figure, serving as headmaster of Eton College and later at Westminster School. His academic influence extended beyond drama, as he was a respected scholar of classical languages and literature. In addition to his theatrical work, Udall translated and adapted several Latin texts, demonstrating his intellectual versatility. His time at Westminster School was significant for shaping the next generation of English playwrights and intellectuals. His works helped lay the foundation for the comedic genres that would later flourish in Elizabethan theatre, influencing playwrights like Shakespeare and Ben Jonson.

▶ Wrote Ralph Roister Doister, Contributed to the genre of comedy

1.3.8. Revenge Tragedy

▶ Sackville's upholding of older styles

Revenge tragedy is a genre of drama that gained popularity in Elizabethan England, characterised by a protagonist driven by the desire to avenge a personal wrong, usually a murder or betrayal. A defining feature of revenge tragedies is the presence of supernatural elements, often a ghost or spirit, which compels the avenger to seek justice. This ghost typically reveals the truth about a past injustice, often a murder, urging the protagonist to take revenge. The central character is frequently torn between a sense of duty to avenge the wrong and a deep moral conflict, creating an emotional and psychological struggle that drives the narrative forward. The avenger's internal conflict is often portrayed

as a battle between personal morality and a desire for retribution. The plot is typically marked by escalating violence, which reaches its peak in a tragic and bloody conclusion where the protagonist often meets a fatal end, usually along with other key characters. This cycle of vengeance leads to a devastating sense of catharsis, as the audience experiences both fear and pity for the characters' inevitable downfall. Revenge tragedies explore deep themes such as justice, the corrupting power of vengeance, and the destructive consequences of seeking retribution. Key examples of this genre include Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy.*

▶ Vengeance, supernatural, conflict, tragedy

1.3.9. Seneca (c. 4 BCE – 65 CE)

Seneca (c. 4 BCE – 65 CE) was a Roman Stoic philosopher, statesman, and playwright whose works greatly influenced both philosophy and literature, especially during the Renaissance and early modern period. As a philosopher, Seneca is known for his writings on Stoicism, particularly his essays and letters that emphasised virtue, self-control, and the importance of rationality in facing life's challenges. His works like *Letters to Lucilius* and *On the Shortness of Life* became central texts in Stoic philosophy. Seneca's influence also extended to drama. He wrote a series of tragic plays, including *Phaedra, Medea*, and *Thyestes*, which became models for Renaissance playwrights, particularly in the genre of revenge tragedy. His tragedies were notable for their intense emotional content, philosophical themes, and vivid portrayal of suffering, often centred on themes like vengeance, fate, and the human condition. While his plays were inspired by Greek myths, Seneca adapted them with a focus on psychological complexity and moral dilemmas.

▶ Exponent of Revenge tragedy

1.3.10 University Wits

By the time Shakespeare emerged on the dramatic scene in England, the romantic drama was firmly established. This was the achievement of a band of young men, who were Shakespeare's immediate predecessors. They are known as 'University Wits'. They were a group of late 16th-century English playwrights who were educated at universities (Oxford or Cambridge). It was Saintsbury who gave them the name, 'University Wits.' Prominent

members of this group were: Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene and Thomas Nashe from Cambridge, and John Lyly, Thomas Lodge, and George Peele from Oxford. Being the literary elite of the time, they often ridiculed other playwrights such as Thomas Kyd and Shakespeare who did not have a university education. Some scholars think that Marlowe would have surpassed Shakespeare as an author if he had not been killed in a tavern brawl. University Wits did make a significant contribution to Elizabethan literature in various genres.

▶ University wits versus other poets

The historic importance of the 'University Wits' is great for it was they who paved the way for the free and flexible drama which Shakespeare was to make his own. One of them, Lyly, gave the English Comedy an intellectual tone and made classical mythology engaging, and it was from him that Shakespeare learned 'how to combine a courtly main plot with episodes of rustic blunders and clownish fooling'.

▶ Intellectual and flexible nature of drama by University Wits

1.3.10.1 Thomas Kyd (1558-1594)

Thomas Kyd is one of the most important university wits. His sole play *The Spanish Tragedy* (1585), a Senecan tragedy, is still regarded as a landmark in drama. It is a well-constructed play in which the dramatist has skilfully woven passion, pathos and fear. He succeeded in producing dialogue that is forceful and capable. Kyd introduced the revenge motif in tragedy. He, thus, influenced Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Webster's The *Duchess of Malfi*. The device of a play within a play, which Shakespeare employed in *Hamlet*, was used for the first time in *The Spanish Tragedy.* He also introduced the hesitating type of hero in the character of Hieronimo, who anticipates the character of Hamlet.

▶ Nature of tragedy in Kyd's drama

1.3.10.2 Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593)

Christopher Marlowe is perhaps the greatest among the University Wits. As a dramatist, Marlowe surpassed all other University Wits. His memorable plays are *Tamburlaine* (1587-88), *Dr Faustus* (1587) and *Edward II* (1593); his other plays are *The Jew of Malta* (1592), *The Tragedy of Dido, the Queen of Carthage* (1594) and *The Massacre of Paris* (1596). Swinburne calls him "the first great poet, the father of English tragedy and the creator of blank verse." He was the first English dramatist, who, according to Rickett, "saw clearly enough that the

romantic drama, was better suited to the insular genius." Marlowe provided big heroic subjects that appealed to human imagination. Marlowe's characters Tamburlaine, Dr Faustus, and the Jew of Malta are outlined with strength and developed with fire. Each play illustrates one ruling passion, in its growth, its power, and its extreme manifestations. Tamburlaine is obsessed with the passion of becoming the mightiest man on earth, to be the "scourge of Good" and "a terror to the world." Dr Faustus is fired with the desire to possess all knowledge and all pleasure without toil and without law, the *Jew of Malta* depicts the passions of great and hatred. It was Marlowe who imparted individuality and dignity to the dramatic hero.

▶ Tragic heroes in Marlow's plays

Marlowe, for the first time, made blank verse a powerful vehicle for the expression of varied human emotions, as no one had done before him. His blank verse, which Ben Jonson calls "Marlowe's Mighty Line," is noticeable for its splendour of diction, picturesqueness, vigour and energy and its responsiveness to the demands of varying emotions. Marlowe created authentic romantic tragedy in English and paved the way for the development of Shakespeare's dramatic genius.

▶ Marlowe's use of blank verse

1.3.10.3 Thomas Lodge (1558-1625)

Thomas Lodge was a lawyer by profession who gave up his legal studies and opted for a literary career. He has written only a few dramas. *Rosalynde* is the most famous of his romantic comedies. It is said that Shakespeare has taken the plot of his *As You Like It* from Lodge's *Rosalynde*.

▶ Lodge's *Rosalynde* and Shakespeare's *As You Like It*

1.3.10.4 Thomas Nashe (1567-1601)

Thomas Nash was a professional journalist. He took an active part in the political and personal questions of the day. His writings were satirical. His *Unfortunate Traveller* or *The Life of Jacke Wilton* is a prose tale which is important in the development of English novels.

▶ Nashe's satirical writings

1.3.10.5 Robert Greene (1560-1592)

Robert Greene wrote much and recklessly. His plays made a considerable contribution to the development of English drama. His sense of wit, humour and imaginative vision revealed his dramatic potential. Some of his plays are *Alehouses*, *King of Aragon* and *Friar Bacon and Friar Bangay.* Greene is weak in creating a character. His style

▶ Humour in Greene's plays

is not one of outstanding merit but his humour is genial. His method is less strict than those of other tragedians.

1.3.10.6 George Peele (1556-1596)

George Peele became a literary hack and freelancer. *The Famous Chronicle of the King Edward the 1, The Old Wives Tale, The Love of King David* and *Fair Bethsabe*, etc., are his great plays. His plays have romantic, satirical and historical tunes in nature. His style is violent to the point of absurdity but was enlivened by moments of real poetry. He handled Blank-verse with more ease and variety than was common at that time. He was fluent and had a sense of humour and pathos. In short, he represents a great advance upon the earlier drama and became popular among the playwrights of his time for the poetical qualities of his verse.

- Poetic quality in Peele's plays

1.3.10.7 John Lyly (1553-1606)

John Lyly is another great dramatist who has a strong inclination towards romantic comedy. His comedies are marked by elaborate dialogue, jests and retorts. However, we can find his influence in Shakespearean comedies. Lyly wrote eight comedies- *A Most Excellent Comedy of Alexander and Campaspe and Diogenes* (1584), *Sapho and Paho* (1584), *Gallathea* (1588), *The Man in the Moon* (1588), *Midas* (1589), *Mother Bombie* (1590), *Love's Metamorphosis* (1590) and *The Woman in the Moon*. *Midas* is one of the most important works of John Lyly which has shaken the development of romantic comedy in English literature.

- John Lyly's romantic comedy

Lyly wrote for private theatres. He created a genuine romantic atmosphere imbued with humour and fancy, as a setting for the romantic comedy. He deftly assimilated realism, classicism and romanticism in his comedies. He established prose as a medium of expression for comedy. He used prose skillfully to express light feelings of fun and laughter. The introduction of songs, symbolical of the mood or movement of a particular comedy, owes its popularity to Lyly. He thus paved the way for the blossoming of Shakespeare's dramatic genius.

- Features of Lily's comedy

1.3.11 Ben Jonson (1573-1637) and Comedy of Humours

Contemporaneous to Shakespeare was Ben Jonson, a powerful personality, and in many ways a contrast to him. Jonson was a classicist, a moralist and a reformer of the

drama. He was educated at Westminster School where he probably acquired a good knowledge of the classics. He worked as a bricklayer at first. Subsequently, after completing his military service at Flanders, he became an actor and playwright. Jonson was the first unofficial poet laureate, being given a pension by James I in 1616. In the same year, he published his collected works, raising drama to the status of other literary texts.

▶ Ben Jonson's contributions to English drama

Jonson's first major play was *Everyman in His Humour*. By 'humour', Jonson meant the governing passions of human beings, such as greed, lust, ambition, etc., which he exaggerates for the purpose of satire. In Renaissance and mediaeval physiology, humour was a bodily liquid. Excess of one particular fluid was felt to unbalance the temperament of people, making them melancholic or sanguine. Avarice is the dominating passion depicted in Jonsonian Comedy. But folly too is found everywhere. The comedies are called 'Comedies of Humours'. Jonson presents a comic world informed by a recognition of man's propensity for foolishness. It underlies that the play is a darker premise, people are greedy, lustful and liars, and society is governed by Vice rather than by Virtue. Jonson also delights in the mad behaviour of those on the stage and manipulates everything towards impossible situations only to resolve them at the last moment. *Volpone, The Alchemist* and *Bartholomew Fair* expose the idea of people driven by humours.

▶ Jonson's Comedy of Humours

Apart from his plays, Ben Jonson excelled in the production of courtly masques. Masques were fashionable at Court, especially during the reign of James I. They were spectacular entertainments which combined verse, music, dancing, disguises and visual effects. They were performed indoors, often by professionals. The members of the court took part in the masques but remained silent. Only the actors spoke. A masque invariably ended with dancing, with both spectators and the courtly masquers involved, but not the actors. The plot was symbolic with virtue triumphing over vice. It was Jonson who established the masque as a definite form. He added an anti-masque at the beginning, a burlesque or parody of the main masque. The purpose of the anti-masque was satiric while the main masque was educative and moral.

▶ Explanation of courtly masques

Masques were expensive entertainments, elaborate

and spectacular. They were also meant to glorify the court as ideal, orderly and virtuous. The lack of dialogue between the common actors and the silent courtiers, however, symbolised the rift between the Court and the common world outside - a rift that, with the accession of James and his son Charles, was to develop into a political confrontation.

▶ The political side of masques

1.3.12. Jacobean drama

Jacobean drama refers to the period of English theatre during the reign of King James I (1603–1625), a time marked by a flourishing of tragic, dark, and complex plays. This era followed the Elizabethan period, with playwrights increasingly exploring themes of corruption, political intrigue, revenge, and moral decay. The plays often reflected the turbulent social and political climate of the time, including issues of power, succession, and the nature of authority. Notable features of Jacobean drama include heightened realism, psychological depth, and a focus on the darker aspects of human nature. Playwrights such as John Webster, Thomas Middleton, and Ben Jonson produced works that deal with the complexities of the human soul, often exposing the brutality of revenge, deceit, and ambition. Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* and *Middleton's The Revenger's Tragedy* are prime examples of Jacobean tragedy, blending elements of horror, violence, and moral ambiguity. Besides, Jacobean comedies, like Jonson's Volpone, often featured satirical portrayals of greed, social climbing, and hypocrisy, critiquing contemporary society. The period is also known for its use of elaborate language, vivid imagery, and elaborate stagecraft, creating a theatrical experience that was both intellectually stimulating and visually compelling. Jacobean drama's influence on later literature and theatre remains significant.

▶ Experiencing Jacobean drama

1.3.13 John Webster

John Webster (1580-1625) is the most profound of the tragic writers. He is remembered for two plays - *The White Devil* and The *Duchess of Malfi* as both are revenge plays. Webster builds here the sinister world of Renaissance Italy, where cunning is the equivalent of good, and intrigue, continued with the most ingenious devices, is elevated into fine art. Superficially viewed, his plays seem mere melodramatic, where horror is exploited and violence openly displayed. Webster troubles little to construct his

plots well. He is content to concentrate on theatrically effective scenes. Yet when these two plays are read, or seen in the theatre, it becomes apparent that they are more than melodrama. Behind this world of theatrical violence, Webster, with a poet's mind, sees life itself as pitiless, cruel and corrupt. This elevates his idea of violence into a vision. He extends no mercy to his characters as is seen in his treatment of the *Duchess of Malfi.* However, in a few lyrical lines, he suggests that he is aware of the merciless nature of the universe.

- Melancholic and horror nature of Webster's plays

1.3.14 John Fletcher (1579-1625) and Francis Beaumont (1584-1616)

The names of the dramatists, John Fletcher and Francis Beaumont, are commonly taken together. Though they also worked separately, they produced some of their finest plays in collaboration. As dramatists, they have suffered because critics often compare their work with Shakespeare's. Three plays show their talent: the tragicomedy *Philaster,* and two tragedies, *The Maid's Tragedy* and *A King and No King.* The world they depict is much removed from the ordinary world. Upon the background of artificial courtly life, they portray exaggerated passions, often corrupt and unnatural, and high-flown sentiments. The plots are elaborate, invented with great ingenuity and admirably conducted. The verse, too, has a pleasing softness and grace. If we keep out the Shakespearean comparison, Beaumont and Fletcher appear as dramatists of many virtues. Once the comparison is made, their grace becomes lifeless and the verses miss profundity. Fletcher outlived his collaborator and is more prolific. Among the plays that he wrote without Beaumont's collaboration was *The Faithful Shepherdess,* in which a complicated plot of love is worked out against a pastoral background. The poetic qualities of the play are noteworthy.

- Qualities of Beaumont's and Fletcher's dramas

1.3.15 Philip Massinger (1584-1639)

Massinger was a prolific writer with a number of plays to his credit. The best of them are

1. *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, one of his most charming and successful comedies. It is a realistic comedy of the Jonsonian kind.

2. *The Roman Actor*- a tragedy full of violence, tumult and crime.

3. *The Maid of Honour*, the most classical of his plays, one in which a simple plot is smoothly unfolded and one which has unity of action and regular construction. But the characters and situations are stereotyped and artificial. There are elements of imitation and no invention in the play. The faithful lover, the licentious lover, the noble heroine, and the other stock characters are there in the play.

▶ Massinger's best plays

Philip Massinger's work combines in itself the qualities of both Fletcher and Ben Jonson. He is quite alive to the requirements of the popular stage and gives the people what they want. There is thrill, sensation, spectacle, and even indecency in his plays. But he also makes his plays the vehicle for the propagation of his ideas. He has his own strong views on religion and politics, and he does not hesitate to voice them through his plays.

▶ Massinger's plays

To Massinger must go the credit for saving the decadent blank verse from total degeneration. The blank verse had lost its cadence and had all but ceased to exist. His versification is rhythmic in an age in which the versification of most authors is dislocated. Some of his other characteristics as a dramatist are his power of oratory, which is often strained, laborious and monotonous. His imagination lacks spontaneity, and the same images, characters and situations, are constantly repeated. He is an industrious rather than an inspired poet. In his plays, there is much indecency, and the conclusion is often forced and unnatural. However, his noble and massive work is such that it redeems his age from the charge of decadence.

▶ Enlivening of blank verse

1.3.16 Thomas Dekker (1570-1641)

While the playwright John Marston is pessimistic and cynical, Dekker is optimistic and gay. Both are equally licentious. Dekker's cheerfulness and gaiety are surprising if we take into account the general decadence and gloom of the period. The best-known plays of Dekker are: (1) *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599) which gives us realistic pictures of the followers of the craft and has been directly inspired by Deloney's *The Gentle Craft.* (ii) *The Honest Whore* (1604) gives us a glimpse of the underworld of London and records the trials and experiences of a whore who is determined to lead an honest life. It might be called a domestic drama as far as the main plot is concerned.

▶ Dekker's cheerful writing

Both comedies mentioned above are remarkable for

their realism. His portraits of craftsmen remain unexcelled in their accuracy and truth to life, cheerfulness and optimism as well as characterisation. Dekker excels in painting female characters. His women have the grace, tenderness and delicacy of Robert Greene. His male characters, too, have been drawn with great sympathy and insight. There is a fusion of different elements, the realistic and the romantic, the courtly and the rural, in the manner of Greene. He has the gift of freshness and grace. No burden of learning weighs him down. He is artlessly romantic and truly poetic. He has the lyrical gift of a high order, and the songs in his plays are light, delicate and musical. While he has merits of a high order, he cannot be ranked with the greatest. His plays are ill-constructed and marred by much coarseness and licentiousness.

- Dekker's characters and style of writing

Summarised Overview

The religious and moralistic nature of early plays, including their staging and performance, has been discussed here. The engagement of comedy and tragedy in the artistic dramas, later on, was found in the writings by Thomas Sackville and University Wits. Ben Jonson extensively employed the elements of humour in his plays as he developed a style named 'Comedy of Humours' in his narrations. John Webster's employment of tragedy, Beaumont's and Fletcher's tragi-comedic plays, Massinger's use of blank verse in plays and Dekker's cheerful writing are discussed in the unit.

Assignments

1. Discuss the religious and moral elements found in Mystery and Miracle Plays.
2. Write an essay on University Wits by referring to their style and themes of plays.
3. Write a note on the dramatic career of John Fletcher and Francis Beaumont.
4. Analyse the nature of Ben Jonson's plays by referring to the Comedy of Humours.

Suggested Readings

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

Unit 4

Prose and Fiction

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of the unit, the learners will be able to:

- elucidate prose and fiction writers' major contributions to Mediaeval and Renaissance literatures.
- comprehend various forms and styles of prose and fiction that existed in the Mediaeval and Renaissance Ages.
- examine the role of translated works, especially of *The Bible*, in enriching the genre of prose in English.
- understand the knowledge and precision contained in the essays published in Mediaeval and Renaissance periods.

Background

Although the Elizabethan period is known as The Golden Age of English Poetry and Drama, it should also be considered to be a great age of English Prose. This is because great prose writers like Sir Philip Sidney, Lyly, Greene, Lodge, Nashe, Deloney and Dekker helped to establish English Prose on the route to fame. The Elizabethan prose initially appeared to be a translation of foreign works, particularly Italian novellas or short tales like William's *Palace of Pleasure* or Geoffrey Fenton's *Tragical Discourses*. *The Adventures of Master* FJ by George Gascoigne was the most interesting work of early Elizabethan prose fiction.

The romances and picaresque tales served as inspiration for Elizabethan prose fiction. Translations of the ancient Greek and Latin stories that were rediscovered during the Renaissance were a major factor in the development of Elizabethan prose fiction. At the same time, chivalric literature began to arrive from Spain, France, and Italy. The development of prose fiction in the Elizabethan era was significantly influenced by the works of Don Quixote and Amadis de Gaul, both of Portuguese descent.

Keywords

Utopia, Wycliffe's writings, Tyndale's Bible, Arcadia, Anglicanism, Hydrotaphia

Discussion

1.4.1. Medieval and Renaissance prose

Medieval and Renaissance prose represent two significant periods in the evolution of English literature, each marked by distinct characteristics and stylistic shifts. Medieval prose, spanning roughly from the 5th to the 15th century, was heavily influenced by religious themes and Latin texts. It was often functional, focusing on historical accounts, religious writings, and moral instruction. Notable examples include Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, which blends poetry and prose to depict a vivid social landscape, and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, a historical record of early English history. During the medieval period, prose was often written in Latin or Old English and was primarily produced by monks and clerics for educational and religious purposes.

- Medieval prose: religious, Latin, functional

The Renaissance, which began in the 14th century and flourished in the 16th century, saw a dramatic shift toward humanism, the study of classical antiquity, and the exploration of individual experience. Prose from this period was characterised by an increased focus on vernacular language, the development of new genres like the essay, and a broader range of topics, including philosophy, politics, and exploration. Key figures like Sir Thomas More, with *Utopia*, and Francis Bacon, with his essays, expanded the scope of English prose, laying the groundwork for modern prose forms. The Renaissance also marked the rise of the printing press, which helped disseminate prose works to a wider audience.

- Renaissance prose: humanism, vernacular, diverse topics

1.4.2 Sir Thomas More (1478-1535)

Sir Thomas More was one of the early humanists and the first prose writer of great literary significance. He is known today chiefly for his *Utopia* or *The Kingdom*

of Nowhere, a work which was originally written in Latin (1515) but was translated into English in 1551 by Ralph Robinson. It is the "true prologue of Renaissance". It shows the influence of Plato. *Utopia* has been called "the first monument of modern socialism." More extols democratic communism, people's state, elected government, equal distribution of wealth and nine hours' work a day. In the book, we find the first reasoning for the foundation of civilised society, summed up by the three great words—Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. More advocates religious tolerance. In English literary history, More is seldom remembered for his contribution to style but rather often for the originality of his ideas.

▶ *Utopia* as a prologue of Renaissance

Utopia embodies More's conception of an ideal state, but it is also a vigorous satire on the abuses, corruptions and errors of the age. In More's *Utopia*, to quote Long again, "We find for the first time, as the foundations of civilised society, the three great words- Liberty, Equality and Fraternity."

▶ The ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity

More wrote in Latin; he never sought to mould English prose. His style is formless and his sentences are interminably long. In English literary history, he occupies an important place because of the originality of his ideas and the logical way in which they have been expounded.

▶ More's narrative style

1.4.3 Bible Translations

1.4.3.1 John Wycliffe

John Wycliffe (1324-84) is also called the First Protestant, and the 'Father of the English Reformation'. He may be called with equal justification the Father of English Prose as well. He took to writing in English only towards the end of his life, and the occasion was provided by the conflict between the Pope and the King. Following the example of France, King Edward refused to pay the arrears of tithes to the Pope. An anonymous pamphlet appeared defending the Pope's claim, and Wycliffe replied to it in clear, moving English prose. His followers, known as Lollards, went about the country, preaching his ideals. He attacked violently not only the abuses of the Church but also the very dogmas of the Church.

▶ Wycliffe's writings against abuses of the Church

As a writer of English prose his contributions are as follows:

1. He was the first to translate the Bible into English. The

English version of the Bible came from the pen of Wycliffe and his followers and was produced in eight years from about 1380 to 1388. Wycliffe's Bible was a translation of the Latin 'Vulgate' issued by St. Jerome in the fifth century. He made the Bible accessible to every common reader.

▶ Wycliffe's translation of the *Bible* and production of pamphlets

2. He was the first to use pamphlets and leaflets as direct means of appeal to the people at large. Hence his style is simple and forceful. It does not have any artistic quality, but it has logic and vigour.

1.4.3.2 William Tyndale (1468-1536)

Tyndale was the most important member of the group of scholars known as "the Cambridge Reformers". He was inspired by the example of Luther to begin his translation of the *Bible* in 1522. He used the original Greek and Hebrew Bibles. The translation was completed by his friend, Miles Coverdale. Tyndale's version forms the basis of the famous Authorised Version of the Bible, 1611.

▶ Tyndale's translation of the *Bible*

Tyndale's *Bible* is not merely a religious work but also a work of great literary significance. It is not merely a translation but also a work of Protestant propaganda. The notes that Tyndale has added are strongly critical of the Roman Catholic creed. As Pollard puts it, Tyndale 'fixed once for all the style and tone of the English Bible'. Its style and tone are popular. As Tyndale himself tells us in the 'Preface', his ambition was that even a peasant should be able to read his *Bible*. His prose is remarkable for its simplicity, clarity, lucidity, and directness. And the translator's religious fervour and reverence give the translation a rare dignity. It is not the ornate prose of the Renaissance, but clear, forceful and straightforward prose. It is remarkable for its poetic cadences, for its music and melody, for its poetic imagery, sense of rhythm and harmony. Its phrases are unforgettable, and its words have great beauty and power.

▶ Tyndale's style and method of translation

1.4.3.3 Miles Coverdale

From Coverdale's translation (1535), we have got a beautiful combination of words like 'loving kindness', tender-mercy, tender-hearted, the avenger of blood, the valley of the shadow of the death, morning star, broken-hearted, bloodguiltiness, etc.

▶ Coverdale's word combinations

1.4.3.4 *The Authorised Version of the Bible*

The Authorised Version is the work of forty-seven scholars, presided over by Bishop Andrews and nominated by James I. The translators were divided into a number of groups, and each group was assigned a particular part. The translation made by each group was revised by the other groups. In this way, *The Authorised Bible* is the joint work of all the translators who contributed their best to each part of it. Since, henceforth, by King's command, this *Bible* was read in churches all over the country; and in their homes by the devout, its influence on the English language, both spoken and literary, cannot be exaggerated.

▶ The making of *The Authorised Version of the Bible*

1.4.3.4.1 Chief characteristics of the style of The Authorised Version are:

1. Sonorous passages of perfect beauty, having the beauty of the highest poetry.

2. A pleasant archaic flavour which distinguishes its prose from other kinds of prose, and has come to be regarded as truly religious prose.

3. Use of phrases, idioms, turns of speech, maxims and sententious expressions, pithy, and concentrated sentences, which have passed into everyday speech and writing.

4. Avoidance of long and formless sentences as well as the affectations and pedantry of the learned.

5. Use of a poetic, charming language, which served as an alternative to the dry and uninteresting reasoning of the philosophers.

6. Use of a wealth of imagery, a host of similes and metaphors, based on the common everyday objects of nature.

▶ Rich prose and poetic styles of *The Authorised Version*

7. A lofty and poetic style which inspired even the ignorant and could make even a wondering tinker, like Bunyan, into a great prose writer.

The influence of the Bible is seen not only in the use of Biblical idiom and phraseology but also in the frequent allusions and Referencess, to its themes in the works of most English writers. It has been a well of perennial inspiration. Both English mysticism and clear, reasoned

▶ Impact of *The Authorised Version* in English prose

expression, are derived from passages in the Bible. English prose, as we know it today, might not have been possible without the Authorised Version of 1611.

1.4.4 Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586)

Sidney is the very embodiment of the spirit of the Renaissance and the spirit of chivalry. Sidney's "Arcadia", written in 1580 and published in 1590, mingles the pastoral and the chivalrous strains. "Arcadia" is an idyllic pastoral country but the story which is narrated is of love and chivalry, and of knight-errantry. Only the background is pastoral. Scattered all over are Sidney's reflections on life, politics and morals. The work enjoyed immense popularity and writing pastoral romances became one of the fashions of the day. The very word Arcadia has become synonymous with pastoral. The chief merit as well as the chief defect of the work lies in its style. It is a highly refined and ornate style. The chief artifice of Sidney, his chief mannerism, is the use of pathetic fallacy, i.e., life, feeling and will are imparted constantly to abstract and inanimate objects.

▶ Pastoral and chivalric elements in "Arcadia"

Sidney's "Arcadia" is also remarkable for its detailed portraits; its characters are sketched as vividly and clearly as the figures on a painter's canvas. It was from outputs of the Italian Renaissance that Sidney acquired his love for the picturesque, his eye for form and colour, and for the play of light and shade. It is the art of a painter which inspires his character drawing. Sidney's *Apology for Poetry* (1595) is the most memorable critical work which marked the beginning of critical prose in England.

▶ "Arcadia" compared to a painting

1.4.5 Robert Greene (1558-1592)

As a writer of prose romances, Greene is remembered for *Pandosto* (1588), *Mamilia and Menaphone* (1589). His romances are moral in tone and their style is imitative of Lyly. He has a sense of structural unity, restraint and verisimilitude. What distinguishes Greene is the skilful portraiture of women characters. Besides these romances, Greene strikes a note in *Mourning of Garment* (1590) and *Never Too Late* (1590).

▶ Greene's prose romances

1.4.6 Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

Sir Francis Bacon, a man of versatile genius and achievements, occupies a dominant place in English prose. He wrote varied types of prose which is philosophical

in *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), historical in the *History of Reign of King Henry VII* (1622) and speculative in *New Atlantis* (1626), which was left incomplete due to his death.

▶ Bacon's vivid topics of essays

Bacon occupies a permanent place in English prose due to his Essays, ten in number, which appeared in 1597. The second edition (1612) and the third edition (1625) raised the number to 38 and 58 respectively. They are on familiar subjects and they represent the meditations of a trained and learned mind. They contain utilitarian wisdom and are written in a lucid, clear and aphoristic style. Bacon began the vogue of essay writing in English. His essays introduced a new form of literature into English, which was destined to have a varied and fruitful development. They are also a record of Bacon's outlook on the world throughout the years of his active life.

▶ Elegance of Bacon's essays

In the history of English prose, Bacon occupies a very prominent position. He is called the father of English Essays. According to Longs, "Bacon's *Essays* is the one work which will interest all students of English literature. The aphoristic style of his *Essays* is a real contribution to the history of English prose style…."

▶ Contribution to English prose style

In his famous *History of Reign of King Henry VII*, Bacon applied the inductive method of history by basing his account on facts that he believed would speak for themselves. His *The New Atlantis* belongs to the class of Thomas More's *Utopia*. It is a fragmentary sketch of a Baconian *Utopia.* Bacon expressed his dreams for the advancement of knowledge and the improvement of human conditions and also dealt with the social and political arrangement in *The New Atlantis.*

▶ Topics dealt with by Bacon

1.4.7 Roger Ascham (1515-1568)

He was a great educationist. His first work *Toxophilus* or *The School of Shooting* (1545) was written in English. He lamented the state of the English language: "Everything has been done excellently well in Greek and Latin, but in the English tongue so meanly that no man can do worse." But "I have written this English matter, in the English tongue for Englishmen." His second work, *The School Master* (1570) contains intellectual instructions for the young. Ascham's prose style, though frequently marked by Latinisms, is noticeable for its economy and precision. He was the first writer who wrote "the English speech for

▶ Ascham's elevation of English language

the Englishmen." He is "the first English stylist."

1.4.8 John Lyly (1153-1606)

John Lyly was educated at Oxford and from there he came to London in search of a career. It was at the age of twenty-four that he published his famous *Euphues or The Anatomy of Wit* (1578). Its hero Euphues, a young Athenian, goes to Naples, and the book describes his adventures in that city. Athens stands for Oxford, and Naples for London. The work is a satire on the Italianate young men of the day. The secret of its popularity lies in its peculiar, highly ornate style. The first thing Lyly aims for is symmetry and balance in the sentences, which is emphasised by alliteration. And this mannerism, this particular trick of style, not spasmodic, is used constantly and methodically throughout. We would no doubt call such a style artificial and pedantic, but in its own day, it was immensely popular. Moreover, it was of great service, as it served to give a form and a mould to the formless English prose and to impart art to the inartistic. His sentences are balanced and well-constructed. Lyly may be called the first great conscious stylist in the history of English prose.

▶ Lily's prose style

Second, Lyly decorates his style with similes and metaphors drawn from the most remote and fantastic sources. He was a great scholar and for his imagery, he does not go to nature but to books. He draws heavily from ancient mythology and history, but more especially from the fabulous bestiaries (or beast epics) and herberies (accounts of the vegetable world) of the Middle Ages. He himself invents equally fantastic images. This makes his style seem extravagant, artificial and unreal to a modern reader, but in its own age, it proved highly popular. His mechanical devices were easy to imitate, and Euphuism soon became the fashion of the day. In course of time, the word Euphuism came to be used for every kind of affectation and pedantry in prose style.

▶ Lily's narrative resources and devices

1.4.9. Sir Walter Raleigh (1552–1618)

Sir Walter Raleigh (1552–1618) was not only a renowned explorer and courtier but also a significant prose writer, whose works spanned history, philosophy, and the exploration of the human condition. One of his most notable prose works is *The History of the World* (1614), a monumental work that examines historical events from the creation of the world through to the fall of the Roman Empire.

Raleigh's history is notable for its blend of classical, biblical, and contemporary sources, offering insights into politics, philosophy and morality. The work, written during his imprisonment in the Tower of London, reflects his intellectual depth and keen interest in understanding the forces shaping human history.

▶ Raleigh's prose: history, philosophy, exploration

Bessides *The History of the World*, Raleigh's prose writings include essays on various topics, including the nature of time and the experience of life. His letters, often addressed to figures in the royal court, also demonstrate his skill in rhetoric and argumentation, focusing on political and philosophical matters. Raleigh's prose was deeply influenced by his personal experiences, including his involvement in court politics and his exploration of the New World. His writings reflect a fusion of Renaissance humanism, an admiration for classical thought, and a pragmatic understanding of the complexities of his era, contributing significantly to English literature during the late 16th and early 17th centuries.

▶ Influenced by humanism, experience, politics

1.4.10 Richard Hooker (1554-1600)

He is known for his popular work, *Of Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity.* In style, he is strongly affected by classical writers but he usually writes with homeliness and point, his sentences are artificially constructed. Though he proposed to write eight books, he wrote only four books which became *Of Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* in 1594. He also finished one more book. Though three more books were posthumously published, it was doubtful whether he wrote them or not. The first two books present philosophical principles and the other book apply them to life. His book attempts to prove Anglicanism via media between Puritanism and Catholicism. His style is an early example of scholarly and accomplished English prose. Like Shakespeare and Bacon, Hooker opened a new direction in the use of the English language. His sentences are often long and ultra Latinised in form. But its melody and noble cadence are of the richest and highest order.

▶ Richard Hooker's prose manner

1.4.11 Izaak Walton (1593-1683)

Izaak Walton is the most delightful and the most endearing literary figure. He is an accomplished biographer. His biographies of Donne, Hooker, George Herbert, etc., are among the most charming biographies ever written in the English language. He knew his subjects

intimately and narrates their life histories accurately. He relates only such facts as he has painstakingly verified, and therein lies the value of his book. His biography of John Donne is our most reliable source for knowing the facts of the great poet's life. Walton writes with all the intimacy of personal acquaintance. He was cheerful, optimistic, good-natured and shrewd; his writings derive their charm from his personality and outlook on life.

▶ Izaak Walton's biographic works

Even more popular is his *The Compleat Angler*, a transformed pastoral. It is inspired by his optimism and love of nature, and the charm of his personality runs through it. It is in the form of a dialogue between the angler and his pupil. The work is a minor classic of the English language.

▶ Walton's pastoral narrative

1.4.12 Sir Thomas Browne (1605-82)

Sir Thomas Browne is the greatest prose-writer of the Puritan age. He was a man of wide and varied learning and his learning is reflected in his writings. He was a doctor by profession and a mystic by temperament. The mystic vein runs through his works, and everything is coloured by his personal experiences. His chief works are:

1. *Religio Medici* (1635) *or the Religion of a Doctor*. It is his most personal work and reveals his complex soul. He frequently generalises on the vanity of glory, and the nearness of death.

2. *Hydrotaphia or Urn Burial* (1658) is his greatest work. It shows Browne's vast erudition regarding the various ancient modes of burial. However, the work is full of digressions on death and oblivion. He constantly dwells on his own courage, charity and pity for others. It is a charming piece of self-revelation.

▶ Mystic elements and personal experiences in Thomas Browne's works

Browne is one of the greatest stylists in English literature, and it is as an artist that he excels. The charms of this great writer remained forgotten till Charles Lamb discovered them and made others also conscious of them.

▶ Charles Lamb's discovery of Browne

Summarised Overview

Thomas More is considered the harbinger of Renaissance ideas through his epic work *Utopia*. English prose, later on, was much helped by the various translations of *The Bible* by different authors, especially by the publication of The *Authorised Version*. Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* played a prominent role in introducing the chivalric and pastoral aspects into the English prose. Sir Francis Bacon's dealings with various topics and the elegance of his writing style gave English essays a higher status. Sir Thomas Browne's essays comprised of his personal experiences, Izaak Walton's biographic works, Richard Hooker's scholarly and accomplished prose style, and John Lily's peculiar and highly ornate style, etc., enriched the evolution of English prose in Elizabethan Age.

Assignments

1. Write on More's *Utopia* as a prologue to Renaissance.
2. Explain how the translation of *The Bible* by various authors enlivened the English prose.
3. Trace Bacon's contribution to the development of English essays.
4. Discuss briefly the development of Mediaeval and Renaissance prose and fiction.
5. Write a note on Philip Sidney's *Arcadia.*

Suggested Readings

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

Poetry and Drama

BLOCK-02

Block Content

Unit 1

Poetry

Learning Outcomes

The learner, by reading this unit, will be able to:

- observe the important features of poetry ranging from the Age of Chaucer until the Elizabethan Age.
- get an understanding of Chaucer's characters in *The Canterbury Tales* explained in his *Prologue.*
- analyse peculiarities of the poem "Prothalamion" by Edmund Spencer.
- describe John Donne's metaphysical poems "The Canonization" and "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning."

2.1.1 *General Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales*

Background

The Canterbury Tales was written by Geoffrey Chaucer (1340 – 1400) over the span of thirteen years from 1387 to 1400. It is quite a long text in which some sections are written in verse and some in prose. *The Canterbury Tales* is a collection of stories widely regarded as his magnum opus. Despite the fact that Chaucer never makes a clear reference to Boccaccio's *The Decameron*, he acquired much of his source material. *The Decameron* is also a sequence of interconnected stories, similar to *The Canterbury Tales*. Apart from the high literary standard of the work, *The Canterbury Tales* also serves as a historical and sociological introduction to the life and times of the late Middle Ages. It is a collection of twenty-four stories written in Middle English that spans over 17000 lines.

Keywords

Pilgrims, characterisation, storytelling, social, political, culture

Fig. 2.1.1. Geoffrey Chaucer

2.1.1.1 The Life of Chaucer

- Chaucer as a diplomat

Although not much is known about Chaucer's life, official records give us a good idea of his public career. He was born about 1343-44 to John and Agnes Chaucer in London. The name Chaucer (French 'Chaussier') suggests that he was from a shoe-making family, but his immediate ancestors were prosperous wine merchants with some standing at court. Beginning as a page in the household of Prince Lionel and Elizabeth, Countess of Ulster, Chaucer went to France along with the English army, was taken prisoner near Reims and ransomed. He seemed to have risen to the service of the king, undertaking a series of diplomatic missions for ten years which exposed him to continental culture.

- Chaucer's private life and rise to the literary height

Chaucer was married probably in 1366 to Philippa, daughter of Sir Payn Roelt and sister of Katherine Swynford, afterwards the third wife of John of Gaunt. From 1 December 1372 till 23 May 1373, he was once more on the Continent, and it was his first Italian journey. This visit, which took him from Genoa to Florence, had a decisive influence on him. Florence was already a centre of art, architecture and literature; it brought him into contact with the writing of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio. In other words, the Italian journey took him from the Middle Ages to the threshold of the Renaissance.

Shortly before going to Italy, Chaucer wrote *The Book of the Duchess*, an elegy on the death of Blanche, the wife of John of Gaunt. His wide connections and affiliations made him the Controller of the Customs and Subsidy on Wool, Sltins, and Hides in the port of London in 1374.

After some fluctuation of fortune, in 1389, when Richard II asserted his position, Chaucer was appointed Clerk of the King's Works, in charge of the upkeep of the royal buildings. When he lost his Clerkship, he again went through financial uncertainties until the new King Henry IV gave him an annuity of 40 pounds. But the poet died soon after in 1400.

▶ Chaucer's clerical appointments

From this brief sketch, it is clear that, despite the cultivated ironic image of himself as a dreamer withdrawn among his books (as, say, in *The House of Fame*), Chaucer was an active man of affairs, mixing freely in government and courtly circles. Since the love of French culture was common among such classes, Chaucer's tastes and reading were also influenced by it. Among his wide reading, he included the works *Roman de la Rose, The Poems of Marchant* and *The Works of Ovid* (in Latin). Chaucer's early work is often referred to as his 'French' period (1358-72) because of the influence of some contemporary French poets like Deschamps and Froissart. His 'Italian' period (1379-85) begins with *The House of Fame*, and his chief work in this period is *Troilus and Criseyde.* Without rejecting the French and Italian elements, Chaucer enters his 'English' period (1385-90)with *Troilus and Criseyde* and *The Canterbury Tales.*

▶ Chaucer's French, Italian and English periods

2.1.1.2 *General Prologue*

General Prologue begins with a memorable description of Spring. The immediate reason for this is that only with the return of mild weather after winter could people go on a pilgrimage. Chaucer was clearly dealing with a conventional theme with commonplace features. Such conventionality was not a weakness but a strength in mediaeval literature. People in Chaucer's time passed winter inside dark, draughty, heated and smoky huts living on salted beef, smoked bacon, dried peas, beans, last year's wheat or rye and so on. The shortage of fresh food resulted in diseases like scurvy in winter. Thus, when the April shower made the grass grow again, both cattle and men were delighted at the prospect of fresh food and recovery of health. The sweet showers revive nature and by implication human nature; the underlying motif is of resurrection or spiritual renewal. This is the way in which the cycle of seasons is closely related to the cycle of human life. April facilitates occasions and spiritual yearning for going on pilgrimage.

▶ Physical atmosphere for the pilgrimage

The force of rejuvenating Nature is in the South wind which inspires or breathes upon the tender twigs to make them grow; it bathes every vein, that is, the earth and the vessels of sap; it spurs even the small birds to sing all night. The awakening of physical health passes easily into the spiritual quest, the desire to journey out of the mundane and everyday existence to distant holy shrines. The pilgrims come from all corners of England to visit the shrine of St. Thomas Becket, who was martyred in the Canterbury cathedral in 1170. The modem poet, T.S. Eliot, wrote a play *Murder in the Cathedral* on this subject. Eliot's *Waste Land* also opens with an ironic echo of Chaucer: "April is the cruellest month."

▶ Nature in the *General Prologue*

Chaucer habitually refers to the time in the framework of astrology or mythology. He tells that the sun is in the early part of its annual course, just coming out of Aries, the first sign of the zodiac. This is how astrology (which also meant astronomy) links earthly life to the heavenly. The sign of the Tabard Inn in Southwark, where Chaucer the narrator is joined by the twenty-nine pilgrims, was a sleeveless coat embroidered with armorial bearings. The companionship of pilgrims suggests a sense of community, and their varied backgrounds make the description a miniature version of fourteenth-century society.

▶ Tabard Inn as a miniature version of the 14th society

2.1.1.3 Pen Picture of the Travellers

The **Knight**, the first portrait in the work, is an idealised representation of chivalry. He is polite in speech and conduct, brave in war and in competition, and dignified and understated in his filthy rough tunic and coat of mail. His quiet behaviour, akin to that of a virgin, and his lack of fun or vitality may have a very slight ironic undertone. These final two details could give a characteristic picture of him. In the age of weakening chivalry, he feels a little out of place. Although he may have also participated in the Hundred Years' War, all of his military missions were in fact rather a form of Crusade. He engaged in combat with the Moors and Saracens throughout the Mediterranean and Northern Africa. He was the most honoured person in the company of pilgrims because he sits at the head of the table of honour at the Teutonic knights.

▶ Chivalric nature of the Knight

The Knight's son, **the Squire**, appears to have joined the company for pleasure, which is in opposition to his Christian concept. He is a young courtly lover who aspires

to knighthood and whose valour has already earned him much respect. In addition to his attractive physique, there are several more elements of his attire and appearance. His gown was embroidered to resemble a spring meadow, and his hair was curled. Parish priests criticised fashionable clothing as a waste of money that could have helped the less fortunate. The Squire's youthful vitality and ability to sing, dance, draw, write, jostle, and create songs foreshadow the Renaissance courtier character.

- The Squire's jovial approach

In terms of status, **Yeoman** is a servant just one step above the groom. Yeomen joins a group of middle-class and notable landowners. He was clearly a gamekeeper by trade as evidenced by his green robe, horn, and talisman picture of St. Christopher, the patron saint of travellers and foresters. His character may refer to Chaucer himself, because, for more than seven years, the latter served as the deputy forester of the royal forest at North Petherton. Yeoman's close-cropped head, sunburned face, and the panache with which he held his weapons are all his distinguishing features. He may have been one among the young men-archers and knifemen that routed the French chivalry at Crecy based on the bow ('mighty bowe' could refer to the long bow), arrows, armguard (of archery), sword, shield and dagger.

- Yeoman's energetic character

In keeping with her social status, the **Prioress**' personality is depicted in a very subtle manner. It was highly likely that she was raised in a wealthy home. Dowry was a symbol of wealth or familial ties for the elite. However, since virginity was highly regarded in the Middle Ages, many knights forced their unmarried daughters to seek sanctuary in nunneries. Here, they frequently lived in worldly comfort and spiritual contentment. Because of this, Chaucer's Prioress was well-educated but gave into her vanity and flaws in her effort to replicate courtly customs. She was expressly forbidden by the Church from owning pets since the money needed for their upkeep could be used to help the needy, and also from going on pilgrimages, because doing so meant leaving her life of seclusion.

- Secluded life of elite women

Chaucer contrasts Prioress' beauty, attire and refined table manners with the then prevalent social setting in the romance novel style—even her name and descriptive adjectives like "symple and coy" fit in. Her attire, jewellery

(fluted wimple, ornate rosary, and brooch), sensual mouth, delicate nose, and exposed and broad forehead, as well as her pious nature, point out inadequate suppression of femininity at that time, as they are all underlined by her. Chaucer's mild amusement at her refined attitude extends to her proficiency with the nasal intonation typically utilised in the recitative sessions of church services.

- Prioress' ornate character and attire

Prioress' handling of French is also subtly mocked because it reveals her desire for courtliness. It is likely that she learned French in Paris, but rather in an English nunnery. But Chaucer does highlight some lapses in her behaviour. She broke the law by keeping dogs as pets and feeding them foods like roasted meat, milk, and wastel-bread (a costly white bread) that were not common in England. She was so sensitive that she would cry when she see her dogs being killed or beaten, which only served to spotlight her moral apathy. She would also cry when mice were caught, eventhough mice were potentially harmful pests, and perhaps even carriers of plague.

- Prioress' lifestyle and approaches

Due to the high cost of schooling and the need for monks to be educated, **the Monk** typically belonged to the gentry or noble class. St. Augustine (c. 400 A.D.) was the first to establish the monastic order's regulations, followed by St. Benedict (c. 700 A.D.). The monks were required to live a life of abstinence within the monastery, to work as manual labourers, or they chose to become scholars or teachers and adhere to the principles of obedience, simplicity and celibacy. They spent their days worshipping, praising God, giving to the needy and copying manuscripts. The monks lived in luxury as the monastery's wealth and administrative roles grew. The "outrider" monks could not live in seclusion since they had to oversee the estates and monasteries.

- Life of the monks

Daun Piers, the monk from Chaucer's narrative, is often associated with the modern world of luxury, money and pleasure. He scornfully condemns the Augustinian ideal of asceticism, renunciation and seclusion from society. Once more, Chaucer's viewpoint about the Monk's perspective is ambivalent; he does not totally endorse or condemn him. A fundamental social and intellectual shift in the mediaeval era is undoubtedly shown by the Monk's vigour and desire for life. Though his physical characteristics, fashionable attire and the bells in his

- Daun Piers's characterisation

horse's bridle combine to distinguish him, his love of hunting is not uncommon. In this way, all of his defiant and immoral energy is reflected in his eyes.

The Friars were required to swear an oath of leading a simple life, adhere to Christ's teachings, carry out charitable works and preach across the nation. The Dominicans, also known as Black Friars, Franciscans, also known as Grey Friars, Carmelites, sometimes known as White Friars, and Augustinians, also known as Austin Friars, were the four main orders of friars in England at the time of Chaucer. They were orders of mendicants who made their living through begging. However, begging developed soon into a lucrative industry, and the friars began to compete for the right to beg in particular areas. They made a lot of money since they had the ability to receive confessions and collect ecclesiastical taxes. In other words, Chaucer's Friar Hubert serves as an illustration of the mendicant orders' corruption, which the Wyclif's supporters frequently criticise. He is a limitour, which means that he is allowed to beg up to a certain amount, but his earnings significantly outweighed the amount he gave to the monastery. His tendency for lisping and his smooth white neck are indicators of his lechery. He avoided the sick and the impoverished, preying on people's religiosity, and instead frequented pubs and the homes of the wealthy, adopting an obedient behaviour. Although dealing with the destitute was neither honourable nor beneficial, Chaucer asked people to give money to friars. The friar displayed a different kind of power through his eyes, much like the monk does.

▶ The Friars' begging

A very wealthy and influential class in England is represented by **the Merchant**. The Merchant Adventurers, who imported English fabric into foreign cities, and the Merchants of the Staple, who resided at home and exported English wool abroad, were two influential merchant groups. Despite having a generally wealthy image, the merchant was actually in debt, but he managed to keep up his good credit and reputation by constantly bragging about his deals and earnings. He dressed expensively but somewhat conservatively, was highly trendy as seen by his perfectly fastened boots and forked beard, and his beaver cap connected him to the Flemish commerce. The Merchant Adventurers' overseas headquarters were in Middleburgh, and the Merchants of

▶ How did the merchants work?

the Staple utilised the English port of Orwell. Perhaps both factions were represented in Chaucer's Merchant. Usury and illegal currency transactions were two significant economic crimes in which he was covertly engaged.

Chaucer's **Clerk** is a college student preparing for a profession in the Church. He was the embodiment of knowledge whose unworldliness kept him destitute in contrast to the many licentious clerks. Both he and his horse were malnourished, and his clothing was ragged. He worked hard to master logic which was the foundational subject of mediaeval university instruction. He kept the twenty volumes of Aristotle by his bedside as the latter's influence on mediaeval academic life was profound. Twenty volumes at that period, made totally by hand, would have cost the equivalent of two or three burgher houses, according to historians. Therefore, it is not unexpected that all of the Clerk's spending was on books. When Chaucer claims that the Clerk's philosophy did not provide him gold, he is making fun of the word "philosopher," which also implies "alchemist." He never acted in an unsightly manner, and his speeches were always succinct, to the point, and ethically instructive.

▶ The Clerk's ownership of twenty volumes of Aristotle

One of the King's legal assistants, the **Sergeant of the Law** was selected from among barristers. The Sergeant had a 16 years of experience in his profession of law. The legal assistants also included the chief baron of the Exchequer and the judges of the King's courts. Because of Chaucer's legal training, his image can be reflected in the character of the Sergeant of the Law. The parvis, or porch of St. Paul's Cathedral, traditionally served as the location where attorneys met with clients for consultations. The Sergeant of the Law has been appointed as a judge both by commission—that is, by a letter addressed to the appointee giving him jurisdiction over all types of cases—and by patent, which means by the King's letters by appointing the former. He received many gifts from his clients because of his extensive experience and knowledge of all the statutes, cases, and decisions made since the Conquest. It is strange that Chaucer praised the lawyer's knowledge and wisdom because the lawyer pretended to be busier than he actually was. Additionally, he sought to become a landowner by purchasing a lot of land, as his legal knowledge enabled him to have unrestricted property ownership.

▶ Sergeant of the Law's profession

The Franklin (or "free man") is typically referred to as a significant landowner who was not of noble birth. His actual socioeconomic standing is up for debate. According to some people, he wanted to join the gentry, while others saw him on a level with knights, squires, and law enforcement sergeants. Franklin undoubtedly held powerful positions. In addition to serving as a member of Parliament, he presided over sessions of justices. He also served as a "contour," or special advocate in court, and a "shirreve," or officer next in rank to the Lord Lieutenant of the shrine. His attire undoubtedly represents the upper class. He was a well-known epicure who loved wine and food. He raised plump partridge in coops, kept fish in private ponds, and produced superb bread, ales, wine, and meat. Also, Franklin, who adjusted his diet and cuisine according to the seasons of the year, was most well-known for his outstanding hospitality.

- Franklin's service and personal life

The five guildsmen are well-groomed in attire appropriate for their rank. Their wearing of the livery shows their fraternity though they all belonged to different trades. The men's conduct gave them the appearance of real burgesses and aldermen. They had the necessary property, and their wives had similar aspirations. They are the future merchant princes and their companionship signals the identity of an emergent class.

- Life of the five guildsmen

Roger of Ware, **the Cook**, is a culinary master who is not particularly charming. This is due to the Host subsequently accusing him of selling stale, unclean, and infected food, not just because he has a sore on his shin.

- Unhygienic food by the Cook

Like the Yeoman, **the Shipman** presents himself professionally. He was a master at his trade but completely dishonest. Even though he was the captain of the trading ship "Maudeleyne," he had a penchant for pirate behaviour and frequently assaulted other ships without authorisation. If he gained the upper hand in the clashes at sea, he drowned his opponents—apparently a common practice at the time.

- The contrasting attitude of the Shipman

As in mediaeval intellectual life, philosophy and science are combined in the depiction of the **Doctor of Physics**, and medicine was developed with the base on astrology. Each of the twelve signs of the zodiac was thought to govern a separate area of the body, and this is where the

four senses of humour hypothesis come from. Similar to Chaucer's showing a thorough understanding of the law in the portrayal of the lawyer, he also demonstrates a similar level of expertise in mediaeval medicine. Chaucer's *Astrolabe* also discusses the value of astrology in medicinal practice.

▶ Chaucer's knowledge of law

What procedure did the doctor employ? He observed his patient and selected the astrological hours that would be most beneficial for the course of therapy; he was skilled at selecting the best time to create talismanic symbols. In contrast to black magic or necromancy, this was natural magic and a respectable science. The doctor applied the humour theory, which dates to the seventeenth century and, specifically, Ben Jonson. The four basic opposites or qualities—earth (cold and dry), air (hot and moist), water (cold and moist), and fire (hot and dry)— were combined in pairs to form the elements. The four humours were also believed to combine the basic opposites of blood (hot and moist), phlegm (cold and moist), yellow bile (hot and dry), and black bile (cold and dry).

▶ The concept of four humours

Chaucer opens his list of notable medical experts by mentioning the fabled Aesculapius. Around the year 50 A.D., the Greek physician Dioscorides reached his peak. In the second century, Rufus of Ephesus lived. The well-known expert of the second century was Galen. Famous Arabian philosophers and mediaeval authorities from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, respectively, include Avicenna and Averroes. Serapion appears to be referring to three Levantine medicinal writers. Rhazes spent his ninth and tenth centuries in Baghdad. In the eleventh century, Constantyn, a Cartlzage monk, brought Arabian knowledge to Salerno. The final three authorities on the list, who lived in the latter half of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, were all British.

▶ Great physicians in history

The fact that the **Doctor** read the Bible occasionally was not unusual because doctors, especially those who adhered to the Averroist school of thought, were frequently viewed as sceptics. Although not much is said about his attire, we can infer that he was a dignified man of style who was perhaps a little too obsessed with money. When Chaucer makes a pun about the gold that was employed in medications, he seems to be satirical and ambiguous about the doctor's love of gold. The irony

seems to intensify as we learn that the doctor has saved his Black Death earnings in a sensible manner. Chaucer further reveals a crooked connection between physicians and drug dealers (apothecaries). The doctors were accused of forcing people to be imposed upon by their specific druggists while the latter was accused of forcing incompetent practitioners on patients. However, Chaucer refers to the doctor as a "verray, parfit practisour" (a very perfect practitioner) —more in the style of a knight—and we must continually be aware of the satirical undertone of the former.

- The medicinal practice of the time

One of the travellers who draw the greatest attention is, Chaucer's **Wife of Bath**. She is merely a partial replica of La Vieille's portrayal in the Roman poem "de la Rose" as it is typical of Chaucer's practice of fusing the literary model with social reality. Since the Wife was born under the influence of Mars and Venus conjunct in Taurus at the time of her birth, many of her personality traits can be attributed to this sign of the zodiac. This explains her desire for sexual activity and her resistance to having males rule her in marriage life. As a result, she could be seen as the successor to an older sort of heroic woman, Amazon, who lived in a middle-class environment where her martial prowess was displayed in the context of domestic gender relations. Her love of travel, her rather out-of-date attire and equipment, as well as the fact that she was deaf and had widely spaced teeth, are just a few of her personal characteristics that have led critics to correctly identify her. Additionally, Chaucer accurately describes the region of Bath, including her place of origin. Chaucer's use of the phrase "Beside Bathe" alludes to the nearby parish of "St. Michael's juxta Bathon."

- Revolutionary character of the Wife of Bath

Chaucer's assertion that Wife of Bath outperformed the Dutch weavers of Ypres and Ghent in weaving is amusing because the repute of the cloth woven at Bath was not the greatest. In the fourteenth century, Ypres and Ghent served as significant hubs for the Flemish wool industry and their weavers. Generally speaking, they immigrated in great numbers to England in the fourteenth century. It is generally accepted that Edward III's invitation to these Flemish weavers played a role in the growth of the rural cloth industry. However, the Cotswolds, the Pennines, and the Lake District had the greatest availability of waterpower for operating fulling mills, and by the start

- The cloth industry of the age

of the fourteenth century, the cloth industry had begun to move to these regions. The unorganised country weavers took lower pay than their urban counterparts, resulting in less expensive cloth.

Because the sequence in which parishioners went up to the altar to present alms and oblations was decided by importance in the community. The Wife took so much pleasure in her ability to weave that she demanded the first position when making the offering on Sundays. Such pride was all too frequent, and the parson particularly forbids it in his sermons. The Wife was proficient in the arts of love and mingled well with men since she was aware of all the remedies for love (which are detailed in Ovid's *Remedia Amoris*). She was a seasoned traveller who had made three trips to Rome, Jerusalem, and other religious sites around the continent. These protracted pilgrimages were made purely for pleasure, so they were not out of the ordinary or uncharacteristic of her. The travels provided travellers with the same level of comfort and safety as modern trips provide. However, the travellers were punished for the temptations to immorality they presented. From the ninth to the sixteenth centuries, marriage ceremonies were frequently celebrated outside of churches. The ceremony was divided into two parts: the actual marriage and the post-marriage gathering that was celebrated at the altar.

- The Wife of Bath's personal life; the marriage system of the age

A decent parish priest is presented in **the Parson**'s idealised image. Even while it extols the qualities and denounces the wrongdoings that were highlighted by Wycliffites, it should not be interpreted as a reference to Wyclif or any of his supporters. But the Parson is mockingly referred to as a Lollard in the epilogue of *The Man of Law*. The Parson's poverty and education are reminiscent of the Clerk; like the former, all of the latter's wealth was spiritual. He was committed to the duties of his pastoral position and was holy in mind and deed. The Church levies a ten percent of tax on every parishioner. While he may punish non-payment of tithes with ex-communication, he would not judge the impoverished for being unable to pay the tax. But because it was his responsibility to collect the tithes, he would use his own little resources to keep up the shortfall. He was good-natured, perseverant, and hardworking and avoided useless pleasures. He would visit his parishioners on foot in all types of weather, even if he was sick. Above all, he lived what he preached and set

- The Parson's good personality

an example for others to follow as a priest in charge of his flock, in contrast to the majority of religious bureaucrats. He was keenly aware of his influence on the moral life of the parishioners.

The **Parson** was completely devoid of the drive for power and avarice that served as the psychological foundation for capitalism and was exacerbated by the new money economy. Other priests frequently abandoned their flocks in search of more lucrative positions in London. There, he could have performed daily mass for the soul's repose or been hired by a guild to serve as their chaplain. The Parson stayed in the village. He would demand sinners to repent on their sins to Jesus Christ. He would not spare the unrepentant, whatever of rank or riches, to reiterate. His honesty contrasted subtly with the Prioress' too meticulous conscience, and in his humility, he was similar to his flock.

- The Parson's straightforwardness

The Plowman is another romanticised character and the Parson's brother. He was a modest tenant farmer, a perfect embodiment of rural life, and neither antagonistic toward nor afraid of the upper classes. He is a perfect example of the dignity of labour because he could thresh, dig, and construct ditches in addition to carrying loads of manure. The same responsibilities were emphasised in contemporary literature on husbandry, and Langland's *Piers Plowman* carried them out as well. He lived a life of pure charity, unmoved by joy or sorrow, loving God and his neighbours while wearing the out-of-date tabard, a loose tunic without sleeves that is comparable to a type of labourer's smock.

- The Plowman as a farmer

Obviously, **Miller**'s attire is unimportant. His immense physical power is what stands out in the picture. Physiognonists frequently commented about his physical traits and nature. His short shoulders and heavy body gave him the appearance of being short-tempered, chatty, argumentative and lecherous. His plump face, and red and bushy beard also gave him the same appearance. Given that these concepts were already well-known, Chaucer might not have really visited the sources for them. The Miller's wart with its tuft of hair, his dark and flaring nostrils, and his enormous mouth imply a kind of coarseness that reminds one of the fabliaux. He can heave a door out of its hinges or break it with his head. It makes sense why he was a garrulous clown, and a noisy

- Miller's physical traits

and obnoxious talker. In the Middle Ages, a miller held a significant monopoly because all peasants under the control of a manor's lord were required to deliver their grain to miller of the estate where they resided.

Manciple was a servant who bought supplies for a court inn. He was a con artist like the Miller, and paradoxically, his cunning abilities are referred to as wisdom. Chaucer finds it amazing that the skilled attorneys were no match for their cunning whether they purchased the supplies in cash or on credit. The inexperienced Manciple was easily fooled by these extraordinarily skilled attorneys.

- Manciple's cunningness

In terms of clever bargaining, **the Reeve** is the ideal competitor and friend for the Miller. What did the Reeve do specifically? He, as a steward, served as a primary administrator of an estate under the lord of the manor (or seneschal). He was chosen by the peasants and followed by the bailiff, who was in turn followed by the provost, who was directly responsible for the stock and grain. Oswald, Chaucer's Reeve, appears to be superior to a bailiff and even carried out some of the steward's tasks. Normally, the Reeve was subordinate to the bailiff; although these titles were not firmly defined. According to Chaucer, the Reeve deals directly with his lord, rules under bailiffs, outsmarts auditors and amasses wealth.

- The Reeve as guard

Due to their rivalry in fooling the peasants, the Miller and Reeve in mediaeval England were innate opponents. They argue over often, which is why the cunning Reeve rides away from the Miller. The Reeve's responsibilities as an overseer or manager included routine estate inspections, purchasing essential supplies, and, if necessary, fining the workers. He was an adept record keeper and understood everything about grain storage, when to sow and when to harvest, the health of his lord's cattle and poultry. The Reeve was so cunning that he was able to amass wealth at his lord's expense without disclosing any arrears or losses. In fact, he may win the goodwill and benefits of his ruler by lending him some of the lord's own belongings. His shaved head, rusted blade and ill-fitting clothing reveal his low social standard. With long, skinny, calfless legs and a choleric body, he has a feature that indicates wittiness, grumpiness and wantonness. His lovely Norfolk home is mentioned, which identifies him a real-life individual. What Miller earned by heinous and flagrant theft, the Reeve acquired through

- Reeve's personal traits and nature

cruelty, harshness and manipulation.

Even if they are cowards like the Summoner and the Pardoner, the Miller and Reeve do not have the same unsettling and repugnant effect on the readers. Offenders were summoned to appear before the ecclesiastical court by an officer known as the Summoner (or Apparitor). Such officials were corrupt, including the Archdeacon. Although some academics contend that Chaucer's portrayal of the Summoner is more negative than historical evidence would seem to support, the former was following literary tradition.

▶ Portrayal of Summoner

In the above description of Summoner, his key physiognomical feature is repulsive, and Chaucer's ironic juxtaposition of the former's tortured and emotional face, full of eruptions, with that of a cherub, is poisonous. In reality, the Summoner suffers from a form of leprosy and has a skin condition brought on by unrestrained lechery. Children were terrified of him because of his scraggly brows and short beard. Mercury, lead compounds, sulphur, borax, and oil of tartar have all been utilised as known medications, but no ointment has been able to clear up the white blotches, pimples, and knobs on his face. His untreatable and abhorrent illness is a reflection of his character. The Summoner should not consume strong red wine, leeks, or garlic, according to Chaucer's medical knowledge. He wears a large garland on his head and a flat loaf of bread in his hands as a shield in his inebriated state. Some academics believe that he intended to stand in for a drunken Bacchus. Given his line of work, it is not surprising that he had memorised a few Latin terms like a parrot, which he would boastfully repeat when he was intoxicated. He attempted to evade questions by repeating a legal phrase, but if anyone pressed him further, his ignorance would become apparent. Any mischief person that the Summoner came across would be urged not to fear the ex-communication curse of the archdeacon since money would make everything right. In other words, bribery was a common practice existed at that time.

▶ Summoner's physical nature

When we learn that the Summoner is able to manipulate the personal lives of those around him, his image assumes a demonic shade. If a man was paid simply a quart of wine, he would gladly pardon him for keeping a lady for a year as it was a practice popular among the celibate priests. Due to his sexual immorality, he likely learned

▶ Summoner intervening in other's life

the nefarious details of other people's life. This may be the reason he was able to keep the young people at his mercy and under his control. He served as their advisor and knew their deepest secrets.

The sellers of papal amenities were known as **pardoners** (or quaestors). Many people, including some laypeople, were prohibited from preaching. Many travelling pardoners were completely alcoholised, and the Church condemned the frauds and abuses they engaged in. The Pardoner of the fourteenth century sold sculptures of saints and honed the art of preaching in order to sell amnesties more successfully. These relics were nothing more than bones and rags, as demonstrated by Chaucer's Pardoner.

▶ Pardoners' job

Chaucer then goes back to the Tabard Inn, where the travellers had gathered, after viewing the portrait exhibition. But before continuing, he makes an aesthetic defence of the coarseness of his bourgeois style, saying that he has been guided by moral honesty and genuine truth. He finds heavenly backing in the straightforward language of *The Bible*. Moving on, the Host, Hany Bailly, presides over a delicious dinner. After dinner, in keeping with his fun nature, the host advises that the pilgrims tell two stories—one for Canterbury and one for home—to ease the monotony of their lengthy horseback journey. The Host, who would preside over the festivities, decides to go with the pilgrims. He serves as the judge and guarantees the best storyteller a free meal when they return. The Host's idea is enthusiastically accepted by all, and a spirit of camaraderie has already developed within them. The Knight who starts the game with delight receives the lot. In addition to the Host's brief biography, Chaucer the narrator also takes on a distinct persona. Even though his two stories later give him a more distinct shape, his distanced, sarcastic, and self-deprecating bourgeois figure is already apparent. He may be a little while comparing with the Prioress and the Knight, he became familiar and unflinching with the emerging bourgeoisie, deeply respectful of the lowly, pious, and unworldly, and bitingly satirical of the dishonest and cruel. Because he lacks a strong brain, he begs forgiveness for any disruption of degree or hierarchy in his series of portrayals as he creates this narrator persona.

▶ Storytelling at Tabard Inn

Summarised Overview

Chaucer, a poet and the author of *The Canterbury Tales*, landed at the Tabard in Southwark, London, in the month of April. As pilgrimages were common during this time period in mediaeval times, Chaucer left the pub with owner Harry Bailly and travelled a long way to Canterbury, Kent, to see the shrine of the martyr Thomas Becket. At the inn, 29 more pilgrims were prepared to depart on their journey. From the knight and his squire to the miller, the parson, the Wife of Bath, and several other members of mediaeval society, Chaucer wrote about each pilgrim. In order to spice up the journey, Bailly, who hosted the group of pilgrims at the inn, advised that they take turns telling stories to each other as they go. When they return to the inn, the other pilgrims would treat with supper the one who tells the finest story.

Assignments

1. Why is *The Prologue to The Canterbury Tales* considered a microcosm of the mediaeval world?
2. Why did the characters in *The Canterbury Tales* go on a pilgrimage to Canterbury?
3. Discuss *The Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales* as a mirror of fourteenth-century English society.
4. What is the purpose of *The Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales*?
5. Give a pen portrait of the Knight in *The Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales*
6. Are the Prioress and Wife of Bath depicted using satire or irony in The Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*? Explain.

Suggested Readings

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2.1.2 "Prothalamion"

Background

The term "prothalamion" was coined by Edmund Spenser to distinguish his poetry of the same name from his earlier bridal song "epithalamion", but the meaning is virtually unchanged because the prefix "pro-" (or prior to) replaces "epi-" (or outside of). A "prothalamion" commemorates a betrothal or engagement different to an "epithalamion," which honours the wedding day itself, the occasions leading up to it, and the couple's sexual union. The betrothals described in the poem were political events in England at the time, not just affairs of the heart. The poem considers the interrelationships between marriage, nature, and politics while praising the brides' beauty, the virtue of their unions, and the beauty of nature as a diversion from the political complexities of court life. However, the poem also implies that the purity and beauty it speaks of are ephemeral.

Keywords

Poet, works, wedding, mythology, imageries

2.1.2.1 The Life of Spenser

The work of Edmund Spenser dates from the second half of the sixteenth century. Elizabeth I ruled during this time. England was becoming a powerful nation at the time. At the turn of the sixteenth century, Henry VIII played a unifying and integrating role that started this process. The rise of England over the century served to clearly establish the characteristics of English nationhood. The early years of Queen Elizabeth's administration created hopes of prosperity because Henry VII and VIII's rule laid the groundwork for a resource-rich, stable, and modern England. Spenser was most likely born in London in the year 1552, which is a fair amount of certainty. He may have been linked to the noble Spencer family of the Midlands, who had become wealthy through sheep farming, which, as we saw from the previous unit, was a growing sector in the sixteenth century, despite the fact that he himself came from humble beginnings.

▶ Administration in Spencer's time

Spencer was enrolled in Merchant Taylors' grammar school as a "poor boy," where he would have primarily studied Latin with a small amount of Hebrew, Greek and music. The school, which followed a modern, humanism-focused curriculum, was created in 1560 by the guild of tailors (thus the name). It was one of many similar guild-based schools at the time in England. Spenser graduated from this institution and enrolled as a "sizar," or underprivileged student, at Pembroke College in Cambridge University in 1569. He had to perform a variety of odd jobs and understood tedious duties around the institution as a result in exchange for an education.

▶ Spencer's schooling

His poetry was initially published in 1569. It included translations from the "Book of Revelation" in the *Bible*, four sonnets by the French poet Joachim du Bellay from the sixteenth century, and a translation of some of Petrarch's epigrams into French. They were likely commissioned by the main author of the anti-Catholic prose treatise, the Flemish immigrant Jan van der Noodt, and Chaucer prefaced for it. He graduated from Cambridge with a B.A. in 1573, left for a short time in 1574 due to an epidemic, and then came back to complete his M.A. in 1576.

▶ Spencer's initial publications

Twenty-two poetry translations of epigrams and sonnets that Spenser published in 1569 under the title *A Theatre*

depicted the tragedies and calamities that befall sensual worldlings as well as the enormous joys and pleasures that the believers experience. After that, he wrote *The Shepheardes Calender* under an assumed name, which was printed in 1579. The release of Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* is seen as a turning point that heralded the Elizabethan poetic Renaissance. Twelve eclogues (short pastoral poems) were collected in the book and were arranged according to the twelve months of the year. The month's name was printed on each poem. Spenser's lyrical experiment was quite stunning. The calendar concept brought together several themes and metres. It featured, among other things, an elegy, the struggle of a poet whose work goes unappreciated, the contrast of pastoral simplicity and corruption accompanied by greed, a singing contest for a rustic prize, the dialogue between age and young, and the celebration of famous characters. In the poem, these eclogues serve as moral truths that shed light on the time period that Spenser belonged to.

Fig.2.1.2. Edmund Spenser

▶ Form and themes of *The Shepheardes Calender*

The first three books of *The Faerie Queene*, published by Spenser in 1590, were immediately successful and well-known. We learn about his ambitions to write *The Faerie Queene* as a long epic poem that was to be divided into twelve books in his "Letter to Raleigh." It was intended to align with Aristotle's twelve moral virtues. The central theme of the poem is the early life of Arthur. Spenser intended to continue the epic poem with a sequel that would also portray the regal political virtues. Spenser was only able to complete the first six books of *The Faerie Queene* because his objectives were not accomplished. The first three novels, along with his well-known explanation in "Letter to Raleigh", were all published at the same time. Books I to VI were released in 1596 with an extravagant dedication to Elizabeth I in London. *The Faerie Queene* is a literary example of a historical allegory.

▶ *The Faerie Queene* as a long poetic narration

Spenser wrote a number of translations and numerous little poems in 1591. "The Ruins of Time", "The Tears of the Muses", "Virgil's Gnat", "Prosopopoia or Mother Hubbard's Tale", "The Ruines of Rome", "Muiopotmos or the Fate of the Butterfly", and "Visions of the Worlds Vanitie" are a few of them. The book *Complaints* contained a collection of these brief writings, including a selection of short poems from throughout the globe. "Daphnaida, an Elegy upon the Death of the Noble and Virtuous Doughlas Howard" was another work by Spenser published in 1591. Spenser released "Colin Clouts' Come Home Againe" in 1595. Additionally, Spenser and other authors dedicated "Astrophel, a Pastorall Elegie" upon the Death of the noblest and valorous Knight, Sir Philip Sidney.

▶ Spencer's collection of poems

"*Amoretti*" and "Epithalamion" were published jointly in 1595. The former, a sonnet-style collection of love poems, and the latter, a celebration of his marriage to his beloved Elizabeth Boyle, were both penned by Spencer. He released the six books of *The Faerie Queene* the following year, and "Fowre Hyms" in 1596. The same year, he also released his "Prothalamion." "A View of the Present State of Ireland" and "Two Cantos of Mutabilitie" were both published posthumously in 1609 and 1633, respectively, in a version of *The Faerie Queene*. Spenser used a variety of poetic forms and a wide range of topics in all of his writings. He was referred to by Charles Lamb as "the poet's poet" because, he was the model that later generations of poets tried to follow.

▶ Spencer's career as a writer

2.1.2.2 Introduction to "Prothalamion"

Spencer wrote the poem titled "Prothalamion", also known as "Prothalamion; or, A Spousall Verse in Honor of the Double Marriage of Ladie Elizabeth and Ladie Katherine Somerset", a wedding song that he wrote in 1596, to celebrate the twin marriages of Elizabeth Somerset and Katherine Somerset, the daughters of the Earl of Worcester, to Sir Henry Guildford and William Petre, the second Baron Petre, respectively. "Prothalamion" is composed in the typical style of a wedding song. The poem opens with an account of Spenser's discovery of two lovely maidens in the River Thames. The poet continues by praising them and wishing them happiness in their unions.

▶ Prothalamion as a wedding song

Spenser travelled to London occasionally while he was writing "Prothalamion", which was at a period of disappointment and difficulty in his life. While his own bridal ode "Epithalamion" is as exquisite metrically as this one, the bridegroom-turned-poet is a passive observer in the poem, thus it naturally lacks the same thrill of passion. "Epithalamion" makes mention of the poet's own dissatisfaction with both the history of Temple and the accomplishments of Essex.

- "Epithalamion" as a biographical song

"Interesting as they are in themselves, they do not seem to contribute much to the whole effect," wrote C. S. Lewis about "Prothalamion". The poem includes two themes: the overt celebration of the ladies' engagement and the more subtle personal subject, which is used as an introduction and a final passing nod. The two have very different tones from one another. The first is gay, colourful, lovely, and full of hope for fulfilment; the second is depressing and terrible. The poet attempts to suppress the melancholy in a joyous poem while being aware of the contrast.

- Theme and tone of "Prothalamion"

"Prothalamion" is an artfully fabricated poetry. In the poet's eyes, the more significant themes are the ones that are personal, the assertion of underappreciated talent, the passing of a great patron, and the acquisition of a new one in Essex. The strongest passages are those addressed to Essex, who receives roughly 23 lines from Spenser. These are direct address lines. The poem is expertly crafted to address this issue which is mentioned in the lines britain on Essex. The paragraph on Essex is integrated into the poem's structure rather than being added on top of it. The function of the bridegrooms is small, and they are colourless with only a reflected glory that they borrow from Essex.

- Lines on Essex in "Prothalamion"

The 18-line and irregularly rhymed stanza is an adaptation of an Italian canzone. The poem's burden/ refrain is provided by the final two lines. With slight variations, the final sentence is repeated. And to better convey the concept, the penultimate line was significantly altered. The repetition enhances the poetic effect of the poem, which is lyrical throughout. By combining lines with 10 and 6 syllables, the stanza structure allows for a wide range of cadences. Each stanza contains four of the latter and fourteen of the former. The poet's ability to navigate the extremely complex arrangement successfully

- Form of "Prothalamion"

demonstrates his command of a novel metre.

A recognisable combination of mythology and realism can be seen in Spenser's poetry. Spenser elevated the English poems by handling them with a distinctive style, thinking, and art, giving them a new sense of dignity. He uses a lot of classical imagery and creates a lovely ambience in the poem. "Prothalamion's" prominence throughout the Renaissance evokes mythological figures like Venus, Cynthia, and Titan.

- Mythical elements in "Prothalamion"

2.1.2.3 Stanzawise Summary of the Poem

Stanza 1

To escape his personal concerns, the poet took a stroll along the River Thames. All he needed was some mental calm because he was so angry with the job in court. The gentle warmth of the breeze helped to mask the sun's heat. The birds chirp joyfully, and there are flowers all around. The poet repeatedly asks that the water run gently till he finishes his song.

- Musing in the background of the River Thames

CALM was the day, and through the trembling air
Sweet breathing Zephyrus did softly play,
A gentle spirit, that lightly did delay
Hot Titan's beams, which then did glister fair;
When I whose sullen care,
Through discontent of my long fruitless stay
In prince's court, and expectation vain
Of idle hopes, which still do fly away
Like empty shadows, did afflict my brain,
Walked forth to ease my pain
Along the shore of silver streaming Thames,
Whose rutty bank, the which his river hems,
Was painted all with variable flowers,
And all the meads adorned with dainty gems,
Fit to deck maidens' bowers,
And crown their paramours,
Against the bridal day, which is not long:
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.

It was a calm day with a gentle breeze that helped to chill things up and reduce the heat from the strong sun. I was angry with myself for wasting time in court because my political aspirations had failed and my hopes had proven to be false illusions. I took a stroll along the Thames

River banks to help me feel better. Please be quiet, River Thames, till I complete my poetry. The coastline and the meadows that surrounded the river were covered in flowers that were so lovely that they could be strung up in young women's rooms or made into crowns for their fiancés in advance of their soon-to-be wedding days.

▶ Exquisite scenery

Stanza 2

A bunch of nymphs are spotted by the poet by the river's edge. The nymphs, who are mystical maidens renowned for their purity, are the poet's first usage of a mythological figure in this passage. Each nymph had gorgeous features and hair that fell to her shoulders in free strands. Flowers including primroses, white lilies, red roses, tulips, violets, and daisies were arranged into bouquets by the nymphs collectively.

▶ Seeing of nymphs

There, in a meadow, by the river's side,
A flock of nymphs I chanced to espy,
All lovely daughters of the flood thereby,
With goodly greenish locks, all loose untied,
As each had been a bride;
And each one had a little wicker basket,
Made of fine twigs, entrailed curiously,
In which they gathered flowers to fill their flasket,
And with fine fingers cropt full featously
The tender stalks on high.
Of every sort, which in that meadow grew,
They gathered some; the violet pallid blue,
The little daisy, that at evening closes,
The virgin lily, and the primrose true,
With store of vermeil roses,
To deck their bridegrooms' posies
Against the bridal day, which was not long:
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.

I spotted a group of nymphs—the legendary daughters of the river—in a meadow by the river. They had loose, green hair that made them appear to be brides. They each had a wicker basket made of twigs that they were carrying about, filled with flowers they had picked from the meadow. The nymphs quickly and deftly selected all types of flowers, such as blue violets, daisies that close at night, lilies that are so white they appear virginal, primroses, and vermeil roses, which they would use to

▶ Nymphs collecting flowers

adorn their bridegrooms on their soon-to-be-wed days: River Thames, please be calm until I complete my poetry.

Stanza 3

Swans are introduced by Spenser as the second mystical being. Swans that crossed the river appeared more pious and white than Jupiter, who adopted the swan disguise in order to win Leda's affection. But Spenser does go on to state that these swans are more brilliant than Leda herself. The River Thames asks that its waters refrain from defiling the revered swan's pristine wings.

▶ Swans in the poem

With that, I saw two swans of goodly hue
Come softly swimming down along the Lee;
Two fairer birds I yet did never see.
The snow which doth the top of Pindus strew,
Did never whiter shew,
Nor Jove himself, when he a swan would be
For love of Leda, whiter did appear:
Yet Leda was they say as white as he,
Yet not so white as these, nor nothing near.
So purely white they were,
That even the gentle stream, the which them bare,
Seemed foul to them, and bade his billows spare
To wet their silken feathers, lest they might
Soil their fair plumes with water not so fair,
And mar their beauties bright,
That shone as heaven's light,
Against their bridal day, which was not long:
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.

Two lovely swans were swimming down the Lee River when I observed them. I had never seen such stunning birds before. Those swans were whiter than the snow on top of the renowned Pindus mountain range. Even the god Zeus could not match those swans in terms of whiteness when he assumed that shape to woo Princess Leda. Leda wasn't nearly as white as the swans in the river in front of me, despite the fact that people claim she was as pale as Zeus was. In fact, the swans were so white that even the still river in which they floated appeared to make them dirty; as a result, the river instructed his waves to stay away from the silky feathers of the birds in order to prevent the waves from dirtying the lovely birds and lessening their beauty, which was as bright as the sun will be on their

▶ Mythical characters

impending wedding day: please be quiet, river Thames, until I finish my poem.

Stanza 4

- Swans, goddess and nymphs

As they saw the swans swim across the river, the nymphs were all rendered speechless. Swans are typically given the task of pulling Venus, the goddess of love, in her chariot. The purity or virginity of the nymphs is matched with the white flowers.

Eftsoons the nymphs, which now had flowers their fill,
Ran all in haste, to see that silver brood,
As they came floating on the crystal flood.
Whom when they saw, they stood amazed still,
Their wondering eyes to fill.
Them seemed they never saw a sight so fair,
Of fowls so lovely, that they sure did deem
Them heavenly born, or to be that same pair
Which through the sky draw Venus' silver team;
For sure they did not seem
To be begot of any earthly seed,
But rather angels, or of angels' breed:
Yet were they bred of Somers-heat they say,
In sweetest season, when each flower and weed
The earth did fresh array,
So fresh they seemed as day,
Even as their bridal day, which was not long:
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.

By this time, the nymphs had gathered enough flowers, so they hurried to view the silver swans floating down the river. The nymphs were astounded to see them and stood there with their mouths open, taking it all in. The nymphs believed they had never seen such beautiful birds before and thought they were either angelic or the legendary swans that pulled the goddess Venus's chariot through the skies. The nymphs believed the swans were angels or the offspring of angels since they were so gorgeous and it seemed inconceivable that they were born from any mortal creatures. However, the fact is that the swans were actually produced in the spring, when the land was covered with new flowers and plants, by the heat of the sun. Please keep calm, River Thames, until I complete my poetry. They appeared to be as young and innocent as their upcoming wedding day.

- Interviewing of the poem with mythical elements

Stanza 5

The nymphs create posies and a basket of flowers that resemble a bridal chamber decorated with flowers as the following phase. The flowers are thrown over the River Thames and the birds by the nymphs in anticipation of the approaching wedding. Additionally, the nymphs compose a wedding song. With all the floral scent, Thames resembled the Peneus, a famous river from antiquity that ran beside Tempe and the Thessalian valley.

▶ Flowers as a symbol of the wedding

Then forth they all out of their baskets drew
Great store of flowers, the honour of the field,
That to the sense did fragrant odours yield,
All which upon those goodly birds they threw,
And all the waves did strew,
That like old Peneus' waters they did seem,
When down along by pleasant Tempe's shore,
Scattered with flowers, through Thessaly they stream,
That they appear through lilies' plenteous store,
Like a bride's chamber floor.

Two of those nymphs meanwhile, two garlands bound,
Of freshest flowers which in that mead they found,
The which presenting all in trim array,
Their snowy foreheads therewithal they crowned,
Whilst one did sing this lay,
Prepared against that day,
Against their bridal day, which was not long:
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.

Then the nymphs pulled all the fragrant flowers they had chosen from their baskets and flung them onto the swans and the river's waves, making the river resemble the Greek river Peneus, which flows through the Tempe Valley in Thessaly. In fact, the river appeared to be the floor of a wedding chamber because of how heavily it was covered in lilies. Two of the nymphs made flower crowns out of the most recent blooms they could locate in the meadow, and they gave them to the swans who put them on their heads. Another nymph was singing a song that was prepared for the impending wedding of the swans: "Please remain quiet, river Thames, till I finish my poem."

▶ Riverbed with water and flowers on the surface as a metaphor for the wedding chamber

Stanza 6

The nymph's song has an alluring melodic effect that mesmerises listeners. Spenser wishes the couple eternal

happiness and the satisfied heart of a swan because swans are the wonder of heaven. He also asks Venus and Cupid to shower love and care on the pair so they will not have to worry about betrayal and hatred. Their children must be a symbol of dignity and a danger to immoral individuals, as they are surrounded by unending wealth and happiness.

- Seeking of happiness and love

'Ye gentle birds, the world's fair ornament,
And heaven's glory, whom this happy hour
Doth lead unto your lovers' blissful bower,
Joy may you have and gentle heart's content
Of your love's complement:
And let fair Venus, that is queen of love,
With her heart-quelling son upon you smile,
Whose smile, they say, hath virtue to remove
All love's dislike, and friendship's faulty guile
For ever to assoil.
Let endless peace your steadfast hearts accord,
And blessed plenty wait upon your board,
And let your bed with pleasures chaste abound,
That fruitful issue may to you afford,
Which may your foes confound,
And make your joys redound
Upon your bridal day, which is not long:
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.'

You swans, who are the sky's and the world's most exquisite decorations, are being escorted to your loves, and I wish you pleasure and joy in your union. More specifically, I pray that Venus, the goddess of love, and her son Cupid will beam upon you and, via their smiles, will make sure that there are no arguments or problems in your unions. In order for your children to defeat your enemies and for your joy to overflow on your upcoming wedding day, I pray that your hearts will be full of peace, your kitchens will be full of food, and your bedrooms will be proper and productive. Please be quiet, river Thames, until I have finished my poem.

- Addressing swans, the symbol of paradise, by wishing them joy

Stanza 7

- Poet's fantasy image

On such a day, the river Lee, which has its headwaters in Kent, flows joyfully. It was as though Cynthia, the moon, was beaming above the stars as the birds swooped over the swans.

So ended she; and all the rest around
To her redoubled that her undersong,
Which said their bridal day should not be long.
And gentle echo from the neighbour ground
Their accents did resound.
So forth those joyous birds did pass along,
Adown the Lee, that to them murmured low,
As he would speak, but that he lacked a tongue,
Yet did by signs his glad affection show,
Making his stream run slow.
And all the fowl which in his flood did dwell
Gan flock about these twain, that did excel
The rest so far as Cynthia doth shend
The lesser stars. So they, enranged well,
Did on those two attend,
And their best service lend,
Against their wedding day, which was not long:
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.

The nymph's singing came to an end at that point, and everyone mimicked her, proclaiming that the swans' wedding day was rapidly approaching. This line resounded in the ground and spread over the meadow. The happy swans then floated along the Lee River. As they passed, the river's waters murmured, almost as if he could communicate with them through speech. He did, however, demonstrate his appreciation by lowering his current. All the birds that inhabited the river started to congregate around the two swans because they were much more attractive than the other birds, much as how the moon is much more attractive than the stars around it. They set up shop around the swans in this manner, catered to them, and offered to be at their best for their upcoming wedding: "Please be quiet, river Thames, till I finish my poem."

▶ A fairy imagination of the Lee River at night

Stanza 8

▶ Poet's memories

The poet starts remembering his interactions with people at the estate and the venue after the wedding in London gets underway.

At length they all to merry London came,
To merry London, my most kindly nurse,
That to me gave this life's first native source;

Though from another place I take my name,
An house of ancient fame.
There when they came, whereas those bricky towers,
The which on Thames' broad aged back do ride,
Where now the studious lawyers have their bowers
There whilom wont the Templar Knights to bide,
Till they decayed through pride:
Next whereunto there stands a stately place,
Where oft I gained gifts and goodly grace
Of that great lord, which therein wont to dwell,
Whose want too well now feels my friendless case.
But ah, here fits not well
Old woes but joys to tell
Against the bridal day, which is not long:
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.

They eventually all travelled to London, where I was born and reared despite having a name that is derived from a different location and coming from a prominent, long-established family. They arrived at a location with brick towers on the banks of the Thames that are now homes for law students but were once the headquarters of the Knights Templar before the order disintegrated out of pride. Please be quiet, river Thames, until I finish my poem. There is a place next to the brick towers where I frequently received favours from the important man who resides there, whose protection I sorely miss now. However, it is inappropriate to dwell on such grievances here and I should instead limit myself to talking about the joys of the wedding day, which is not far away.

- Poet's memories and anticipation of the wedding day

Stanza 9

The setting is the impressive castle where the Earl of Essex resided and where the wedding took place. He was so valiant that he posed a threat to other nations. His gallant assault on Spain made him famous, and the whole of Spain trembled at the mention of his name. He was the object of Queen Elizabeth's great pride, and he merits a sonnet in his honour.

- Narration about the Earl of Essex

Yet therein now doth lodge a noble peer,
Great England's glory, and the world's wide wonder,
Whose dreadful name late through all Spain did

thunder,
And Hercules' two pillars standing near
Did make to quake and fear:
Fair branch of honour, flower of chivalry,
That fillest England with thy triumph's fame,
Joy have thou of thy noble victory,
And endless happiness of thine own name
That promiseth the same:
That through thy prowess and victorious arms,
Thy country may be freed from foreign harms;
And great Elisa's glorious name may ring
Through all the world, filled with thy wide alarms,
Which some brave Muse may sing
To ages following,
Upon the bridal day, which is not long:
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.

However, an aristocrat who honours England and is admired by the rest of the world now resides there. He recently terrified the Spanish and instilled fear in the cliffs on either side of the Straits of Gibraltar. Man of honour, great knight, word of your victories spreads throughout England. Since even your name implies that you would be joyful, I hope you enjoy your victory and have a happy life forever. And I sincerely hope that thanks to your military prowess and successes, England will not be threatened by any other nations. On the day of the wedding, which is coming up soon, I hope that Queen Elizabeth's name will be honoured all over the world along with your cries to arms, which some poet will immortalise in song for all of human history: Please remain quiet, river Thames, till I finish my poetry.

- The courageous story of the Earl of Essex

Stanza 10

With his magnificent golden hair, the Earl of Sussex went toward the river looking youthful. He was accompanied by two glorious, valiant, and gorgeous young men. They resembled Castor and Pollux, the twins of Jupiter. The brides' hands were held by the grooms, which marked the beginning of their union.

- Earl of Sussex and two young men

From those high towers this noble lord issuing,
Like radiant Hesper when his golden hair
In th'Ocean billows he hath bathed fair,
Descended to the river's open viewing,

With a great train ensuing.
Above the rest were goodly to be seen
Two gentle knights of lovely face and feature
Beseeming well the bower of any queen,
With gifts of wit and ornaments of nature,
Fit for so goodly stature;
That like the twins of Jove they seemed in sight,
Which deck the baldric of the heavens bright.
They two forth pacing to the river's side,
Received those two fair birds, their love's delight;
Which, at th' appointed tide,
Each one did make his bride
Against their bridal day, which is not long:
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.

The same aristocrat I mentioned previously emerged from the tall battlements of the mansion like Hesperus, the evening star, who bathes his blond hair in the ocean all day and then rises above the horizon at night. A large group of people followed the aristocrat as he descended to the river. Two dashing knights who would have been a good match for any queen stood out from the crowd. They resembled Zeus's sons Castor and Pollock, stars in the constellation Gemini in Greek mythology, because they were so intelligent and well-built. The two swans, whom they adored, were waiting for the two knights when they arrived at the river. They will wed at the appointed time, and the wedding day is quickly approaching. River Thames, please be silent while I finish my poetry.

▶ Anticipation of the wedding moment

Summarised Overview

The word "prothalamion" is a Spenserian neologism that originally referred to a pre-wedding hymn. Elizabeth and Catherine Somerset, daughters of Edward Somerset, the Earl of Worcester, were married on November 8, 1596, which is when the poem was written. At Essex House on the Strand in London, the marriage was formally consummated. This poem was written because Spenser was previously supported by the Earl of Essex, a Somerset ancestor. However, this poem differs greatly from Spenser's own wedding hymn. The Prothalamion is shorter, more reflective, and almost sedate in pace, in contrast to the Epithalamion, which is exuberantly sensual and consistent in its themes throughout its length.

Assignments

1. What does "The poet's Poet" mean in reference to Edmund Spenser?
2. Why was "Prothalamion" regarded as a wedding song?
3. What does central subject of "Prothalamion" entail?

Suggested Readings

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2.1.3 "The Canonization"

Background

Although John Donne is mostly recognised today as a poet, he was also well-known for the stirring oratory of his sermons in Jacobean England and his prominent position as Dean of London's St. Paul's Cathedral. Donne, the third child of John Donne and Elizabeth Heywood, was born in London in 1572. Elizabeth was the daughter of Sir Thomas More's cousin Joan Rastall and the Catholic playwright John Heywood. Donne was raised a Catholic, and his early years would have been characterised by the hardships and exclusion experienced by people who did not practise Protestantism in a Protestant nation. Between 1584 and 1589, he studied at Oxford's Hart Hall, but he left without receiving a diploma. He was admitted to Lincoln's Inn in 1592, where he studied law and took part in the vibrant literary scene. Although Donne never practised law, his understanding of the subject permeated all of his poetry and thought. By the end of 1597, Donne had left Lincoln's Inn and was employed as Sir Thomas Egerton's secretary. Donne and Ann More, the niece of Lady Egerton, met in Egerton's home and secretly wed in 1601. When the marriage was made public the following year, it generated controversy, and Donne lost his job and spent some time in jail.

Keywords

Quiet, love, death, metaphor, Canonization

2.1.3.1 John Donne's Poetry

The only way that Donne's poetry was shared around a small circle of friends and customers was in manuscript form. Donne had no desire for his poetry to be widely read, and he hated the idea of printing them since he saw it not appropriate for a gentleman to earn money by writing poetry. He did not want to be associated with being primarily a poet or a writer who was doing it for the money. He regretted approving the publication of his lengthy poems compiled in *The Anniversaries*. Due to Donne's predilection for 'publishing' his poems in the manuscript, it is also challenging to date the majority of them with accuracy.

- Donne's hesitation to publish his works

His satires and elegy are most likely from the 1590s, as are several of his love poems, as well as his elegies. Between the time of his marriage in 1601 and the time of his ordination in 1615, a large portion of his Holy Sonnets

and possibly his love poems were believed to be composed. In the nineteent grew, and in the twentieth century, poets like T. S. Eliot hailed him as a proto-modernist. He is now regarded as one of the greatest English Renaissance philosophical poets.

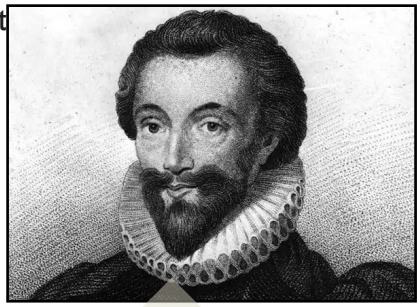

Fig.2.1.3. John Donne

- John Donne's poetic career

2.1.3.2 "The Canonization"

The first edition of John Donne's poem "The Canonization" appeared in his posthumous 1633 book, Poems. "The Canonization", a poem by John Donne, was written after he wed Anne More. It is because he mentioned his destroyed wealth right away in this poem and attributes the blemish on his fortune to his marriage. Despite feeling extremely defeated, he does not see any lessening in the intensity of his love for Anne. The first phrase seems to be bursting with loving impulses laced with impatience and defiance: "For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love." He is so engrossed in his amours that he does not give a hang about the whining tongue of others.

- Donne's love for Anne in "The Canonization"

Stanza I

By presuming the issues facing his addressee, the speaker subtly describes his connection to the worlds of politics, wealth, and aristocracy. He then describes his own background in respect to these issues as well as how far he has come since then. He wishes the listener will ignore him and pursue a career in the court, pandering to the aristocracy who are focused on favour (the King's true face) and wealth (the King's imprinted face, as on a coin).

- Social and political background

For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love,
Or chide my palsy, or my gout,
My five gray hairs, or ruined fortune flout,
With wealth your state, your mind with arts improve,
Take you a course, get you a place,
Observe his honor, or his grace,
Or the king's real, or his stampèd face
Contemplate; what you will, approve,
So you will let me love.

Just shut up and let me fall in love, please. You are welcome to tease me for having trembling hands or aching joints, or for having grey hair or being poor. You can start a new career or look for a position in a posh nobleman's retinue, serving a lord or high-ranking priest; you can serve the King or the coins bearing his image; you can do whatever you like, as long as you leave me alone and allow me to be in love.

- Donne desires the fortune of his audience

Stanza II

He continues to make fun of modern Petrarchan ideals of love while stressing the point that neither his sighs nor his tears have ever drowned ships or produced floods. (Petrarchan love poems frequently included assertions along the lines "My tears are rain, and my sighs storms.") He also makes fun of how the real world works, arguing that his love will not stop troops from fighting in wars or lawyers from pursuing legal matters, as if these were the only issues that existed in the world beyond the boundaries of his love affair.

- Donne's mockery of Petrarchan ideals

Alas, alas, who's injured by my love?
What merchant's ships have my sighs drowned?
Who says my tears have overflowed his ground?
When did my colds a forward spring remove?
When did the heats which my veins fill
Add one more to the plaguy bill?
Soldiers find wars, and lawyers find out still
Litigious men, which quarrels move,
Though she and I do love.

Who does my love harm, really? Have my sighs of love sunk any ships? Has anyone's land been inundated by my tears? Has the chilly rejection of my advances by my sweetheart prevented spring from arriving in those instances? Has the love fever in my veins ever caused even one additional death to be added to the list of plague victims? Despite the fact that my wife and I are in love, soldiers continue to fight in wars, and lawyers continue to find litigious individuals to sue one another.

- Love and war

Stanza III

The speaker launches a series of analogies that will assist him to convey the depth and originality of his love. He first claims that he and his partner are attracted to

each other, like moths to candles ("she one, I another fly") before asserting that they are the candle itself. They represent the eagle's (powerful and masculine) and the dove's (calm and feminine) qualities combined into the form of the phoenix, which is a bird that dies and rises through love.

▶ Comparison to moth and phoenix

> Call us what you will, we are made such by love;
> Call her one, me another fly,
> We're tapers too, and at our own cost die,
> And we in us find the eagle and the dove.
> The phœnix riddle hath more wit
> By us; we two being one, are it.
> So, to one neutral thing both sexes fit.
> We die and rise the same, and prove
> Mysterious by this love.

Whatever you say about my woman and me, love is what makes us who we are. You could compare ourselves to waning candles that have been consumed by passion or to mortal, lustful flies. We are courageous and sage-like eagles, and kind and humble like doves. We represent the myth of the phoenix, a bird that perishes and then rises from its own ashes. When we have sex, the two of us combine to form one phoenix, a hybrid androgynous being made of two bodies. We "die" (have orgasms), like the phoenix, and then rise anew. You see, we become a wonderful creature because of our love.

▶ Love as a centre point of life

Stanza IV

In the poem, the speaker examines the prospect of canonization.

> We can die by it, if not live by love,
> And if unfit for tombs and hearse
> Our legend be, it will be fit for verse;
> And if no piece of chronicle we prove,
> We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms;
> As well a well-wrought urn becomes
> The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs,
> And by these hymns, all shall approve
> Us canonized for Love.

We can absolutely pass away from love if we cannot survive on it. Our love story will work perfectly for poetry, even if it is not precisely something you could carve on a tomb or a hearse. While we might not enter history

books, we will establish a place for ourselves in the sonnet stanzas. The poetry I write will be an appropriate memorial to us, just as a beautiful, well-made urn or a vast, imposing grave is the ideal place for the ashes of heroes. Everyone who reads it will concur that we deserve to be saints for our devotion to love.

▶ Poetry and love

Stanza V

▶ Donne and his partner as the patrons of love

He discusses his and his partner's duties as the patron saints of love, to whom countless more lovers would turn in the future for guidance.

> And thus invoke us: "You, whom reverend love
> Made one another's hermitage;
> You, to whom love was peace, that now is rage;
> Who did the whole world's soul contract, and drove
> Into the glasses of your eyes
> (So made such mirrors, and such spies,
> That they did all to you epitomize)
> Countries, towns, courts: beg from above
> A pattern of your love!"

People will say the following when they want to pray to us: "You two lovers, whom love made into each other's sacred, private chapel; you two, who found peace in a love that is now causing for passionate devotion; you two, who shrunk the soul of the world itself down into the reflective mirrors of your eyes, seeing in each other everything that exists, making each other into the whole wide world with its countries, cities, and noble courts: ask God to send us the pattern that he has for the world."

▶ Donne's and his lover's passionate love

2.1.3.3 Form

The first, third, fourth, and seventh lines of each of the five stanzas of "The Canonization" are written in pentameter; the second, fifth, sixth, and eighth lines are written in tetrameter; and the ninth line is written in trimeter. (Each stanza has the stress pattern 545544543.) Each verse has the rhyme pattern abbacccdd.

▶ Metre of lines

In the lines *We die and rise the same, and prove/ Mysterious by this love*, the poem's tone alternates throughout between an arch, affluent sensibility ("half-acre tombs") and intense loving abandonment. One of Donne's best-known and most-discussed poems is "The Canonization." Its criticism by Cleanth Brooks and others has made it a central issue in the debate between formalist

- Donne's and Brook's understanding of poetry

critics and historicist critics. Donne contends that the poem is what it appears to be, an anti-political love poem, while Brook thinks that it is actually a kind of coded, ironic rumination on the "ruined fortune" and dashed political hopes of the first stanza, based on events in Donne's life at the time of the poem's composition. The decision of which argument to accept depends heavily on temperament. However, it is probably better to view the poem as a type of humorous, passionate speech act.

Summarised Overview

"The Canonization," a clever, pun-filled poem by John Donne, was originally released in his posthumous collection *Poems* in 1633. The speaker of the poem, a middle-aged man who has experienced a profound love affair, requests a jeering friend to stop and "let him love" already. This poem implies that love is timeless in more ways than one, including the fact that it can strike at any age and, with a little help from poetry, help lovers become saints who live forever.

The speaker begs his audience to keep quiet so that he can love. If the addressee is unable to control his speech, the speaker advises him to criticise him for his palsy, gout, his "five grey hairs," or his lost riches in addition to his propensity for love. *Call us whatever you like*, the speaker instructs his audience, for it is love that has made them who they are. They are like candles ("tapers") that burn by feeding upon themselves ("and at our own cost die"), and the addressee might "Call her one, me another fly," he claims. The lovers discover the eagle and the dove in one another, and by working as one ("we two being one"), they solve the mystery of the phoenix because they "die and rise the same," just like the phoenix, but unlike the phoenix, it is love that kills and resurrects them.

He claims that if they are unable to live by love, they can die by it. If their legend is not suitable for "tombs and hearses," he promises that "We'll construct in sonnets charming rooms." The speaker and his beloved will be "canonised," or accepted into the sainthood of love, as a result of the poetry about them. A well-crafted urn does as much credit to a dead man's ashes as does a massive tomb. The lovers will be invoked by everyone who hears their tale, who will claim that nations, cities, and tribunals "*ask from above / A pattern of your love*!"

Assignments

1. How would you describe the speaker's relationship with the person he is addressing in this poem?
2. What is the ideal method to love in the speaker's opinion,? Do you concur with his analysis? If not, why not?
3. What connection does this poetry make between love and religion?
4. What connection does this poem make between poetry and eternal life?
5. What is the paradox included in John Donne's poem "The Canonization"?
6. Consider the imagery and conceits used in "The Canonization" in your essay.
7. How does "The Canonization" put the messages about love and poetry into practice?

Suggested Readings

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2.1.4 "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning"

Keywords

Metaphysical, compass, separation, movement, love, distance

2.1.4.1 Overview of the Poem

"A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" was written by John Donne in 1611 on the occasion of his leaving his wife, Anne More Donne. Donne left his wife in England to embark on a diplomatic trip to France. "A valediction" is a closing statement. This poetry celebrates the unique, individual love the speaker and his sweetheart share while advising against grieving over separation. It wasn't released until after Donne's passing, like the majority of his poems. The poet reassures his lady love in this poem that her worries and concerns over his departure from a foreign country are unfounded and that their relationship is as strong and enduring as ever. Their love for souls is so complete that it creates one soul that is superior to both and unaffected by the change. The poem's central thesis is the notion of the unity of souls.

▶ The central theme of "A Valediction"

2.1.4.2 Stanza Wise Analysis

Stanza I

The speaker opens with a morbid thought. He discusses the passing of a "virtuous" man. Because of his kindness, he passes away quietly. In this situation, Donne compares passing away to "whisper[ing]" one's soul away. Nothing about the poem is traumatic. Onomatopoeia is best exemplified by the word "whisper." The word mimics or sounds like the noise it refers to. The dying man is not himself. His bed is surrounded by "sad pals" who are debating whether or not he is deceased. There is no indication that he is dying because his final moments are so serene. If "The breath goes now" or not, they ask one another in conversation.

▶ Donne's grief over his parting

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

The above lines form the main idea in the first stanza. The speaker begins with a scene of upright folks silently dying while softly pleading for their souls to depart from their bodies. The companions of the dying guy debate over whether the men have yet stopped breathing because these virtuous deaths are so inconspicuous.

▶ Death or parting of good people

Stanza II

Readers unfamiliar with Donne's complex use of conceit may find the second stanza too shocking. The speaker is equating a good man's tranquil passing with his love for the intended listener. They do not experience the "tear-floods" and "sigh-tempests" of the shallow when they part. The speaker in Donne's poem observes how other couples interact with one another and realises that his connection with his love is superior. Never in a million years would he and his companion be so crude as to show their feelings to the "laity" or common people. They keep it a secret from others. He claims that exposing it would be a "profanation" or a dishonour to their "pleasure." They will "make no noise" and keep their distance from others who are engaged in less serious relationships.

▶ How do Donne and his wife become different from other couples?

So, let us melt, and make no noise,
No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;
'Twere profanation of our joys
To tell the laity our love.

The speaker makes the case that they should follow these deaths as a model and say goodbye in silence. They shouldn't succumb to the need to sigh and cry excessively. In fact, expressing their grief so publicly would devalue their intimate love by making it known to the general public.

▶ A silent parting

Stanza III

The "Moving of the earth" or an earthquake, which is another illustration of a natural disaster, is introduced in the third stanza. This earthquake is something unforeseen and mysterious. "Harms and dread" are also brought on by earthquakes. These lines have been inserted to highlight how ridiculous it is to make a big deal out of the speaker leaving. The second and third lines are a little less clear and they are referring to the concentric circles or celestial spheres that the moon, stars, and planets travel in. Despite

being divided, they nevertheless tremble and vibrate in response to other things. The speaker is characterising their shaking in this passage as "trepidation." Although it causes more shaking than an earthquake can, it is silent and uninvolved. Another metaphor for the speaker's view of his relationship is presented here. It is the far stronger shaking of the cosmic spheres, not the flashy earthquake.

- Their parting as shaking as an earthquake

Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears,
Men reckon what it did, and meant;
But trepidation of the spheres,
Though greater far, is innocent.

- Comparison between the earthquake and the parting of lovers

Humans are injured and scared by natural occurrences like earthquakes. Ordinary folks observe these occurrences and ponder their significance. Even though they are greater and more significant, most people are unaware of the movements of the skies.

Stanza IV

In the sixth stanza, the speaker returns to discuss the weaker love relationship of others. It is "Dull" and "Sublunary," which means that it is located below the moon as opposed to in the sky. Participants in these interactions are motivated by their senses. The relationship's "soul" can be identified using one's senses. The impact of physical proximity to these loves cannot be overstated. Since absence "doth eliminate" the entire relationship, they "cannot admit / Absence." Touch and sight are the only things shallow lovers use to communicate with one another.

- Weaker love is dependent on visual proximity

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

People who are uninteresting and ordinary experience a type of love that is unable to withstand distance since it depends on sensual connection. The physical connection that their love depends on is destroyed when they are physically separated.

- Physical connection and love

Stanza V

The fifth stanza in "A Valediction" contrasts with the fourth. Donne then moves to his own marriage and uses the pronoun "we" to refer to himself and his wife. They interact in a "refined" or sophisticated way. They, as physical beings, have difficulty comprehending their love since they neglect the physical proximity of their love. The spiritual nature of the speaker's and his wife's love is reiterated in the following two lines, as their love is more mental than physical. They do not worry about the "eyes, lips, and hands," according to this, and are "inter-assured of the mind." These are not the things they will miss most about one another after they separate.

- Love of mind, not physical

> But we by a love so much refined,
> That our selves know not what it is,
> Inter-assured of the mind,
> Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss.

On the other hand, the relationship between the speaker and his sweetheart is more uncommon and unique. Even if they are unable to comprehend it, they are connected mentally and are confident in one another on a non-physical level. They are less affected by the separation of their bodies as a result.

- Non-physical type of love

Stanza VI

The sixth stanza opens with a statement about marriage that is quite simple and well-known. Although they may have had two distinct souls, they now function as "one." Because of this, when they separate, there will not be a "breach, but an expansion." Their bond will expand like thinly hammered gold is extended. Even when strained to the extreme, their love remains the same. It is also crucial to mention that Donne selected gold to serve as a symbol of their love. He is aware of the enduring and lovely aspects of his relationship.

- Parting as the expansion of love

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

- Parting compared to a hammered metal

Love unites the spirits of the lovers. They will remain united in their souls notwithstanding the speaker's departure. Instead, they will enlarge to fill the space between them, much to how fine metal enlarges when hammered.

Stanza VII

The image of the compass, which was addressed in the opening, becomes significant at this point in "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning." Donne first retracts his earlier claim about their "oneness." He makes this compromise since he is aware that there may be some scepticism over their "inter-assured" friendship. If "they," referring to him and his wife, are "two," then they serve as the compass's two points. Donne describes his wife as the "permanent foot" of the compass. She possesses a stable "soul" that never puts on a "show / To move" and stays rooted in place. His wife will not move unless "the other do."

- The lovers as two points of a compass

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

Even if their spirits are distinct from one another, they are nevertheless connected in the same way that a sketching compass's legs are. The spirit of the lovers is like the stationary foot of a compass, which appears to be still but actually moves in response to the other foot's motion.

- The imagery of a compass

Stanza VIII

The motion of the stationary foot is further defined in the seventh stanza. At first, it occupies the centre of their universe and is the centre of attention. The other leg, the one compared to Donne, will lean if it decides to "roam" too far off in the distance. His wife only moves in this direction. She "hearkens" after him when he wants her to and then "grows erect" when he gets home or goes back to the set point.

- Leaning and roaming of compass points

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

- Lovers' leaning toward each other is similar to the movement of compass legs

The middle of the paper is occupied by this still compass foot. The stationary foot adjusts its angle to lean in the direction of the moving compass foot, as though yearning to be closer to its mate. The stationary foot stands straight once more, appearing attentive and excited, as the moving foot twists and closes the compass.

Stanza IX

- The firmness and support of Donne's wife

The next four lines explain the metaphor in its entirety. The speaker clearly addresses his wife in these sentences. She will be the line that draws him back in, he promises her. She possesses a "firmness" that keeps his circle within bounds or makes it "fair." She will always return him to his starting point no matter what he does or where he goes.

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

- Lover's support to draw the flawless circle

He claims that the speaker's lover will be like his stationary foot, when he must take a detour or an indirect way. He is able to form a flawless circle thanks to her fixed position because it gives him the steadiness to do so. This brings the speaker back to his girlfriend.

- Writers who used the image of the compass

Many people find it odd when a compass is taken for comparison with love. But, even before Donne, the imagery of the compass has been employed by other writers. F.P. Wilson notes that Joseph Hall used this picture in his poem "Epistles", which was published three years before John Donne's composition of this poem. The poet-dramatist Guarin also used this picture in his madrigal from the 1500s. Guarin sees his beloved as the fixed foot firmly planted in the middle, and the lover as the other foot being rotated by fate. This image is later used by a lesser-known poet, Thomas Carew, in his poem "Excuse of Absence". These instances show how this picture has become ingrained in the educated minds of the people of the period. John Donne incorporates this image into his mental clothing and uses it in a very appropriate way.

Summarised Overview

John Donne's poem "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" examines love via the concepts of assurance and detachment. Donne conveys his moral issues to his readers with powerful imagery. According to Donne, a deeper, more refined love results from the fusion of two souls into one mentally. If a true marriage of the minds has taken place, connecting a couple's spirits forever, then physical proximity is immaterial. For those who have a "refined love," Donne seems to imply that the experience of separation is a good one. He seems to view separation as a source of strength and greatness, when we typically equate it with sadness and misery. Their love grows, expands, and follows them wherever they are during this period of separation. The speaker of the poem begins by describing the passing of a good man. His companions are unsure if he is dead or not as he enters the afterlife quietly. Donne likens this type of amicable severance to the way he and his wife will part ways. They "melt" from one another instead of having an emotional meltdown, as a shallow pair might. Donne likens the flow of their love to the "celestial spheres." These times are considerably more potent than the widely visible "Moving of the earth," despite being invisible to humans on earth. The illustration demonstrates how their separation would be an "expansion" as opposed to a "breach." Their bond will elongate like pounded-thin gold leaf.

Assignments

1. What aspects of "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" should be discussed as metaphysical poetry?
2. Analyse the spiritual aspect of love in the poem "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning."
3. In what way did the poet justify his brief separation from his sweetheart in "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning"?
4. What type of conceit did Donne deploy in stanzas 7-9 of the poem "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning?

Suggested Readings

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2. Bloom, Harold. *The Best Poems of the English Language: From Chaucer Through Frost*, HarperCollins, New York, 2004.
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5. Donne, John. *Poems* by J.D. Iohn Marriot, London, 1633.
6. Eliot, TS. "The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry." *The Clark Lectures at Trinity College*, Cambridge, 1926.
7. Greenblatt, Stephen. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature Major Authors Edition: The Middle Ages Through the Restoration And the Eighteenth Century*, Norton, 2006.
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1. Carter, Ronald and John McRae. *The Routledge History of Literature in English*. Routledge, London, 1997.
2. Daiches, David. *A Critical History of English Literature in Two Volumes*. Vol. I, Secker & Warburg, London, 1961.
3. Poplawski, Paul. *English Literature in Context*, Cambridge UP, London, 2008.
4. Sanders, Andrew. *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*, Clarendon Press, London, 1994.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

Unit 2

Drama

Learning Outcomes

This unit will give the learner an understanding of :

- the dramatic and intellectual accomplishments of Marlowe.
- *Doctor Faustus* as a great tragedy.
- *Doctor Faustus* as a Christian morality play.
- *Doctor Faustus* transcending the morality ethos within its structure to become a great human tragedy.

2.2.1 Doctor Faustus

Background

Doctor Faustus was penned by Christopher Marlowe for the Admiral's Men and was performed in 1588. Its initial Quarto edition appeared in print in 1604 usually called the A-text. Later, this Quarto was reprinted numerous times with some interpolations. A larger edition of the play, however, including numerous humorous moments that were missing from the 1604 edition, was revised and released in 1616 and is known as the B-text. Both the 1604 and 1616 versions of *Doctor Faustus* are used in modern editions.

Doctor Faustus is preoccupied with his soul's eternal damnation. He struggles with thoughts of damnation and his own doubts continually as his blood congeals as he attempts to sign away his soul. The words Homo fuge, or Fly man, appear on the doctor's arm. It is a complicated drama with many different themes, symbols, and literary devices. Most people think of it as a mixture between a tragedy and a warning. The notion of selling one's soul to the devil may have its roots in the myth of Faustus, particularly in Marlowe's renowned portrayal.

Keywords

Characters, role, plot, act, themes, structure, passages

2.2.1.1 The Life Of Marlowe

Christopher Marlowe was son of a prominent shoemaker in Canterbury who was rich and well-respected Marlowe was christened at Saint George's church in Canterbury on February 26 after being born on February 6, 1564. In December 1580, Marlowe transferred from King's School in Canterbury to Corpus Christi College in Cambridge. He enrolled, thanks to a scholarship established by Archbishop Parker that was available to students pursuing careers, in the church for six years. This information suggests that Marlowe had intended to join the church, even though his initial entry in the college records listed him as a dialectic student.

Fig.2.2.1. Christopher Marlow

- Marlowe's birth and primary education

Marlowe completed his B.A. in 1584, followed by his M.A. three years later. Except for a few extended vacations during his second year, his academic career was largely traditional. The only issue Marlowe encountered was right before receiving his M.A. The college was planning to delay his degree because of certain persistent rumours. In a letter to the university, the Queen's Privy Council reassured the college about Marlowe's moral reputation and stated that he had served her majesty. This letter was written to dispel allegations that Marlowe intended to ally himself with the English Catholics in Reims, France. Marlowe appears to have served the government during this time by either transporting overseas dispatches or working as a spy for Sir Francis Walsingham, the head of Queen Elizabeth's secret service. However, there is no current direct proof of his exact activities or assignments while serving the Queen.

- Marlowe's moral reputation

He travelled to London after getting his M.A. from the university and joined Rawley, Nashe, and Kyd in a remarkable group of young men. His debut drama, *Tamburlaine* the Great, had both acts presented on stage at the end of the year 1587. Marlowe was a young man

only twenty-three years old at the time, but due to the popularity of his first play, he had already made a name for himself as a dramatist. After leaving the university, he spent the next six years of his life primarily in Shoreditch, a neighbourhood known for its theatres. During this time, he travelled much for the government, although he never changed his London address. He formerly shared a residence with Thomas Kyd, who is also the author of the wildly successful Elizabethan play *The Spanish Tragedy*. Kyd later claimed that Marlowe had a cruel heart and a violent temper.

- Marlowe's moral reputation

Due to his involvement in a street brawl in which William Bradley, the son of a Holborn innkeeper, was slain, Marlowe was jailed in Newgate in September 1589. Watson, a friend of Marlowe's, had used his sword to kill the man, thus Marlowe was not accused of the crime. He was discharged on 1st October after posting a forty-pound bail and receiving a warning to maintain the peace. Marlowe was entangled in a legal dispute three years later, in 1592, after he was called to court for attacking two constables in the Shoreditch neighbourhood. The cops said that Marlowe's threats had caused them to fear for their lives. He paid a fine and was let go. Marlowe once more ran into trouble with the Privy Council in the spring of 1593 over an allegation of atheism and blasphemy. Thomas Kyd had been detained for possessing several heretical documents that denied the deity of Christ. Kyd insisted that Marlowe owned them and disputed that they belonged to him. The Privy Council then called Marlowe to appear before them, and unless he had a licence to the contrary, he was required to do so every day.

- Dispute between Marlowe and Kyd

Then, Marlowe was assassinated twelve days later in a pub in Deptford, a dockyard close to Greenwich. Marlowe had accepted Ingram Frizer's invitation that day to dine at the pub with several other young men of questionable reputation who had been involved in con games, swindles, and espionage. After dinner, Marlowe and Frizer got into a fight over the tavern tab. When Marlowe used a dagger to strike Frizer in the head, Frizer miraculously turned around and threw the blade back at Marlowe, killing him by striking him in the forehead. Marlowe built a strong reputation as a dramatist throughout his brief career on the strength of four plays. He wrote *Faustus* in 1589 or 1592,

- Marlowe's murder and his major works

The Jew of Malta in 1589, and *Edward II* in 1592 in addition to his debut play, *Tamburlaine*. He also translated Ovid's *Amores* and Lucan's *Pharsalia* in addition to his dramatic works. His most well-known poems are "The Massacre of Paris" and "Hero and Leander."

2.2.2 Dramatic Persona

- Faustus' inclination to errors

- **Faustus:** The protagonist, a bright scholar from Wittenberg, Germany in the sixteenth century, Faustus is willing to pay the ultimate price—his soul—to Lucifer in exchange for supernatural abilities because of his hunger for knowledge, fortune, and worldly power. The fact that Faustus never seems to be certain about the choice to surrender his soul and frequently questions whether or not to repent lessens the tragedy of his first grandeur. Although he has good ambition and starts great, he ultimately lacks a particular inner strength. He is unable to fully embrace his dark path and is also resistant to accepting his error.

- Mephistopheles's negative image

- **Mephistopheles:** Mephistopheles is a devil whom Faustus conjures through his early magical trials. The objectives of Mephistopheles are murky: on the one hand, he frequently states that he wants to seize Faustus' soul and send it to hell; on the other hand, he actively works to discourage Faustus from making a bargain with Lucifer by forewarning him about the horrors of hell. With his poignant, regretful stories of what the devils have lost in their permanent separation from God and his frequent musings on the suffering that results from damnation, Mephistopheles is ultimately as terrible a figure as Faustus.

- Chorus' role in enriching play

- **Chorus:** A character who offers comments and narrative while apart from the action. In Greek tragedy, the Chorus was standard.

- **Old Man:** A mysterious character that shows up in the climax. The elderly man ex-

- Old Man's appearance in the climax

horts Faustus to turn to God and beg for forgiveness. He appears to take the role of the good and bad angels who attempted to sway Faustus' actions in the opening scene.

- Good Angel's effort to bring Faustus to God's path

- **Good Angel:** A spirit that exhorts Faustus to depart from his alliance with Lucifer and go back to God. The good angel portrays Faustus' conscience and divided will between good and evil in various ways, together with the old man and the bad angel.

- Evil Angel as Faustus' dark side

- **Evil Angel:** A spirit that acts as the evil angel's counterpoint and gives Faustus justifications for not turning from his transgressions against God. The malicious angel stands for the dark side of Faustus' conscience.

- Lucifer's negative face

- **Lucifer:** The master of Mephistopheles, the prince of devils, and the dictator of hell.

- Wagner's conjuring

- **Wagner:** Servant to Faustus. Wagner learns how to conjure devils and perform magic by consulting his master's books.

- Resemblance of the Clown's actions with Faustus'

- **Clown:** The servant of Wagner is a clown. The clown's antics offer comic relief because they contrast with Faustus' opulence at first. He is a bizarre figure. But as the play progresses, Faustus' actions start to resemble those of a clown.

- **Robin:** An innkeeper or ostler who, like the clown, offers a light-hearted counterpoint to Faustus. Robin and his friend Rafe pick up some fundamental conjuring techniques, proving that even those with the least education can be adept at magic. Robin and Rafe are mentioned by Marlowe to show how degraded Faustus becomes when he falls prey to petty deceit like the formers.

- Robin's and Rafe's conjuring

- Rafe's role

- **Rafe:** An ostler and Robin's pal. In Doctor Faustus' B-text versions, Rafe plays the role of Dick, Robin's clown friend.

- Valdes' and Cornelius' black magic

- **Valdes and Cornelius:** Two magicians and Faustus' companions who instruct him in the practice of black magic.

- Horse-Courser and mount

- **Horse-Courser:** A horse trader who purchases a mount from Faustus, which vanishes after it is driven into the water, prompts the horse-courser to seek retribution.

- Fautus' companion with the Scholars

- **The Scholars:** Colleagues of Faustus at Wittenberg University. Loyal to Faustus, the scholars make an appearance at the play's beginning and conclusion to express shock at the direction his studies have taken, to laud his accomplishments, and to hear him agonisingly confess his deal with Lucifer.

- Pope's political role

- **The Pope:** The head of the Roman Catholic Church and a significant political player in Faustus' era in Europe. For the Protestant audience of the play, the Pope is both a source of pleasure and a representation of the religion that Faustus has abandoned.

- Charles V and power

- **Emperor Charles V:** The most powerful monarch in Europe, whose court Faustus visits.

- Knight as Benvolio

- **Knight:** Knight was a German nobleman at the court of the emperor. Faustus uses the knight's scepticism about the latter's abilities by causing antlers to grow from his head as a warning. In the B-text versions of Doctor Faustus, the knight is more developed and given the name Benvolio; Benvolio intends to kill Faustus in retaliation for his actions.

- Bruno's appearance in B-text adaptations

- **Bruno:** A Pope's nominee who has the emperor's backing. The Pope kidnaps Bruno, who is set free by Faustus. Only B-text adaptations of Doctor Faustus feature Bruno.

- Duke of Vanholt's role

- **Duke of Vanholt:** A German aristocrat whom Faustus visits.

- Martino and Frederick in B-text adaptations

- **Martino and Frederick:** Benvolio's friends grudgingly participate in his mission to murder Faustus. Only B-text versions of Doctor Faustus have Martino and Frederick.

2.2.3 Short Summary of the Play

Doctor John Faustus is introduced by the chorus, whose role is to both explain and facilitate transitions in the play. The chorus here clarifies that Faustus' story is neither an overarching account of battle nor courtly love. The story revolves around a man of humble origin who, in later years, is raised by a relative while going to school in Wertenberg. The young man demonstrates his brilliance as a religious scholar but, overflowing with vanity, veers off course to investigate necromancy or dark magic. Faustus reads through various literature on logic, medicine, law, and religion as he sits in his study. He dismisses them one by one until finally turning to a book of magic. Faustus has attracted to the power and authority that this art promises. He decides to study magic despite the Good Angel's cautions that suddenly arrive. He asks his German acquaintances Valdes and Cornelius to instruct him in all the fundamentals of the "damned art" of necromancy. Later, in an act of magic, Faustus calls forth the devil Mephistopheles,"an unhappy spirit that fell with Lucifer." He was the prince of devils as God cast him out of heaven. Mephistopheles advises that Faustus runs the risk of having his soul corrupted by dabbling in magic. Then he forewarns the hellish punishments that await him if he joins forces with Lucifer. Unfazed, Faustus sends the demon back to his lord with a proposition: 24 years of Mephistopheles' service in exchange for the soul of Faustus. Mephistopheles goes back to Faustus and informs him that Lucifer has agreed to the arrangement, but only if he receives the blood-

- The pact between Faustus and Lucifer

written and signed deed for his soul.

As soon as Faustus completes the task as directed, the words "Homo fuge" emerge as a mark on his arm. They appear to be a warning and are Latin for "Fly, O man!" Uneasy, Faustus attempts to think of a place to flee—certainly not to God, who would damn him to hell for what he had done. Mephistopheles lavishes him with expensive gifts and diabolical entertainment before giving him all the books he needs on spells and incantations to divert Faustus and fortify his resolve. Later, Faustus begins to second-guess himself and mulls over the idea of giving up magic and making amends. He then hardens his heart and starts probing Mephistopheles about the nature and motion of heavenly bodies after remembering that he is unquestionably already condemned. But when Faustus asks, "Who formed the world?" the devil declines to respond, renewing his scepticism. The devil Lucifer and his fellow ruler of hell Beelzebub arrive as the doctor prays to Christ to save his soul. They appeal to Faustus' hunger for knowledge and captivate him with a display of the Seven Deadly Sins to sway him away from the verge of repentance.

▶ Faustus between sin and the verge of repentance

After careful study, Faustus now travels to Rome to see the Pope using his evil abilities. He bothers the Pope when he entertains visitors, throwing pyrotechnics among them, stealing food and wine, and boxing the Pope's ears. He asks Mephistopheles to make him invisible. In the years that follow, Faustus travels around Europe, making appearances at kings' courts and developing a distinguished reputation for wit and expertise in the dark arts. Emperor Carolus the Fifth eventually summons Faustus to his court and implores him to summon Alexander the Great. While a knight makes fun of the doctor's skill, the emperor is suitably pleased by the achievement. As payback, Faustus bestows on him a pair of horns, which are a surefire indicator that the knight has been duped by his wife. Faustus continues his journey and pulls off more magical tricks, including a harsh and dishonest trick on a horse-courser (a dealer in horses). The Duke and Duchess of Vanholt are afterwards amused by him at court by his production of grapes in the winter.

▶ Faustus in front of emperors

The last act begins with Faustus summoning Helen of

Troy in front of an audience of admiring academics. But the cursed doctor's 24 years are coming to an end, and soon it will be time to give over his soul. He is urged to seek God's forgiveness and repent by an elderly man who appears. Despite being briefly seduced, Faustus decides to renew his blood oath to Lucifer. Then, to strengthen his determination, Faustus requests that Mephistopheles bring Helen of Troy back to life as his lover. Faustus tells three other academics about his fate in the hours before his death. They beg him to pray to God for assistance, but Faustus thinks it is already too late. He has been in a covenant with Lucifer for too long, abandoned God, and committed blasphemy. When the clock strikes eleven, Faustus is by himself after pleading with the students to go. Faustus begs Lucifer to spare him or for Earth to bury him and shield him from God's vengeance as his fear and desperation grow. But Faustus' fate is predetermined. When twelve o'clock rolls around, Lucifer's henchmen emerge to drag the doctor's soul to hell.

- Faustus' relationship with Helen and his death

2.2.4 Plot Summary: The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus

In the following section, the Act and Scene-wise explanation of the play is given

2.2.4.1 Prologue

The chorus states at the beginning of the play that there will not be any tales of battle, courtly love, or brave acts. Instead, the audience will see the tale of Faustus, a commoner and a man of humble birth from the German town of Rhodes. When Faustus reached adulthood, he moved in with family in Wertenberg, attended college, and pursued theology. He did well in school and soon obtained both his degree and the title of "doctor." Then, he was driven by ambition and pride to practise black magic. Similar to the mythical Icarus, who flew too close to the sun on wax and feather wings, Faustus went too far in his quest for unfathomable knowledge. The chorus declares that this man eats and craves everything magic has to offer. He is currently seated in his office.

- Faustus' learning of black magic

2.2.4.2 Act 1, Scene 1

Faustus contemplates his future as a scholar while alone in his office. He has a master's degree in theology,

- Faustus' study of logic

but he wonders if his interests have since altered. He starts by thinking about the study of logic or reasoning, which has its roots in the Analytics of the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle. But the skill of effective debate appears to be logic's primary objective. Faustus quickly dismisses this field of study because he has already mastered the necessary talent.

- Faustus' entry to medicinal learning

He then turns his attention to medicine, noting an Aristotelian proverb that reads, "Where philosophy ends, medicine starts." Galen, a physician from ancient Rome who is regarded as the most illustrious of all famous doctors, is mentioned by Faustus. Faustus is aware that practising medicine can be lucrative and that reputation can be attained through the discovery of a miraculous treatment. He is already a skilled doctor, but he does not take pleasure in his accomplishments; he is still only Faustus.

- Faustus' entry into theology

The Roman Emperor Justinian, whose writings served as the foundation for the study of law throughout the Renaissance, comes up when the doctor turns to the subject of law. Faustus, however, rejects this as well. He concludes that practising law is a monotonous, purposeless, and narrowly focused vocation. He rejects it and comes full circle, concluding that his goals are best served by the formal study of religion. He opens St. Jerome's translation of the Bible and reads a verse that says, "The punishment for sin is death." He has the realisation that because of sin, humanity is destined to die an eternal death. The study of theology likewise looks meaningless in light of this and is unable to satiate his cravings.

- Faustus' learning of Magic

After ruling out the three major fields of study at a Renaissance university, Faustus turns to necromancy and "magical metaphysics" (the study of what is thought to be beyond the known world). This unconventional academic path promises wealth, pleasure, influence, and other desirable qualities. A skilled magician, according to Faustus, "is a magnificent deity," and he has a dream that he would one day become omnipotent, or all-powerful, and superior to emperors or monarchs. Faustus decides to use magic and immediately orders his servant Wagner to call on his pals Valdes and Cornelius. They might support him academically.

The Good Angel and the Evil Angel confront Faustus when he is alone. The Good Angel implores Faustus to read the Bible rather than his wicked book of wizardry. Faustus is urged to pursue his ambitious course of study by the Evil Angel. After they have left, Faustus expounds loudly on the advantages of studying magic and all the wonderful things he will be able to do with its power.

- Confrontation between good and evil

Faustus informs Valdes and Cornelius that he got consumed with the desire to practise magic. Valdes assures Faustus that they would achieve renown and privilege thanks to the latter's intelligence. Faustus would not want to study anything else after seeing what magic is capable of, Cornelius continues. The two anticipate that Faustus would soon surpass them and they decide to assist him in learning the fundamentals of the craft. Faustus asks his buddies to have dinner with him first though he is eager to start that night.

- Valdes' and Cornelius' teaching of magic to Faustus

2.2.4.3 Act 1, Scene 2

Two nosy academics arrive at Faustus' house looking for him. Before informing them that his master is having dinner with Valdes and Cornelius, Wagner engages them in a brief verbal duel. The fact that the doctor's guests are well-known exponents of "that terrible art" is bad news in the eyes of the scholars. They worry that Faustus might also be a magician. They sadly proceed to alert the university's president in the vain hope that he may be able to save Faustus from this terrible error before it is too late.

- Faustus' knowledge of magic and its impact

2.2.4.4 Act 1, Scene 3

Faustus has learned conjuring well enough to summon the devil one cold night. He sketches symbols, marks, and circles after consulting a book of spells. He writes the name of Jehovah backwards and forwards, then rearranges the letters to create new words. He abbreviates the saints' names. Then, while singing in Latin, he invokes the forces of heaven and hell, praying to Beelzebub, Demogorgon, the Holy Trinity, and the spirits of fire, air, water, and earth (a demon). He gives the order for Mephistopheles to come.

- Faustus' expertise in conjuring

When a devil appears, Faustus declares him "too ugly to attend on me" and orders him to take a more attractive form. He jokes that dressing up like an elderly

- Faustus' concept of a devil

Franciscan friar would be acceptable. He anticipates that "this Mephistopheles" would be a submissive, obedient servant, so he is happy when the devil promptly disappears.

- Mephistopheles' understanding of Faustus' magic

When Mephistopheles shows up, he queries Faustus about his intentions. Mephistopheles says that the devil cannot serve Faustus without the consent of his master, Lucifer. He arrived independently rather than in response to Faustus' summons. Mephistopheles is curious to determine the state of Faustus' soul, which he seeks to acquire. The doctor's conjuring is a surefire indicator that a man is in peril of going to hell.

- Mephistopheles' warning to Faustus about Lucifer

Mephistopheles responds to Faustus' inquiries by outlining Lucifer's characteristics as a fallen angel, his position as lord of devils, and why God expelled him from heaven due to his conceit and impudence. Mephistopheles adds that because he was a devotee of Lucifer, he was doomed alongside him. Mephistopheles cautions Faustus to veer away from the path he has chosen as he muses on the eternal agony he experiences being cut off from God. Faustus dismissively instructs him to go back to Lucifer, his boss, and give Lucifer his soul in exchange for 24 years of Mephistopheles's obedience to his orders. Additionally, Faustus states that he intends to enjoy a life of "voluptuousness" during this time, one that is rich in pleasure. He needs a response by midnight. After the devil leaves, Faustus muses over all that he will accomplish with his envisioned might. He will rule as the world's emperor and be able to accomplish amazing things, including connecting Spain's and Africa's continental coastlines.

2.2.4.5 Act 1, Scene 4

Wagner engages in some banter with a clown, or peasant, by calling him "boy." The man asks, indignantly, how many "boys" he has seen with beards similar to his. Then, according to Wagner, the man appears to be jobless and so hungry that he would sell his soul to the devil in exchange for some flesh to eat. He tries to enlist him as his servant, but the clown does not appear interested. Wagner then threatens to use magic to transform the clown's lice into demonic spirits that would devour him. When this fails, he forces money on the fellow that the man tries to return. Belcher and Baliol, two devils Wagner

summons in a fit of rage, pursue the scared clown. Wagner expels the devils after a little interval. Now that the clown has witnessed Wagner's display, he agrees to work for Wagner in exchange for teaching him how to perform additional magical feats and summon demons.

- Wagner's dealing with clown

2.2.4.6 Act 2, Scene 1

Faustus waits in his study for Mephistopheles's return. He is troubled by doubts about the choice he has made. On the one hand, he is aware that for dabbling with magic, he will be damned. On the other hand, it might be too late to turn to God once more because it does not make sense how God could love him. Suddenly, he realises that he would rather pursue his own ambitious goals, therefore he might as well keep working for Beelzebub. The Evil Angel and Good Angel reappear to debate the merits of repentance. The Good Angel claims that Faustus still has time to turn away from magic, repent, and enter heaven. This is an illusion, according to the Evil Angel, and should not be believed. He advises Faustus to be mindful of the honour and fortune he will get as a result of using magic.

- Faustus' working for beelzebub

After the angels leave, Faustus decides to carry on with his plans because he thinks that as long as Mephistopheles is by his side, no deity can harm him. The devil then appears and announces that Lucifer has accepted Faustus' offer: he can exchange his soul for 24 years of service to Mephistopheles and a life of luxury and pleasure. There is only one condition. Faustus must write and sign the contract in his blood as proof of his dedication to the deal. Mephistopheles responds that it will expand Lucifer's expanding realm when Faustus inquires what the worth his soul has for Lucifer. When asked if he experiences anguish in his role as a devil torturing doomed souls, Mephistopheles acknowledges that he does. The devil then reminds Faustus of the fantastic rewards connected to a deal with Lucifer to allay any doubts he may have had.

- Lucifer's acceptance of Faustus' offer

Faustus writes the contract in blood after slashing his arm, but the blood quickly gels and he is unable to continue. He ponders what this means briefly. Mephistopheles then brings hot coals to liquefy the blood once more so that Faustus can fulfil the terms of

the agreement. It is finished, he declares in Latin as he signs it. *Homo fuge*! (Fly, O Man!) is inscribed on his arm in an instant. Despite the ominous warning, Faustus is at a loss about where to go. God certainly would not provide him with a safe refuge.

▶ Faustus 'blood' agreement

Mephistopheles lavishes Faustus with crowns and expensive attire while pledging "by hell and Lucifer" that the doctor will have anything he wants. As anticipated, Faustus approves the agreement, and Mephistopheles accepts it on Lucifer's behalf. Then, following Faustus' initial instruction, Mephistopheles explains the horrifying features of hell. However, Faustus declares that he has no fear of hell and claims, "I think hell is a fable."

▶ Faustus being advised by Mephistopheles

Faustus orders Mephistopheles to "find" him a wife. The devil reappears with a second devil disguised as a terrifying woman. Mephistopheles pleads with Faustus to abandon all thoughts of marriage when he rejects her. Instead, he is free to choose any number of stunning mistresses. The devil then provides Faustus with a comprehensive book of information to study about spells and incantations, astronomy and astrology, and the natural sciences to quench his hunger for knowledge.

▶ Faustus being trained by devils

2.2.4.7 Act 2, Scene 2

One of Doctor Faustus' spellbooks has been stolen by Robin, an ostler (someone who works with horses), who wants to try his hand at conjuring. He is informed that a gentleman needs their services by a fellow ostler named Rafe, but Robin shoos him away and warns him that he is going to do something dangerous. Rafe remarks that Robin cannot read after seeing the book. With any luck, Robin can read well enough to entice his mistress, he responds. Rafe finds out that Robin has been practising some minor magic and is utilising a potent book of spells. He is given the option to use Robin's magic to seduce the kitchen assistant, Nan Spit, whenever he likes. Rafe enthusiastically offers to help Robin with his conjuring.

▶ Robin's learning of conjuring

2.2.4.8 Act 2, Scene 3

Faustus rethinks his decision to follow magic once more out of fear of eternal damnation. Mephistopheles claims that the doctor's imagined version of heaven is not as wonderful as the one created for humans. Faustus

- Faustus' stand on returning to God

interprets this speech as a justification for renunciation of magic and turning to God, the opposite of what the devil wanted.

- Good and Evil Angels following Faustus

The Good Angel and Evil Angel both appear at the mention of repentance. The Good Angel promises Faustus that even if he repents, God will still feel sorrow for him, in contrast to the Evil Angel's assertion that God cannot. The Evil Angel responds, "Ay, but Faustus never shall repent," to Faustus' claim that God will feel sorry for him if he turns from his sin.

- Faustus' efforts to realise God

As the angels leave, Faustus acknowledges that he finds it difficult to repent because "his heart is so hardened." He laments the fact that the chorus "Faustus, thou art condemned" resounds in his ears like thunder whenever he speaks about salvation, faith, or heaven. If magic had not offered the "sweet pleasure" it does, he believes he could have ended his life by now. However, magic has "conquered [his] terrible misery." Faustus then decides to never repent again and asks Mephistopheles to explain the nature of the cosmos. Everything goes smoothly until Faustus wonders who created the world. Mephistopheles remains silent. He explains to Faustus that he should consider hell more in his fallen state because it is "our dominion," and he is unable to teach him anything that contradicts it.

- Faustus' repentance

Faustus starts to worry if it is too late for his soul. Upon his appearance, the Evil Angel asserts categorically that it is. The Good Angel reiterates that there is always time to act. When Faustus repents, the Evil Angel swears that the devils will tear him to pieces, but the Good Angel swears that they will not ever slash his skin. Faustus cries out to Christ the Saviour to save his miserable soul as he is perplexed and afraid.

Lucifer, Beelzebub, and Mephistopheles appear in response to Faustus' prayer to Christ. Lucifer openly informs Faustus that he cannot be saved by the intervention of Christ. Faustus is then cautioned not to ever again use the name of Christ or think of God. This would violate the agreement Faustus made with him. Asking for Lucifer's forgiveness, Faustus swears to follow. The Seven Deadly Sins—Pride, Covetousness, Wrath, Envy, Gluttony, Sloth, and Lechery—are paraded before the doctor by Lucifer to strengthen his resolve.

- Faustus being presented Seven Deadly Sins

"Oh, this feeds my soul!", Faustus exclaims as the show satisfies his baser instincts. Hell will have all of these pleasures, according to Lucifer. After reminding the doctor to "ponder on the devil," he then hands Faustus a fresh book of charms to read.

2.2.4.9 Act 3, Chorus

- Wagner's praise of Faustus

Wagner adds, while playing the chorus, that Faustus has committed his life to the pursuit of unbounded knowledge. He has mastered astronomy, attained power equal to the Olympian gods, and is currently out collecting geographic information. He then makes a detour to Rome to see the Pope and take part in the revered Feast of Saint Peter that day.

2.2.4.10 Act 3, Scene 1

- Faustus' tour

Doctor Faustus describes how his most recent journeys with Mephistopheles went. In his list of remarkable locations, he mentions Trier, Germany; Paris and the French Riviera; the Rhine River's course; Naples and Campania, Italy; the poet Virgil's Tomb; Venice and Padua, Italy; and the Italian cities of Padua and Padua. Then he queries whether Mephistopheles has delivered him to Rome as instructed. They are in the Pope's private chamber; the devil promises Faustus. The Tiber River, the four main bridges, the castle, and other prominent features of the neighbourhood are then described. Faustus gladly urges that they depart and tour Rome since he is curious. Mephistopheles, on the other hand, begs him to wait till he sees the Pope and promises they will have fun. To prepare, Faustus requests the devil to make him invisible. Faustus consents.

- Incidents with Pope

The cardinal of Lorraine and attendant friars accompany the Pope as he arrives. The banquet is ready. An unidentified voice snidely interrupts their talk, much to the humiliation of the Pope and the confusion of all. Invisible hands take up cups and serving trays. The Pope concurs with the cardinal's suggestion that this is a soul that has departed from purgatory. He then makes the cross, but as soon as he does, unidentified hands box his ears. The friars start a dirge to condemn the wicked spirit at the Pope's command. Faustus and Mephistopheles retaliate by beating them and hurling pyrotechnics at them before escaping.

2.2.4.11 Act 3, Scene 2

Using the book written by Doctor Faustus, Robin and Rafe have started practising conjuring. The evidence of their achievement is a stolen silver goblet, which Robin displays. A vintner (wine seller) comes along right then and asks for payment for the goblet. While the winemaker searches each of them, Robin and Rafe pretend not to have the object and pass it between each other covertly. Then, with an incantation in his mouth, Robin insists on searching for the vintner. As a result, a miffed Mephistopheles who went all the way from Constantinople to respond to the call shows up. The devil is furious and violently transforms Robin into an ape and Rafe into a dog upon discovering that the call originated from these two poor crooks.

- Devil's anger toward Robin and Rafe

2.2.4.12 Act 4, Chorus

The chorus says that Faustus has returned to Germany after seeing everything he wanted to see in the world. His pals welcomed him back and were astounded by the breadth of the doctor's understanding of astrology, the globe, and magic. Because of his academic prowess, Faustus is well-known "in every land." The doctor has been invited by Emperor Carolus the Fifth to his palace to display his craft.

- Fautus' reputation

2.2.4.13 Act 4, Scene 1

The Emperor dares Faustus to demonstrate his renowned conjuring skills before Carolus the Fifth. He guarantees that Faustus will not suffer any consequences for using magic. The emperor begs that the doctor resurrect Alexander the Great and his lover from their graves, and Faustus complies. Faustus explains that he will transform them into spirits instead of raising their corporeal bodies, which have long since gone to dust. A knight has made sarcastic, doubting remarks throughout this conversation between Faustus and the emperor. He now openly makes fun of Faustus before leaving because he does not want to see the magician perform. The doctor assures him that he will soon exact revenge.

- Faustus before the Carolus the Fifth

Alexander the Great and his love are greeted by Mephistopheles. The two entities seem substantial and alive to the emperor. Faustus requests that the unpleasant knight be called back after they go. The man comes

back, not realising that horns have grown out of his head. The Emperor draws attention to them and claims they are unmistakable evidence that the man is married and that his wife has cheated on him. The knight, being indignant, asks that Faustus reverse this sorcery. Faustus enjoys his retribution and then departs the court.

- Retribution for the Knight in the court

Germany's Wertenberg is where Faustus goes back. When he gets home, a horse courser (horse merchant) approaches him and offers to buy his horse. Faustus finally agrees after some convincing, but he adds cunningly that the horse-courser must not ride the horse into the water. After the man leaves, Faustus laments his impending doom and the shortening of his days. The New Testament's account of a thief's last-minute atonement while he hung on a cross next to the crucified Jesus Christ gives him some solace. The doctor nods out in his chair after finishing his thoughts.

- Faustus' realisation

A while later, the horse courser arrives at Faustus' house drenched and distraught. He says he wants his forty dollars back and tells Mephistopheles so. The man disregarded the doctor's advice and drove Faustus' horse into a pond because he believed the animal has mystical abilities that the water would disclose. The horse immediately vanished. Mephistopheles says to the man where Faustus is found dozing off. The horse-courser grabs Faustus' leg and tugs after the man's yells fail to awaken the latter. The leg suddenly falls off, shocking the scared man, who flees. When Wagner enters, Faustus and Mephistopheles are enjoying the effects of their most recent practical joke. The Duke of Vanholt wants Faustus to come to visit, he says. The doctor and the devil leave right away.

- Horse courser and Faustus

2.2.4.14 Act 4, Scene 2

Faustus and Mephistopheles have been entertaining the Duke and Duchess of Vanholt. Faustus addresses the expectant Duchess and inquires as to what delicacy he may offer to please her. She responds that she wishes she could have a serving of ripe grapes right now, but it is winter and impossible. Faustus sends Mephistopheles off after declaring that she will have it. The tastiest fruits the Duchess has ever tasted are brought by the devil when he comes shortly after. When grapes are only accessible in the summer, she wonders how Faustus got

hold of them. While it is winter here, the doctor continues, it is summer in other remote parts of the planet. Only a "swift spirit" needs to be dispatched to retrieve the grapes. The Duke and Duchess congratulate Faustus for his wonderful compassion and promise to treat him well.

- Grapes in off-season

2.2.4.15 Act 5, Scene 1

Wagner, in a brief soliloquy, expresses worry that his master may pass away soon. He has received all of Faustus' possessions. But he finds it strange that the doctor is overindulging in food and drink while having a good time with college kids when the man is close to passing away. Wagner leaves, and Faustus arrives with three scholars. The scholars, who have been dining together, now implore Faustus to summon the legendary beauty Helen of Troy. Faustus agrees after determining that they are earnest in seeking his consent. To the wonder and delight of the scholars, Helen appears with the aid of Mephistopheles. As the scholars get ready to depart, an elderly man enters. He gives Faustus another chance to refrain from his sin. The mercy of Jesus Christ, the Saviour, allows for salvation despite the doctor's horrific misdeeds. Faustus accepts the dagger provided to him by Mephistopheles out of disbelief and desperation with the intent to end his life. The elderly guy begs the doctor to stop, insisting that an angel is watching over him and waiting to extend mercy. This strikes Faustus as having some validity, so he begs the elderly man to go while he thinks about it. With a sorrowful heart, the elderly man departs.

- Scholars, Faustus and the elderly man

Faustus is on the verge of changing his thoughts when Mephistopheles threatens to tear him apart and accuses him of betraying Lucifer. Faustus apologises and says he will write his vow again in blood after severing his arm. Then he gives the order to Mephistopheles to punish the elderly man for tempting him to violate his agreement with Lucifer. The elderly man has a strong sense of faith, and Mephistopheles asserts that only physical suffering can befall him spiritually. The devil then agrees to Faustus' request and returns Helen to him as his lover "in a twinkling of an eye." Faustus pledges she will be his only love after being mesmerised by her beauty and her kiss. The elderly man (who has reappeared) is besieged by devils as Faustus departs with Helen. Mephistopheles was expecting their abuse to weaken his faith, but it did

- Faustus' efforts to repent in vain

not happen.

2.2.4.16 Act 5, Scene 2

On his last night of life, Faustus is with the three scholars. They notice that something is missing. Sighing, Faustus is alarmed by something they cannot see. He mentions an unending death. Faustus is questioned by scholars until he admits that his excessive wickedness has "damned both body and soul." They advise him to beg God for forgiveness, but the doctor claims that his transgressions surpass those of the serpent who beguiled Eve in the Garden of Eden. Then he admits blasphemy, rejecting God, and selling his soul to Lucifer and Mephistopheles. The only thing the scholars can do to aid Faustus is to pray since they are terrified and perplexed.

▶ Faustus' nearing death

Faustus begs for time to stop in desperation so that midnight would never arrive. He now yearns for time to turn from his sin and win salvation. However, he can feel hell dragging him down even as he seeks heaven. To be spared, Faustus appeals to Christ and then Lucifer. He begs the hills and mountains to swallow him up and hide him. When they do not, he pleads for a tremendous storm in the skies to rip his soul from his body and carry it to paradise.

▶ Faustus fails to prevent his death

The clock strikes eleven thirty. Faustus tries to strike a deal with God out of increasing anxiety. Faustus begs God to set a cap on the length of his suffering in hell in the name of Christ, whose death atoned for all sins. If he is eventually saved, 100,000 years is not an excessive amount of time. Then, more truthfully, he condemns himself and Lucifer for his fate rather than cursing the fact that he even has a soul at all. He also curses his parents for giving him life. The hour hand chimes twelve. Devils emerge like lightning and thunder flash. In a fit of rage, Faustus swears off magic and threatens to set his books on fire. However, it's too late; the devils drag him to hell.

▶ Faustus' tragic death

2.2.4.17 Epilogue

That Faustus is in hell is confirmed by the chorus. His twisted, sick life has been severed, much like the twisted, unhealthy branch of a tree. His opportunity for enormous success and immortality has been eliminated. The chorus cautions that while it would be intriguing to

▶ Moral of Faustus' story

think about the path Faustus took in life, the wise will realise it is harmful to do so.

2.2.5 Important Annotated Passages

A sound magician is a mighty-God

Here, Faustus, tire thy brains to get a deity.

(Act I Scene I 59-60)

In these lines taken from *Dr Faustus*, he tries to decide what subject he should choose for his study. He dismisses Philosophy, Theology, Logic, Law, and Medicine as unsuitable subjects for him. He has spent several years studying these subjects. These subjects did not enable him to gain "power, honour, and omnipotence."

Finally, he decides to take up the study of magic. He believes that he can even conjure the spirits and would enjoy the power and honour fit for the Gods. He brain-storms his mind in an effort to elevate himself to the level of God. Kings and Emperors command authority only in their territories but have no power over forces of nature. A learned magician is as powerful as God.

- Faustus' choice of magic

Then doubt not, Faustus, but to be renown'd
And more frequented for this mystery
Than heretofore the Delphian Oracle
(Act I Scene i – 139-141)

In these lines taken from Dr Faustus by Marlowe, Cornelius speaks of the significance of black magic. Faustus asks Valdes and Cornelius to help him in acquiring knowledge of necromancy. Cornelius assures him that Faustus will become famous as a great magician. Cornelius says that a person who is well-versed in astrology and chemistry and knows many languages knows the rules needed to learn black magic. Faustus is an accomplished and learned scholar and so he can shine as a popular magician. When he becomes a learned magician, people will throng to hear his predictions. The visitors will outnumber the people who thronged Delphin to hear the Oracles of Apollo.

- Valdes' and Cornelius' help to learn black magic

There is no chief but only beelzebub;
To whom Faustus doth dedicate himself
This word "damnation" terrifies not him
For he confounds hell in Elysium
His ghost be with the old Philosophers!

(Act I Scene iii 60-61)

Faustus speaks these words to Mephistopheles. When Faustus practises magic, Mephistopheles appears before him as a Franciscan friar. Faustus understands that Mephistopheles hovers around those who repudiate Jesus and the Scriptures. Faustus learns that evil spirits do not appear before a man unless he commits sins that put him in danger of damnation. Mephistopheles declares that the easiest method to call spirits of Hell is to renounce the Trinity and pray to Devil.

- Mephistopheles' involvements

Now Faustus is not afraid of damnation. For him, hell and heaven are the same. He does not believe in the wicked suffering in Hell and the virtuous enjoying bliss in heaven. Faustus states that his spirit is one with the ancient Pagan scholars who, contrary to the Christian faith, believed that after death, the dead went to Elysium where they lived in all comforts.

- Faustus' inclination to evil thoughts

Faustus is not bothered by life after death. He is ready to risk his life for the terrestrial pleasures of this world. Neither ancient Greeks nor Romans believed in the immortality of the soul nor the rewards or punishments in hell. Faustus wants Mephistopheles to keep aside frivolous discussions about the human soul and tell him about Lucifer.

- Faustus' altered mentality

Marriage is but a ceremonial toy;
If thou lovest me, think no more of it.
She whom thy eye shall like, thy heart shall have
Be she as Chaste as was Penelope
As wise as Saba or as beautiful
As was bright Lucifer before his fall.
(Act II Scene I 148-153)

Mephistophele sutters these words to Faustus. Faustus signs an agreement giving his soul as a gift to Lucifer for allowing him to have the services of Mephistopheles for twenty-four years. Then Faustus asks for a wife. The spirit appears like a maid and Faustus curses her. Thereupon Mephistopheles points out that marriage is merely a meaningless ceremony.

- Faustus succumbs before Lucifer

Faustus should not think of a wife and marriage at all. If he desires a woman, Mephistopheles can obtain for him

- Faustus' avoidance of marriage

a lady as loyal as Penelope or as wise as Sheba or a lady as bright as Lucifer before his fall. Penelope was the wife of Ulysses and she remained loyal to him till he returned from the Trojan War. Sheba has been celebrated for her wisdom in the Bible.

I am Pride: I disdain to have any parents.
I am like Ovid's flea; I can creep into every corner.
Sometimes, like a periwig,
I sit upon a wench's brow; or,
like a fan of feathers, I kiss her lips.
(Act II Scene ii 114-117)

In Dr Faustus, Pride is personified as a man who speaks about himself. After signing away his soul to the Devil, Faustus tries to atone and calls on God to save him. Lucifer accompanied by Beelzebub and Mephistopheles appears before Faustus and warns him against breach of the contract. Faustus promises never to pray to God. To please Faustus, the spirits present a spectacle of seven deadly sins.

- Faustus falls into the devil's trap

Pride, the first of the seven deadly sins gives an account of himself. He hates to have any parentage. He is like a fly mentioned by Ovid, the Latin poet. It can fly to any corner of the world. It can sit on the brow of a maid like a periwig or it can touch her lips.

- Danger of pride

Despair doth drive doubts into thy thoughts
Confound these passions with a quiet sleep
Thus, Christ did call the thief upon the Cross
Then rest thee, Faustus, quiet in conceit
(Act IV Scene iv 39-42)

- Selling of Faustus' horse

After selling his horse, and dismissing the horse dealer, Faustus speaks these words to himself. Faustus sells his horse for forty dollars and tells the horse dealer not to ride the horse through the water.

After dismissing the horse dealer, Faustus ponders over devastation and despair. He has a brief spell of despair at the prospect of what will happen to him. He knows that he is a tarnished soul and his downfall is not far off. He is under despair, dejection, and frustration. To forget his spiritual anguish, Faustus decides to sleep. Faustus consoles himself by saying that even Christ

called upon the thief on the Cross. After all, as even Christ needed sleep, Faustus goes to sleep to make himself calm. It is said that Jesus assured the thief (who protested the crucifixion of Christ) that he would be in Paradise along with him. So Faustus hopes that he also will get the pardon and mercy of God.

▶ Faustus' depressed state

Here will I dwell, for Heaven is in thy lips
And all is dross that is not Helena
(Act V Scene i - 102-4)

Faustus utters these words in Dr Faustus. The three scholars are wonder-struck at the marvellous beauty of Helen brought in by Mephistophilis. An old man advises Faustus to repent sincerely so he can retrace his steps to return to God. Mephistopheles threatens to torture him and Faustus is frightened.

▶ Faustus in Mephistopheles' control

To gratify Faustus, Mephistopheles calls up Helen and Faustus kisses her. He feels that his soul has left him to get into the heart of Helen. He requests Helen to return to him his soul. He desires to live on earth because he is transformed into a heavenly atmosphere when she kisses him. All things other than Helen are rotten and worthless to him. Her kiss is a celestial experience and Faustus wants to enjoy it forever. The charming poetic utterance of Faustus over the charms of Helen is universally admired.

▶ Faustus' kiss on Helen

But Faustus' offence can never be pardoned;
the serpent that tempted Eve may be saved but not Faustus
(Act V Scene ii 16-17).

Faustus speaks these words to the three scholars. He says that he would have lived a peaceful life, but having discarded their company, he has suffered spiritual anguish. The scholars think that Faustus has developed some disease on account of his loneliness and that he is suffering from indisposition and depression. Faustus discloses the fact that his misery is due to an excess of crimes and sins which have damned his body and soul.

▶ Faustus depressed state

The second scholar exhorts Faustus to pray for God's mercy. God's mercies are boundless and will be gracious enough to pardon him. At this Faustus replies that his deadly sins are unpardonable and he cannot be saved. The original sin of Eve has not been forgiven by Jesus.

Faustus' sin is more heinous than the sin committed by Eve. Faustus says that Satan has tempted him as the former tempted Eve. Tempted by Satan, Faustus has committed the deadly sins of abjuring God. After all even Satan may for once be forgiven, but Faustus cannot think of God's mercy.

- Faustus' sin

Whose fiendful fortune may exhort the wise
only to wonder at unlawful things
Whose deepness doth entice such forward wits
To practise more than heavenly power permits
(Act V Scene iii 127-130)

In the concluding lines of Dr Faustus, the Chorus tells the moral of the story of Faustus. Through his scholarship, he could have done many good deeds for humanity. But he has become a victim of inordinate ambition.

- Faustus' story as a message

Scholars visiting the house of Faustus on the last day comment on the shrieks they heard the previous night. They are sure that the devils whom he served must have torn him to pieces. Faustus is compared to a laurel tree. The tree which should have grown into a sturdy tree has been untimely cutoff. Faustus who haWs acquired knowledge meets his fall owing to inordinate ambition for 'unlawful things'. His hellish fall should be a lesson to all. The man should observe and look with wonder at the mysteries of the world. We should not think of practising anything forbidden by God.

- Faustus compared to a laurel tree

Like a morality play, Dr Faustus preaches a point that if a man attempts unlawful knowledge, he will incur the wrath of God and suffer eternal damnation.

- Result of unlawful knowledge

2.2.6 Thematic Analysis

In the following section, key themes of the play have been analysed.

2.2.6.1 The Damnation of Faustus

The presence of the Good and Evil Angels in Dr Faustus has been attributed to the influence of the morality tradition. The 'Vices' and 'Virtues' of Morality succeed in swaying Man's will to their side, whereas the Angels in Marlowe serve to strengthen Faustus' will. In Morality Plays, the Vices disguise themselves and are intent on seducing the hero but in Dr Faustus, the sins

- Dr Faustus as a morality play

appear undisguised in an episode of pageantry for Faustus' gratification.

2.2.6.2 Devil's Decoys

Dr Faustus is a tragedy of damnation. As soon as Faustus decides that necromancy is the only study that can give his ambition scope, he seeks aid of his friends Valdes and Cornelius who are proficient in this art. They call spirits from the deep but they have been careful not to forfeit their salvation for supernatural gifts. They never succumb to the temptation of the spirits. They are the devil's decoys luring Faustus along the road of destruction.

- Valdes' and Cornelius' teaching of necromancy

2.2.6.3 Seeds of Decay in Faustus' Character

Faustus not only goes to conjure alone, but also he concludes his pact with the devil. Once the pact is signed, all that happens to Faustus is the devil's work upon the former. Faustus' corruption is not a mechanical outcome of his pact with the devil. Despite his earnest desire to know the truth, the seeds of decay are in his character from the beginning of the play. After Faustus has signed the bond with his blood, we can trace the stages of gradual deterioration. During his previous interview, Faustus questions eagerly about hell. The discussion is renewed after the bond is signed. We notice a change in Faustus. His sceptical levity takes on a more truculent and jeering tone. While asked: "Where is the place that men call hell?," Mephistophelesreplies:

- Faustus' gradual deterioration

Within the bowels of these elements
Where we are tortured and remain forever.

Faustus' reaction is sceptical: "Tush, These are trifles and mere old wives' tales." "Nay and this be hell, I'll willingly be damned." The quarrel that follows the spirit's refusal to say who made the world leads to the intervention of Lucifer and the 'pastime' of the Seven Deadly Sins. Faustus exclaims at the appearance of the Seven Deadly Sins: " Oh, this feeds my soul."

- The appearance of Lucifer and Seven Deadly Sins

2.2.6.4 Salvation Poised in Doubt

So far Faustus has not left Wittenberg, and the emphasis has been on the hollowness of his bargain in respect of any intellectual enlightenment than on the actual degradation of his character. But his childish pleasure

in the devil dance and the pageant of the sins hint at the depth of vulgar triviality into which he is doomed to descend. In the company with Mephistophilis, Faustus launches forth into the world that is something strange and peculiar, not only in Faustus' situation but also in his nature. Once Faustus has signed the bond, he is in the position of having his own free will renounced salvation. Through his bargain with Lucifer, Faustus has taken on an infernal nature, although it is made clear throughout that he still retains his human soul. The question is whether Faustus can be saved by repentance. Faustus is indeed forever repenting and recanting through fear of bodily torture and death. The Good and Bad Angels who personate the two sides of his human nature are forever disputing this point.

Good Angel: Never too late, if Faustus will repent

Bad Angel: If thou repent, devils will tear thee into pieces

When Faustus calls on Christ to save his soul, Lucifer replies:

Christ cannot save thy soul, for He is just
There is none but I have an interest in the same.

▶ Faustus between sinning and re-penting

Like that of the archdeacon of scholastic speculation, the possibility of Faustus' salvation is left poised in doubt.

2.2.6.5 Sins of Demonality

Here, one notices the central theme of the damnation of Faustus. The lines in which he addresses Helen are some of the most famous lines about the language. When Faustus presents Helen to his students, he gives the caution: "Be silent then, for danger is in words." When Helen is introduced the second time, Faustus has attempted the last revolt. As usual, he has been cowed into submission and has reviewed the blood bond. He has stooped to the level of begging for revenge upon his would-be saviour.

▶ Faustus' words to Helen

"Torment, sweet friend, that base and aged man
That drust dissuade me from Lucifer."

He seeks possession of Helen only to safeguard against relapse. Love and revenge are like insurances against salvation. In making Helen his paramour, Faustus sins demonology, i.e., bodily intercourse with demons. Helen is a spirit, and in this play 'a spirit' means 'a devil.'

The implication of Faustus' action is made plain in the comments of the old man and the Angels. Even before the Helen episode, the old man was calling on Faustus to repent. But with Faustus' union with Helen, the nice balance between possible salvation and imminent damnation is upset. The old man who has witnessed the meeting recognizes the inevitable: "That from thy soul exclud'st the grace of heaven..." The Good Angel also comments: "Oh, Thou hast lost celestial happiness."

▶ Behind Faustus' bond with Helen

In his final agony, Faustus himself is haunted by the idea of salvation beyond his reach. "See see where Christ's blood streams in the firmament? /One drop would save my soul." A surfeit of sin hath damned both body and soul. Faustus' offence can never be pardoned. The serpent that tempted Eve may be saved but not Faustus.

▶ Gravity of sin

2.2.6.6 Moral Degradation

The great reversal from the first scene of Dr Faustus to the last scene may be defined in different ways: From presumption to despair; from doubt of the existence of hell to belief in the reality of nothing else, from a desire to be more than man, to the recognition that he has excluded himself from the promise of redemption from haste to sign the bond, to desire for delay when the moment comes to honour it; from aspiration to deity and omnipotence to longing for extinction. In the beginning, Faustus wished to rise above his humanity, at the close he would sink below it; be transformed into a beast or 'little water-drops.'

▶ Reversal of incidents in the play

Faustus takes Mephistophelesas his servant and demands twenty-four years of "all voluptuousness."

Having thee ever to attend on me
To give me whatsoever I shall ask

Faustus wants Mephistopheles to be obedient to his will. "And always be obedient to my will." As the drama proceeds, the servant becomes the master. It is Mephistopheles who speaks with authority as representative of Lucifer and it is Faustus who obeys. Faustus has exchanged knowledge and felicity for shadows and for power he gets slavery.

▶ Mephistopheles' service of Faustus

The last soliloquy of Faustus exhibits his attempt to avoid damnation and it reverses the first soliloquy. The

proud scholar, who had fretted at the restriction imposed by the human condition and longed for the immortality of a God, now seeks to avoid an eternity of damnation. Like a trapped animal, he lashes out against the mesh he has woven for himself and becomes more entangled. The final hope of the pride of the scholar of Wittenberg is these: to be physically absorbed by the elements, to be a 'creature wanting soul', 'some brutish breast ' and at the last to be 'little water drops.'

▶ Fall of a great scholar

We are agonizingly aware of the last minutes of Faustus' life, trickling through the hourglass with what seems like ever-increasing speed. But as each grain falls, bringing Faustus closer to his terrible end, we become more and more conscious of the deserts of eternity and damnation that open up beyond death.

▶ Life beyond death

2.2.7 Themes

Some of the important themes of the play are

- Sin, Redemption, and Damnation
- The conflict between medieval and Renaissance values. In medieval academies, theology was the queen of sciences. In the Renaissance, secular matters took the central stage.
- Power as a corrupting influence
- The Divided Nature of Man i.e. Internal struggle (Personified in the good angel and the evil angel, and the old man)

▶ Overview of themes

2.2.8 Structure

The play contains familiar double-plot construction with buffoonery in the subplot (in prose) to parallel the Faust theme (the major plot in Verse). The Good and Bad Angels contending for the soul of Faustus come straight out of medieval moralities. The three main parts of the play are:

1. The lure of Faustus
2. Faustus owns the Magic Power
3. The Death of Faustus

▶ Different structures of the play

Summarised Overview

Doctor Faustus was written by Christopher Marlowe, first performed around 1588, and first published in 1604 in a version usually called the A-text. The revised edition which appeared in 1616 and 1631 is known as the B-text. *Doctor Faustus* borrows many of the conventions of the morality play. Elements of Morality play in the play are the battle over the spirit waged by a Good Angel and a Bad Angel, and the parade of seven Deadly sins: Pride, Covetousness, Envy, Wrath, Gluttony, Sloth, and Lechery. The potential for salvation exists until Faustus finally succumbs to despair and gives all hope of being able to repent. In the play, Faustus is dissatisfied with all the knowledge he studies and is determined to study magic. He calls Mephistophilis, Lucifer's minister and surrenders his soul to Lucifer. He amazes the Pope by becoming invisible, calls the spirit of Alexander the Great and brings ripe grapes in January. When twenty-four years is almost over, he begins to fear Satan and nearly repents. He is carried off by devils at the end.

Assignments

1. Discuss *Doctor Faustus* as a play in the tradition of English morality.
2. Discuss the Aristotelean components of tragedy in *Doctor Faustus*.
3. Examine how English Protestantism is represented in *Doctor Faustus*.
4. Analyse how *Doctor Faustus* tries to change from a comedy of evil to a tragedy of human bravery.
5. Consider Marlowe's dramatic and intellectual accomplishments in *Doctor Faustus*.
6. Analyse *Doctor Faustus* as a neurotic tragedy and compare it to the plight of modern man.

Suggested Readings

1. Barber, C.L. "The Form of Faustus' Fortunes Good and Bad." *Drama Review*, Vol.8, No. 4, p.p. 92-100, 1963-64.
2. Clifrord, Leech. *Marlowe: A Collection of Essays: Twentientieth Century Views*, Prentice Hall, 1964.
3. Kenneth, Golden L. "Myth, Psychology and Doctor Faustus." *College Literature,* Vol. 12, No. 03, p.p. 202- 10. 1985.
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1. Carter, Ronald and John McRae. *The Routledge History of Literature in English*. 1997.
2. Daiches, David. *A Critical History of English Literature in Two Volumes*. Vol. I, Secker & Warburg, 1961.
3. Poplawski, Paul. *English Literature in Context*, Cambridge UP, 2008.
4. Sanders, Andrew. *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*, Clarendon Press, 1994.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

Unit 3

Poetry

(Non-detailed study)

Learning Outcomes

This unit will introduce to the learner :

- minor poets of the age of Chaucer and Queen Elizabeth.
- the representative works of Sidney, Herbert, Vaughan, Marvell and Crashaw.
- the nature of their poetry and how they reflect the spirit of the age.
- the idea of metaphysical poetry in the analysed poems

2.3.1 *Astrophil and Stella Sonnet 1*

Background

Astrophil and Stella is a sequence of sonnets and songs written by Sir Philip Sidney (1554–1586). It is comprised of 108 sonnets and 11 songs, and tells the story of Astrophil (or Astrophel), whose name means star-lover, and his hopeless passion for Stella, whose name means star. Stella is quite definitely identified with Penelope (there are puns on her husband's suggestive name), and if the sonnets are autobiographical beyond that (always a tricky assumption), they suggest that Sidney tried to persuade her to become his mistress, and she stoutly refused, in spite of her clear and continuing affection for him. It is conventional to refer to "the speaker" in discussing a lyric poem since the speaker and the poet are not necessarily the same. But in these poems, the "speaker" is pretty reliably Philip Sidney who is in love with Penelope Devereux Rich. Sidney's sonnets may lack the depth of thought and emotion captured almost uniquely by Shakespeare in his sonnets, but they are perfect little gems of craft built around fairly conventional ideas.

Keywords

Sonnet, biography, love, passion, structure, rhyme, muse

2.3.1.1 Author Sketch: Sir Philip Sidney

Sir Philip Sidney had a short life of 32 years (1554-1586) which was rich with many incidents. He was a very handsome, talented, pedigreed, and well-connected aristocrat and courtier- his uncle was the Earl of Leicester, for example- and even a Member of Parliament at the precocious age of eighteen. He had the best education the age could afford, having gone first to Shrewsbury School and then to Oxford. He would likely have learned figures of speech as tools of rhetoric, but sonnet writing would probably not have been an academic discipline. Both at university, though, and in subsequent travels on the continent as a soldier and diplomat, he had ample exposure to the poets of the time, and he moved in literary circles. In 1575, the Sidney family accompanied Queen Elizabeth on her famous visit to Kenilworth, and the trip afterwards included a stop at the home of young Penelope Devereux - 13 or 14 age at the time- with whom Philip immediately fell in love that lasted the rest of his life. A marriage was arranged, but in a circumstance straight out of Renaissance comedy, Penelope's father died before the deal was completed, and her new guardian arranged a more mercenary marriage, against her will, to Robert, Lord Rich, in 1581. At about the same time, Sidney began the sonnet sequence which was published after his death with the title of *Astrophil and Stella*.

Fig.2.3.1. Philip Sidney

- Sidney's biography

2.3.1.2 SONNET 1

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,
That the dear She might take some pleasure of my pain,
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain,
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe,
Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertain,

Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburned brain.
But words came halting forth, wanting Invention's stay;
Invention, Nature's child, fled step-dame Study's blows,
And others' feet still seemed but strangers in my way.
Thus, great with child to speak, and helpless in my throes,
Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite,
"Fool," said my Muse to me, "look in thy heart and write."

2.3.1.3 Analysis

The narrator describes his motivation for composing this sonnet sequence. He believes that his lover will fall in love with him if she were to read this sonnet. The narrator composes this sonnet with a distinctly structured style to gain his lover's heart. He also tries to gain some inspiration from talented poets but to no avail. He finally concludes that by truly writing from his heart, he will steal the heart of his one true love. In this sonnet, Sidney, while narrating about Astrophil, hopes that the latter's pity will win over his lover, Stella, and he attempts to convey his love for her in verse. Hence, this poem touches on the theme of the value of poetry, which Shakespeare and Spenser did as well. In the first stanza, Astrophil says that he writes poetry to get Stella's attention, and asks her to read his poetry so that she might understand how deeply he feels for her.

- Motivation for composing the sonnet sequence

The octave of Sonnet 1 introduces the sonnet sequence as a whole. The lyrical voice expresses his wish to transmit his love in his writing: "Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show". The lyrical voice's reflection on writing enables him to make a love sonnet. Nevertheless, the lyrical voice's writing shows that he knows that he will never win Stella's love ("That she, dear she, might take some pleasure of my pain, /Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know"), but he can't help but desire her and express his love to her ("Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain"). The lyrical voice believes that Stella will read his writings and become deeply acquainted with his love, and if she pities him, he will win the "grace" of her attention. This clash between passion and reason is evident in this sonnet and in the entire sequence. Moreover, it shows courtly love, a

- Clash between passion and reason

medieval tradition in which the desperate lover watches the woman, his loved one, from afar.

Moreover, the lyrical voice is concerned with how he expresses his emotions. Notice the metatextuality that the lyrical voice introduces by talking about his own writing. He thinks that he has made a mistake by looking at others' writings ("Studying inventions fine") and trying to emulate them to express "the blackest face of woe." He thinks that this could serve as inspiration: "Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow/Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburned brain". There is natural imagery in the final lines of the octave in order to accentuate this particular emotional writing.

▶ Metatextuality in expressing emotions

The sestet of Sonnet 1 introduces the Volta, turn in Italian. The lyrical voice focuses on the composition of poetry and personifies the moment of writing ("wanting Invention's stay:/ Invention, Nature's child, fled step-dame Study's blows"). He still reflects on studying other poets and their writing: "And others' feet still seemed but strangers in my way/Thus great with child to speak, and helpless in my throes". Notice how the metatextuality is accentuated and deepened in this stanza. Then, the lyrical voice turns into his own particular moment of writing: "Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite/ 'Fool,' said my Muse to me, 'look in thy heart and write'". These final lines are crucial, as they suggest two main things. First, there is a divine influence that the lyrical voice finds while writing. And, secondly, the lyrical voice constructs his own poetic and literary consciousness towards his own writings and those of others.

▶ Depth of metatextuality in the stanza; lyrical voice

The first two stanzas, in particular, abound with expressions that evoke calls for self-pity and demonstrate how desperate he is for Stella's attention. In line 5, the phrase "sought words to paint the blackest face of woe" promotes an extremely brutal image, but shows his attempt to capture his pain in writing and to make her sympathetic towards him. "Studying inventions fine" means that he was studying literature in an effort to entertain her. In line 7, he uses the word "leaves," echoing Spenser's use of "leaves" in the first poem of *Amoretti*. The phrase "sunburned brain" in line 8 means that he cannot think of the words to write about her, as if he has writer's block or is worn out from writing so much. In the third

stanza, the phrase "halting forth" is an oxymoron. Many of the Elizabethan sonnet writers, like Shakespeare, used oxymorons in their poems. In this case, the phrase means that he is very close to thinking of the words but that they just would not come out. It could also be interrupted to imply that he is stuttering. Finally, the ending couplet leaves us with a statement from one of the Muses telling him to just write about how he feels. Referring to Muses in the poems is a tradition in the Elizabethan sonnets.

- Line-wise explanation

2.3.1.4 Rhyme Scheme And Metrics

The meter of *Astrophil and Stella* is a usual six-foot line (twelve syllables). The rhyme scheme can be represented as abab abab cdcd ee. Sir Philip Sidney alters his rhyme schema freely throughout the poem. This particular rhyme scheme "reinforces the notion of tedious but fruitless study."

- Sidney's rhyme scheme

2.3.1.5 Petrarchan Sonnet

The following is the structure of the Petrarchan Sonnet

- The Petrarchan or Italian sonnet breaks down two parts of an octave (eight lines) and a sestet (six lines).
- The octave introduces the situation and sets out the ideas and motivation, and identify the author's failed tactics.
- The turning point is always in line 9, which is commenced by the adversative. "But..." in this sonnet.
- The sestet is a response to that situation usually in an agitated manner, both through the use of the subject and rhythmic manipulation.
- The last line is a finality with romantic advice. "Fool," said my Muse to me, "look in thy heart and write.

- Features of Petrarchan Sonnet

2.3.1.6 Muses

According to Greek Mythology, the nine Muses had control over the Arts and Sciences and they provide inspiration in these areas of the subject. The nine muses include Calliope (muse of epic poetry), Clio (muse of history), Erato (muse of love poetry), Euterpe (muse of music), Melpomene (muse of tragedy), Polyhymnia

(muse of sacred poetry), Terpsichore (muse of dance), Thalia (muse of comedy), and Urania (muse of astronomy). In Sonnet 1, the muse that the narrator is looking to for inspiration is Erato, the muse of love poetry. As the narrator looks for ways and things to say to his lover in order to win her love, he forgets his true essence of being a writer. In the last line, " 'Fool," said my Muse to me, 'look in thy heart and write,' " Erato reminds him to write straight from his heart in his own words and to stop looking for inspiration from elsewhere.

▶ Nine muses of Greek Mythology

Summarised Overview

Sir Philip Sidney wrote a collection of sonnets and songs titled *Astrophil and Stella* (1554–1586). It narrates the tale of Astrophil and consists of 108 sonnets and 11 songs. By narrating as Astrophil, Sidney expresses in this sonnet his yearning for Stella and his hope that his sympathy will win her over. He is also striving to show his love for her via poetry. As a result, this poem explores the same subject Shakespeare and Spenser did: the importance of poetry. Astrophil claims in the verse that he is writing poetry to catch Stella's attention and begs her to read it so that she may comprehend how profoundly he feels for her.

Assignments

1. Write a note on the structure of the petrarchan sonnet.
2. What are the rhyme scheme and metrics used in *Astrophil and Stella* sonnet 1?
3. Analyse the poem *Astrophil and Stella* sonnet 1 by focusing on its themes.

References

1. Carter, Ronald and John McRae. *The Routledge History of Literature in English*. 1997.
2. Daiches, David. *A Critical History of English Literature in Two Volumes*. Vol. I, Secker & Warburg, 1961.
3. Poplawski, Paul. *English Literature in Context*, Cambridge UP, 2008.
4. Sanders, Andrew. *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*, Clarendon Press, 1994.

2.3.2 "Easter Wings"

Background

"Easter Wings" was first printed in George Herbert's posthumous collection *The Temple* in 1633, the year after Herbert had died. The collection was made out of three sections: "The Church Porch," "The Church," and "The Church Militant." This poem appears in the middle and longest section, "The Church," which included the same number of poems as there are psalms in the Church of England's liturgical calendar.

Keywords

Sonnet, biography, love, passion, structure, rhyme, muse

2.3.2.1 Introduction

"Easter Wings" is a visual, or shaped poem; if viewed sideways, each stanza resembles a set of open wings. This shape reflects the poem's central theme, as the speaker suggests that those who stay close to God through religious devotion can "fly" above, or find redemption from, their suffering. God, you created human beings and gave them everything they needed, though the first person, Adam, foolishly lost it all by sinning and being expelled from the Garden of Eden, growing more and more sinful until he was poor in spirit. God, let me rise from my own sin with you, as songbirds rise in harmony with each other. And let me sing of all of your triumphs. Then the fall of Adam and Eve will have simply allowed me to rise even higher.

- Thematic components of "Easter Wings"

2.3.2.2 The Life Of George Herbert

George Herbert came from a noble family, a branch of that of the Earl of Pembroke. His elder brother was the poet and philosopher, Lord Herbert of Cherbury. He studied in the famous Westminster School and went to Trinity College, Cambridge in 1601. He was elected as a fellow and later became a public orator from 1619 to 1627. He had affluent and influential friends and was

living the life of a country gentleman, spending his time in the country and then in London. His hopes of getting some political employment did not materialise and so he joined the church in 1630. He was ordained and appointed rector of Bemerton, Wiltshire and lived a very pious and saintly life. He was constitutionally frail. He died of consumption at an early age. He was a man of great charity, refinement and many artistic gifts. He was a friend of John Donne and initiated his metaphysical style in poems. His poetry was published, however, only after his death, but it was so popular that 20,000 copies were sold in a few years.

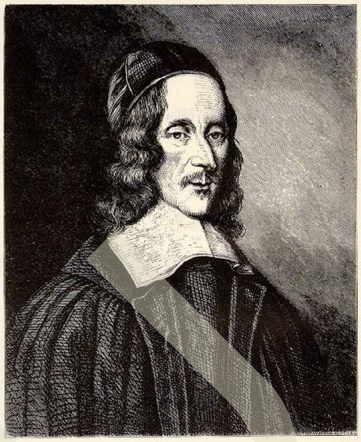

Fig. 2.3.2. George Herbert

▶ Herbert's biography

2.3.2.3 Herbert's Poetical Works

▶ Rustic theme of poems

Herbert published most of his poems in one volume, *The Temple* (1633). His prose 'Remains' (1652) includes 'A Priest to the Temple', consisting of practical and spiritual instruction for country people.

▶ God and Herbert's poetry

His poetry is a picture of the many spiritual conflicts between God and his soul. He is the saint of the Metaphysical school of poetry. He is among the greatest writers of poems on sacred subjects. His theory is that a man should take all high gifts to God's service and he believed that a poet should take the altar blossom with his poetry. In many of his poems, he talks with God on very intimate terms.

In *The Temple,* there are about 150 short poems suggested by the church, her holidays, and ceremonials. They show Herbert's zeal for the Church of England. They are concerned with practical theology. He himself described his work as "a picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have passed betwixt God and my soul before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus, my master, in whose service I have now found perfect freedom". So it is the conflict, which gives life to his poetry that might otherwise be too doctrinal and didactic. His poems

breathe the spirit of the Anglican Church and also of troubled soul seeking and finding peace. However, there is no reference in his writing to which church is right and where the path of salvation was to be found. Religious controversy as such does not interest him much. He is basically a churchman in the sense that for him the regulations, the forms and the customs of the Church are a source of inspiration for spiritual extension and revival. Of course, he wished the volume of his poems to be published, if it might be of any help to any dejected poor soul. Thus, *The Temple* is simply the story of man's struggle.

- Spiritual conflicts in Herbert's poetry

Herbert's poems are peculiarly honest, intimate, sincere and modest. They are homely, quiet, and colloquial and touched with quaint humour. They are metaphysical in nature in their usual conceits and they blend thought and passion. But Herbert does not cultivate the learned scholastic imagery of Donne. He is precise and simple in expression.

- Features of Herbert's poetry

2.3.2.4 Analysis

Stanza One

Lines 1-6

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,
Though foolishly he lost the same,
Decaying more and more,
Till he became
Most poore:
With thee

In the first stanza of "Easter Wings," the speaker begins by addressing the Christian God as "Lord". This god created "man in wealth and store". Adam, the first man, was created with everything he could've ever needed. He had that which should have made him happy - food, shelter and comfort. Without stating it explicitly, Herbert alludes to the Fall in the next lines. He does not go into detail about Adam and Eve and the forbidden fruit. Instead, he goes straight to the "foolishness" of humankind and the loss of everything that God created for them. Things decayed "more and more" until "man" became "poore". As the lines shrink, so does the happy and hopeful imagery. The darkest lines of the poem are the shortest. Then, as they expand, things become cheery

- Foolishness of humankind and the structure of the poem

once more.

Lines 7-10

O let me rise
As larks, harmoniously,
And sing this day thy victories:
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

In the second half of this stanza, the speaker brings themselves into the poem. He addresses God and asks that he be allowed to "rise" as a "lark". This simile compares the speaker to a bird that is elevated above the foolishness of humankind. The speaker would like to rise above Adam's choices. It is also at this point in the poem that the speaker introduces the theme of Easter. It is with "thee" that he wants to rise. This is an allusion to the holiday traditionally celebrated to honour Christ rising from the dead. In the last lines of the stanza, he asks that he be allowed to "sing" of victories and rise as far as the fall took mankind down.

- Herbert's request to God to rise mankind

Stanza Two

My tender age in sorrow did beginne
And still with sicknesses and shame.
Thou didst so punish sinne,
That I became
Most thinne.
With thee
Let me combine,
And feel thy victorie:
For, if I imp my wing on thine,
Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

In the second stanza of "Easter Wings," the speaker continues to use first-person pronouns. He says that he was born into "sorrow" because of the first man and his choices. He is still impacted by what Adam and Eve did. The lines shrink and the imagery becomes more depressing. He speaks about the darkness of his own life, sickness, and sin. All of this feels inescapable until the lines start to grow again.

- Shrinking and expanding structure of the poem

The poem emphasises in the second stanza, how "With thee," or with God, the speaker is going to rise. The speaker knows that he needs God's help to fly. So

he is going to "imp," or support himself with the feathers from God's wings. This is how the speaker intends to rise above the sin that is at the root of the human race. Assonance is the use and reuse of the same vowel sound within words that are next to one another or close together. For instance, the "i" vowel sound in the last lines of the poem with words such as "I," "imp," "thine," and "flight". Alliteration is a similar device. It occurs when words are used in succession, or at least appear close together, and begin with the same sound. For example, "more" and "more" in line three of the first stanza and "fall," "further," and "flight" in line ten of the first stanza.

- Assonance and alliteration

2.3.2.5 Structure of "Easter Wings"

"Easter Wings" by George Herbert is a two-stanza-shaped poem, meaning that each stanza is organised so that the lines form a particular shape. The two ten-line stanzas, when originally published, appeared horizontally on the page in the shape of two sets of wings. Now, the poem is generally reversed so that the stanzas appear like two hourglasses.

- Two-stanza shaped poem

The lines follow a simple ababaccdc rhyme scheme and make use of iambic stresses. This means that in each metrical foot, the first beat is unstressed and the second stressed. The lines vary greatly in length, from two words and two syllables up to nine words and ten syllables. A reader should also consider how their content influences the length of the lines and their positioning. For example, the lines that are the most hopeful and uplifting are the longest, at the beginning and end of each stanza. While in contrast, the more depressing lines are shorter.

- Rhyme scheme and structure

2.3.2.6 Literary Devices in "Easter Wings"

Herbert makes use of several literary devices in "Easter Wings." These include but are not limited to alliteration, assonance, and enjambment. The enjambment is seen through the transitions between lines. The moments in which the poet does not use end punctuation are most commonly enjambed.

- Employing of several literary devices

Summarised Overview

In "Easter Wings," the speaker reflects on how one's relationship with God provides solace from suffering, and how suffering itself is what initially makes it possible for one to experience spiritual redemption. The speaker makes the case that suffering can be overcome and that one can attain spiritual freedom and salvation by being devoted to God. According to the poem, the speaker's pain makes this redemption possible, and the speaker's eventual spiritual release will be all the more potent as a result of the suffering the speaker has gone through.

Assignments

1. Write a note on George Herbert's poetical works.
2. Discuss the religious elements used in the poem "Easter Wings."
3. What are the structures and literary devices used in the poem "Easter Wings"?

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1. Carter, Ronald and John McRae. *The Routledge History of Literature in English*. 1997.
2. Daiches, David. *A Critical History of English Literature in Two Volumes*. Vol. I, Secker & Warburg, 1961.
3. Poplawski, Paul. *English Literature in Context*, Cambridge UP, 2008.
4. Sanders, Andrew. *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*, Clarendon Press, 1994.

2.3.3 "To His Coy Mistress"

Background

Andrew Marvell belonged to a literary group known as 'Metaphysical poets'. Metaphysical poetry is highly philosophical and full of strange metaphors. This kind of poetry was developed mainly by John Donne in the 1590s and early 1600s. Marvell belongs to the second generation of Metaphysical poets. His present poem "To His Coy Mistress" was influenced by other Metaphysical poets as well as other poetic conventions. Also, this poem was written probably in the 1650s, during a significant political turmoil in English society. So, Marvell's speaker seems to have withdrawn from all such political complications. He rather wants to experience love apart from the politics of the world in which he lives. This poem is a perfect example of the "carpe diem" theme that means "seize the day", i.e., make the most of the present time.

Keywords

Imaginative, relationship, life, love, lust, youth

2.3.3.1 Discussion

Andrew Marvell was a Metaphysical poet writing in the interregnum period. "To His Coy Mistress" is one of his famous Metaphysical poems. He wrote this poem during the English Interregnum (1649-60). The poem was first published posthumously in 1681, in "Miscellaneous Poems" but it may have been circulated as a manuscript before that. It is a renowned carpe-diem poem in English literature. In "To His Coy Mistress", no particular setting is found. The overall poem takes place in the speaker's imagination. But the poet mentions the name of some places. The speaker imagines himself and his mistress wandering across the whole earth, from the river Humber (East Yorkshire) in England to the Ganges in India. Most of the poem talks about love and sexuality. So, we may think that the speaker and his mistress could be lovers living in any setting.

▶ Marvell's imaginative realm in "To His Coy Mistress"

The title of the poem "To His Coy Mistress" tells us that the speaker is saying something to his ladylove (mistress) who is shy (coy). The word 'coy' is used with a specific meaning that the ladylove is not at all responsive to her lover's call of making love. According to the poet-lover, we should enjoy every moment of our life as it is precious. We should use the opportunity whenever we get it. The poem is completely based on the "carpe-diem" theme which means "seize the day". The poem is about the poet lover's urge to his beloved to break her coyness and make love before it is too late. So, the title is quite apt for the poem.

▶ Love and lust in the poem

Fig.2.3.3. Andrew Marvel

The poem is spoken by a male lover to his female beloved in an attempt to convince her to sleep with him. The speaker argues that the Lady's shyness and hesitancy would be acceptable if the two had "world enough, and time." But because they are finite human beings, he thinks they should take advantage of their sensual embodiment while it lasts. He tells the lady that her beauty, as well as her "long-preserved virginity," will only become food for worms unless she gives herself to him while she lives. Rather than preserve any lofty ideals of chastity and virtue, the speaker affirms, the lovers ought to "roll all our strength, and all / Our sweetness, up into one ball." He is alluding to their physical bodies coming together in the act of lovemaking.

▶ Physical relation-ship between the poet and lover

2.3.3.2 Life of Andrew Marvell

Marvell was born in 1621 in Hull. He was the son of a Calvinist priest. He got his education at Cambridge. He then went abroad and spent four years on continental travel. He worked as a tutor for several noble families. His lyric poetry was probably written mainly during these years, i.e, his twenties and thirties. Eventually, he became

the Assistant Latin secretary to the government, with Milton as the Principal Secretary. Thus he came in contact with Milton. Although he had seemed inclined to the Royalist side, he became a fervent follower of Cromwell and a friend of Milton. He was a Member of Parliament for Hull from 1659 till his death in 1678. He proved to be an able man of affairs, as well as an accomplished poet. He continued to write poetry, but it is the earlier lyrics that are remembered and studied today, and his reputation rests on comparatively few poems.

▶ Marvell's poetic and political life

In his public life, he was an upright and honourable Englishman. He was a strong supporter of law and order. He was a staunch friend, a generous foe and a capable man of business. It is noteworthy that he is the only Puritan among Metaphysical poets. But he was not a sour or gloomy type of man like the Puritans of the age. He was a humanist, a wit and a poet. He was not the enemy of worldly and artistic amusement.

▶ Marvell's nature and character

2.3.3.3 Marvell's Poetical Works

Marvell's poetry is based on the adoration of nature. His feeling for nature rises to a kind of ecstasy. He is the first to sing about the beauty and glory of gardens and orchards. He takes delight in buds, blossoms and bushes. In them, he takes his earnest delights. His "The Garden" foreshadows Keats by its sensuousness and Wordsworth by its optimistic and severe meditative mood. He is very Wordsworthian in "Appleton House" and in "Upon the Hill and Grove at Billborough".

▶ Marvell's love of nature

Marvell's feeling for animals and birds, his suffering when they suffer, is voiced with infinite gracefulness in his semi-mythological poem "The Nymph Complaining of the Death of her Fawn." He also wrote love poems that were mostly tissues of conceit. In 'The Definition of Love,' the wit and conceit are daringly metaphysical. Some of his love poems are graceful as 'The Gallery' or slightly ironical denouncing women's tricks, artifices, and coquetry. A few of his love poems hold the readers by their passion. They are masterpieces of metaphysical poetry in this genre, and they also mark a return to the amorous theme 'Gather ye Rose Buds While ye May'.

▶ Marvell's love poems

Marvell was an ardent patriot. It was a high-minded

patriot who could praise Cromwell without defaming Charles. This is dictated in his ode, 'Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland'. Religion had far less place in Marvell's verses than in those of the Anglicans. Though he wrote verses that speak of his religious ardour, his poems distinctly reveal his joyous humanism and his love for wine, women and song, which prove him a son of the Renaissance.

▶ Patriotic and religious themes in Marvell's poem

Marvell was a satirist and an original writer of vigour. His sincerity and straightness of vision sufficed to raise him to the Metaphysical school, to which he belonged from its state of decline to bring it back from extravagance to reason without alienating fancy. He paid little regard to versification. He wrote in rhymed eight-syllable couplets. In the formation of stanzas, Marvell shows himself as one of the least varied and inventive poets of his times. Thus, Andrew Marvell was a prominent literary man and artist of his time. His chief characteristic feature was his versatility.

▶ Marvell's versification and Metaphysical affiliation

He could write beautiful lyrics and odes, pungent satires, and telling political pamphlets. He is remembered and loved mainly because of his early poems in which he shows himself to be a true lover of nature. Moreover, in his best poems, he bears more affinity to Elizabethan than to the poets of Restoration. Another interesting thing to note is that some of his most beautiful poems were originally written in Latin and then translated into English.

▶ Affinity to Elizabethan

2.3.3.4 Analysis

In Andrew Marvell's metaphysical poem "To His Coy Mistress", the speaker addresses his ladylove who is shy and not responsive to his call for love. The speaker tries to make her realise the brevity (shortness) of life. He urges the lady to make love to him at their youthful heights before it is too late.

Lines 1–4

Had we but world enough and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day.

Andrew Marvell's famous metaphysical love poem "To

His Coy Mistress'' begins with the speaker talking to his shy ladylove (coy mistress). He opines that if they had plenty of time and space in this world to live, then her shyness would not be considered a crime. So, the speaker calls his ladylove's present shyness a crime. The speaker adds that if they had enough time in their hand, then they would sit together somewhere and would plan the ways in which they can spend their time. They would plan how they would walk or how they would pass the ''long love's day''. So, in these opening lines of the poem, the speaker seems to be trying to convince his 'coy mistress' about the mortality of human life. Moreover, he is talking about love. Let us read on to know further.

- Shyness as a crime

Lines 5–10

Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.

Well, the speaker continues the same argument here. He would imagine the condition if they had a limitless life. If they had enough time, his beloved would sit beside the river Ganga in India and collect some valuable stones like rubies. On the other hand, the speaker would sit on the bank of river Humber complaining to the river about her beloved not coming to him. Thus, they would pass the days. In the next line, the speaker expresses how much he would love his beloved if they had enough time. He says he would love his mistress for ''ten years before the flood''. This alludes to the Great Flood in Christian history. Also, his mistress could refuse his proposal until the ''Conversion of the Jews'', which refers to the day of Christian judgement prophesied for the end of times in the new testament's Book of Revelation. He would not mind as they will have enough time to make love.

- Between love and the possibility of limitless life

Lines 11–14

My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires and more slow;
A hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;

In the next line, the speaker claims that his love is a "vegetable love". He compares his love to vegetables because his love grows slowly and organically, without any external force. The speaker then suggests that if time permitted, his love would grow more than the width of an empire and its growth will be very gradual. Then the speaker goes on to describe how he would have praised each and every part of his beloved's body if he had enough time to live. He says he would have consumed a hundred years in praising her eyes and gazing at her forehead.

Lines 15–20

Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.

Continuing from the previous lines, the lover says that he would take two hundred years to adore each of his ladylove's breasts. Also, he would take thirty thousand years for praising the rest of her body. The speaker claims that he would have consumed a lifetime to praise each part of her beloved's body. He will concentrate on her heart at the very end. The speaker claims that his beloved deserves to be praised like this. She is so beautiful and so charming that the lover couldn't love her any lesser if he got enough time in this life.

Lines 21–24

But at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.

Here begins the second section of the poem. In the first section, the speaker spoke about the possibilities of the extent of love that they could enjoy if they had a limitless life in this world. But alas! It is impossible. He says that he hears the sound of the time's wings as it flies closely behind their backs. Time waits for no one. It flies, leaving everything behind. He also says that the other world (after death) is waiting for us at a distance

(yonder). It's like a vast desert of eternity lying before us. Thus, the lover reminds his beloved of life's brevity (shortness).

Lines 25–28

Thy beauty shall no more be found;
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long-preserved virginity,

Here the speaker describes the situation after death. In our destined tomb, our beauty will slowly but surely turn into dust. So, the beloved's beauty will fade as soon as she dies. Here "marble vault" refers to the coffin. The speaker's song would not be heard from her coffin. Everything will vanish and turn to dust there. After mentioning the beloved's beauty, the speaker speaks of the virginity that she has preserved for a long time. The worms would destroy this long-preserved virginity there in the coffin. Thus, we see the speaker trying to make his lady realise that things like beauty and virginity would not be any use after death.

- Life after death; loss of value of beauty and virginity

Lines 29–32

And your quaint honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust;
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.

Not only her virginity but also her honour will turn to dust. All that honour for which she has saved her virginity will be attacked by worms. At the same time, his lust for her beauty too will turn into ashes. Though the lover finds the grave a "fine and private place" as nobody can see them there, it's not the place where lovers should "embrace".

- Turning honour and virginity into dust

Lines 33–37

Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may,

The last section starts with "now therefore". It means

the speaker will now talk about the things they need to do right now before time flies. He says that youth is the best part of life to enjoy. At this time, one becomes energetic and passionate. The skin is as fresh as the morning dew. Moreover, in her youth, the beloved's soul is very much willing to come out (transpire) from every pore of the skin with immediate desires. The speaker here is actually talking about his lady's erotic desires which he believes he can see in her body. So, he suggests that they should indulge in physical lovemaking ('sport' hints at a sexual play) without wasting time. This is like making hay while the sun shines.

▶ Making love in youth

Lines 38–40

And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour
Than languish in his slow-chapped power.

The speaker now suggests that the two lovers should be like passionate (amorous) preying birds, like eagles and hawks, and eat (devour) time before time eats them. He means to say that unless the lovers enjoy their time at their youthful heights, time will not wait for them and they will slowly suffer (languish) the destructing power of time.

▶ Being passionate

Lines 41–46

Let us roll all our strength and all
Our sweetness up into one ball,
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Through the iron gates of life:
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

The speaker now suggests that they should unite all their strength and passion along with their sweetness to get the pleasure of love. Life is just an iron gate that does not open easily. It is filled with struggle and resentment (rough strife). With all their strength and passion, the lovers will tear the iron gate to get that happiness. In the last couplet, the poet wants to say that they cannot make their good times of youth wait for them. However, they can make the most of their time with love's unitedness.

▶ Making most of the time for love

Summarised Overview

Andrew Marvell, an English author and politician, penned the metaphysical poem "To His Coy Mistress" (1621-1678). The poem's speaker addresses a woman who has been reluctant to respond to his romantic advances in the opening line. He talks about how he would treat her in the first stanza if he were not constrained by the limitations of a typical lifespan. Her rejection to his advances would still not deter him from appreciating every aspect of her body for generations. In the second stanza, he bemoans the fleeting nature of human life. The speaker argues that once life is done, there is no longer a chance to enjoy one another because no one hugs in death. The speaker exhorts the woman to reciprocate his efforts in the last stanza, arguing that by passionately loving one another, they will both make the most of their limited time on earth.

Assignments

1. Discuss Herbert as a religious poet.
2. Discuss the Metaphysical elements in Herbert's poetry.
3. "To His Coy Mistress" is the period's finest variation on the theme of Carpe diem. Discuss.
4. Bring out the metaphysical traits revealed in Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress."
5. How does Andrew Marvell vindicate love and sexuality in the poem "To His Coy Mistress"?

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Suggested Readings

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

Unit 4

Drama

(Non-detailed study)

Learning Outcomes

The learning outcome of this unit is to introduce the learners to:

- the minor dramatists of the Elizabethan era.
- features and components of the Elizabethan tragedy.
- the Senecan traits of tragedy, revenge, murder and bloodshed in *The Spanish Tragedy*
- the elements of comedy of Humours in *Every Man in His Humour.*

2.4.1 *The Spanish Tragedy*

Background

Thomas Kyd wrote the Elizabethan tragedy *The Spanish Tragedy,* or *Hieronimo is Mad Again* between 1582 and 1592. *The Spanish Tragedy* created a new form of English theatre, the retribution plays or revenge tragedy, and was extremely well-liked and influential in its day. The drama has a figure who represents revenge as well as multiple brutal killings. *The Spanish Tragedy* was mocked by numerous Elizabethan and Jacobean authors, including Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Ben Jonson. It is frequently regarded as the earliest mature Elizabethan drama, a claim that Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* disputes. Shakespeare's Hamlet has several aspects of *The Spanish Tragedy,* including a ghost out for vengeance and a play within a play designed to catch a murderer.

Keywords

Tragedy, marriage, murder, revenge, suicide, grief

2.4.1.1 Introduction

The chief merits of the play *The Spanish Tragedy* lie in the well-constructed horrific plot involving murders, frenzy and sudden deaths, gripping scenes with events following events, foreign aristocratic settings, powerful dialogues, powerful use of dramatic irony and the refined literary tone. The other major feature that adds to its immense appeal is the clear focus of the play on the passion for retribution. In the action of the play, no room is given for the dissipation of concentration on the revenge theme. Interestingly, the Revenge Motif itself is personified and presented as a character. The introduction of the ghost and the play-within-the-play are the other devices that Kyd uses ingeniously to strengthen the revenge motif.

- Revenge as a key theme in *The Spanish Tragedy*

2.4.1.2 Life Of Thomas Kyd

Thomas Kyd (1558-1594) was a remarkable playwright of the Elizabethan Age. One of the seven university wits, he was the most popular among the pre-Shakespearean dramatists. He was, in fact, a seminal force in Elizabethan drama. The credit for having launched the Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy goes to Kyd. Authentic information available about Kyd's life is very little. He was born in London into a respectable family in the year 1558 and was probably educated at Merchant Taylor's school. His father, Francis Kyd, was a scrivener and his mother Agnes or Anna Kyd was a cultured woman. Kyd had the advantage of classical learning; his wide knowledge of Seneca could be discerned from his plays. His close association with Christopher Marlowe, another outstanding playwright of his days, landed him in trouble. He was accused of " a libel that concerned the state" and atheism. He was jailed for controversial papers on a theological dispute found in his room. He apparently claimed that the writings were not his but Marlowe's. He died in 1594

Fig. 2.4.1. Thomas Kyd

- Kyd's personal, literary, social and political aspects.

before his parents died.

Apart from *The Spanish Tragedy*, a prose treatise *The Householder's Philosophy* (1558) derived from Tasso, and a play *Cornelia* (1594), a translation of the French dramatist Garnier's *Cornelie*, are the works definitely attributed to Kyd. Literary historians say that many of Kyd's work is lost.

- Kyd's writing career

2.4.1.3 Kyd's Contribution To Elizabethan Drama

Thomas Kyd's significant place in English literary history is due to his popular play *The Spanish Tragedy*. The influence of this play on Elizabethan Theatre was immense. David Daiches states: "Time and time again later Elizabethan plays use or refer to something in *The Spanish Tragedy*". It is clearly evident that Shakespeare took many clues from this play for his famous tragedy, *Hamlet*. Critics remark that the staging of *The Spanish Tragedy* marked a distinct era in the development of English tragedy. It was the most famous play of its age and "the great exemplar of the Elizabethan revenge tradition."

- *The Spanish Tragedy* as an influential Elizabethan tragedy

Thomas Kyd was neither a poetic genius like Marlowe nor a great wit like Lyly but his theatrical sense was, indeed, a great gift. He could turn an exciting story into a drama of striking situations with suspense and horror. His contribution lies in "devising the high-flown exotic revenge plot" which became a model for other English playwrights to follow in future. He learnt much from Seneca's plays, especially to keep his play to a single theme and to relax tension without changing the tone. Above all, he was intelligent enough to study the tastes of the Elizabethan audience and cater to their needs. *The Spanish Tragedy*, first produced in the early 1580s, became the most successful and popular play of its time.

- Specificities of dramatic skills

2.4.1.4 Plot Summary

Act – 1

The play opens with the vengeful Ghost of Don Andrea appearing on the stage with the spirit of Revenge. The Ghost says it has returned from the Underworld, accompanied by Revenge, on the orders of fair Proserpine, wife of Pluto, the king of the Underworld,

- Return of Ghost of Don Andrea

to the world of the living to observe and comment on the events to follow. Thus, the future role of the Ghost and Revenge as the chorus is well established at the outset.

The Ghost of Andrea's introductory speech provides vital information necessary for the proper understanding of the play. There are clear references in the prologue (i.e the introductory speech) to Andrea's past – his ancestry, love for beautiful Bel-Imperia, "duteous service" to the state, intense desire to demonstrate his valour, participation in the fierce battle between Spain and Portugal, death at the hands of Balthazar and as a result his unjust and unbearable separation from his beloved at the prime of life.

- Andrea's past is referred

On his return to Spain after a resounding victory over Portugal, the Spanish General briefs the King of Spain about the battle and refers to the valiant fight of Don Andrea, and his tragic death at the hands of Balthazar, the son of the Viceroy of Portugal. The General also informs the King about Balthazar having been brought to Spain as a captive (prisoner of war). At this juncture, the royal prisoner is claimed to have been captured by Horatio, the son of Marshal Hieronimo and Lorenzo, the son of the Duke of Castile. The Duke of Castile was the brother of the King of Spain. The King grants the ransom to the brave Horatio and the privilege of guarding Balthazar to Lorenzo. The King also asks Balthazar to accept the hospitality of Lorenzo. Balthazar, moved by the King's verdict, thanks him for treating him as a guest and also expresses his admiration for Horatio's chivalry.

- Battle between Spain and Portugal

In Portugal, the Viceroy is in gloom, and he is under the impression that his son, Balthazar, has been killed in the war. Mourning over the supposed untimely "death" of his son, he says that the earth appears to be an "image of melancholy" to him. He indulges in philosophical musings and refers to the fact that men in low positions are happier than those in higher positions. He concludes that man is a puppet in the hands of Fate. Fate is deaf, blind and fickle and the helpless man is forced to dance to the ever-changing tunes of Fate.

- The Viceroy of Portugal mourns his son's death

In fact, Villuppo, a scheming nobleman of the Portuguese court, makes the Viceroy believe that another courtier by the name of Alexandro is responsible for the

- Alexandro's imprisonment

death of Balthazar. The Viceroy calls Alexandro a cruel traitor and orders him to be jailed and awaits execution till the confirmation of Balthazar's death.

- Bel-imperia's mourning over Andrea's death

Meanwhile, in Spain, Bel-Imperia, the daughter of the Duke of Castile and a lover of Andrea, learns about the sad death of Andrea from his friend Horatio. In a soliloquy, Bel Imperia reveals the pangs of her grief-stricken soul and moan that with Andrea's death all her joys have vanished. She vows to avenge Balthazar who is responsible for slaying Andrea. She unfolds her plan of using Horatio to fulfil her vow. She also hints at Balthazar's love for her.

- Marshal Heironimo's arrival in Spain

In the meantime, an Ambassador from Portugal arrives and he is happy to see Balthazar who is reported to have been murdered by Alexandro. On orders from the King of Spain, Marshal Hieronimo, an adept theatrical performer, presents a masque to entertain the Portuguese Ambassador and Balthazar.

- The Spirit of Revenge's assurance

The Ghost of Andrea who is pained to witness all these spectacles of "league, love and banqueting" expresses impatience to the Spirit of Revenge. Revenge assures the Ghost that the friendship he has seen will change into hatred, day into night, hope into despair, peace into war, joy into pain and bliss into misery and asks him to wait for time to ripen.

Act II

- Balthazar's failed attempts to win Bel-imperia's love

Though Balthazar enjoys the hospitality of Lorenzo, he is in deep despair due to his inability to win Bel-Imperia's love in spite of his earnest attempts to woo her. Bel-imperia's outright indifference to Balthazar intrigues her brother Lorenzo too and he rightly guesses that his sister must be in love with somebody else. He consoles Balthazar and assures him that he would find out the cause of her irresponsive behaviour. He threatens Pedringano, her sister's 'loyal" servant, and at the dagger's point, he elicits the information that Horatio is her secret lover.

- Horatio's emergence as rival both in arms and love

Balthazar is very sad to know that his "rival in arms is also his rival in love". He considers Horatio his "destined plague" and is determined to take revenge upon his rival. Lorenzo instigates him by saying that the impediment should be removed without delay when the feeling of

revenge is strong. Thus, they plot to murder Horatio.

When Horatio and Bel-Imperia meet and exchange words of love, fear and hope, the "trusted" servant of Bel-Imperia shows the scene to Balthazar and Lorenzo kept in secret. Unaware of the treacherous people, the lovers decide the time and place for subsequent meetings for "delight and dalliance".

- Love between Horatio and Bel-Imperia

Meanwhile, the King of Spain and his brother the Duke of Castile discuss a strategy to cement the strained relationship with Portugal. The King tells his brother that Balthazar is of a friendly disposition and loves Bel-imperia well. By solemnising their marriage, he hopes to strengthen the friendship between the two countries. He also promises a handsome dowry, release of the tribute and succession to the Spanish Crown if the couple has a son. The Ambassador from Portugal says he is glad to carry this happy tiding to his Viceroy and leaves for Portugal.

- Political value of marriage between Balthazar and Bel-Imperia

As planned earlier, Horatio and Bel-imperia meet at Hieronimo's bower (garden) on a fateful night. Bel-imperia asks "trustworthy" Pedringano to keep watch at the gate outside. While exchanging words of love, Bel-imperia says that her heart "foretells some mischance". Horatio asks her sweetheart not to say so. Instead of keeping watch at the gate, avaricious Pedringano, enamoured of gold, fetches the traitors to the scene. Disguised Lorenzo, Balthazar and Serberine surprise the lovers. Bel-imperia shouts "we are betrayed." The traitors hang Horatio in the arbour and stab him. Thus Balthazar settles scores with Horatio. Bel-imperia cries, "Murder! Murder!". But they stop her mouth, abduct her and imprison her hoping she will agree to marry Balthazar.

- Stabbing of Horatio

The cries of Bel-imperia wake up Hieronimo who says the scream of a woman "has chilled his heart with trembling fear." Terribly alarmed, he enters the garden and finds a murdered body hanging but the murderers have disappeared from the scene. From the clothes worn by the body, he discovers that the murdered man is his young son. He cries in agony. Isabella, his wife, is shocked at the ghastly killing and cries that the murderers have left her in "everlasting grief." Old Hieronimo carries away the blood-stained kerchief and vows to take

- Old Hieronimo's vow of revenge

revenge on the murderers. He decides not to bury the body till he fulfils the vow of revenge. He bears the body away.

- Ghost of Andrea's decision of revenge

The Ghost of Andrea wails over the unexpected turn of events resulting in the death of his intimate friend Horatio and pities over the condition of Bel-imperia. Revenge reassures him of action and asks him to be patient till the corn is ripe for the sickle to cut.

Act III

In Portugal, the Viceroy, who has lost all peace due to the reported death of his son Balthazar, orders the burning of the suspected traitor, Alexandro. The torturers bind him to the stake. Fortunately, the Ambassador who enters the court at that moment informs that Balthazar is alive. He hands over the letter given by the Spanish king to the Viceroy. Irked by the false insinuations made by the villainous Villuppo, the Viceroy orders the instant execution of the real traitor, and the loyal Alexandro is vindicated.

- Realising that Balthazar is alive

Hieronimo is much distressed over the loss of his son. Overwhelmed with grief, he loses balance at times. One day, on his way, he finds a letter addressed to him. It is a letter written in blood by Bel-imperia. She has mentioned the names of her brother Lorenzo, and Prince Balthazar as the killers of Horatio and has asked Hieronimo to take revenge on them. But Hieronimo thinks it a "trickery laid to entrap his life". To find out the fact from Bel-imperia he enquires Pedringano about Bel-imperia's whereabouts. Lorenzo intercepts and tells Hieronimo that she is in disgrace.

- Bel-Imperia's letter to Hieronimo

At the same time, Lorenzo begins to suspect Serberine and considers him a potent threat to his life as he is a witness to the horrid crime. He also thinks that Pedringano may turn into a traitor. So he cunningly contrives a plot to kill Serberine with the help of Pedringano first and then to implicate Pedringano by another devious scheme. Unsuspecting Pedringano, carried away by the lure of gold, agrees to act according to Lorenzo's devised plan.

- Lorenzo's concepts

Then Lorenzo sends a page (a boy servant) to Serberine, Balthazar's assistant, with the false message that Balthazar intends to meet him at St. Luigi's Park at 8

O'clock in the night. He also slyly instructs Pedringano to hide in a corner of the park with a pistol to kill Serberine. Pedringano, expecting rich rewards, goes to the Park to execute Serberine. Lorenzo devises another plan to arrest unsuspecting Pedringano at the park. According to this devious plan, Lorenzo sets some watchmen on the task of surveillance of the park that night. In all innocence, Balthazar's assistant Serberine goes to the park at the appointed time to meet his master but is shot by Pedringano who is arrested by the watchmen as per his wish of Lorenzo. Thus Lorenzo succeeds in his twin schemes.

▶ Lorenzo's successful plans

Pedringano sends a letter to Lorenzo seeking his immediate help to escape from the gallows. But cunning Lorenzo sends a messenger to Pedringano with the assurance of getting a reprieve from the King. At the same time, he induces Balthazar to seek immediate justice from the King for the murder of his assistant Serberine and thus tries to hasten the execution of Pedringano.

▶ Lorenzo's crooked planning

When Marshal Hieronimo conducts an enquiry, Pedringano speaks indifferently expecting a pardon from the King. The expected pardon never reaches on time and Pedringano is hanged. Yet somehow a letter written by Pedringano to Lorenzo falls into the hands of a hangman who in turn gives it to Hieronimo. From the contents of the letter, he realises that Bel-imperia's words about the killers are true.

▶ Hieronimo's realisation

Hieronimo turns sad when he confirms the identity of the killers. He decides to seek justice directly from the king but the involvement of royal personages in the murder of his son prevents him from disclosing the identity of the killers immediately. Meanwhile, several events occur and make Hieronimo helpless. With weighty unexpressed agony, he behaves like a lunatic. Overwhelmed with grief, he even contemplates suicide but decides against this desperate act because it will prevent his avenging the murder of his son, Horatio.

▶ Hieronimo's desperate state

In an extreme state of melancholy, he meets the King to reveal the truth but finds the circumstances most inopportune. The Ambassador from Portugal meets the King with the happy news of the acceptance of the marriage plans and he also says that he has brought

- Hieronimo before King

Balthazar's ransom to Horatio. At the mention of the name "Horatio", Hieronimo cries loudly and digs into the ground with his dagger.

- Hieronimo's strange attitude

Hieronimo's unrestrained behaviour makes everyone believe that he has become almost insane. The King is also disturbed by the strange behaviour of Hieronimo. Utilising the opportunity Lorenzo tells the King that Hieronimo's action indicates that he wants the ransom for himself. This mischievous misrepresentation only adds to the grief of Hieronimo, but the King believes the words of Lorenzo. Hieronimo who appears as a living image of grief hurries away without letting anyone know what is in his mind.

- Strife between Hieronimo and Lorenzo

In the meantime, the Duke of Castile, Lorenzo's father, learns of Lorenzo's interference in the unhappy Hieronimo's affairs. He speaks to his son about this but Lorenzo convinces his father by saying that Hieronimo is a "silly man distract of mind". At Lorenzo's suggestion, the Duke effects a reconciliation between Lorenzo and Hieronimo. The Duke advises Hieronimo not to suspect his son Lorenzo and assures him that his son will not interfere in his affairs. Hieronimo, in turn, assures the Duke of "perfect amity".

- Revenge's approach to the reconciliation between Hieronimo and Lorenzo

The Ghost of Andrea is quite unhappy over the reconciliation between Lorenzo and Hieronimo. He asks Revenge to awaken and reveal the mystery. Revenge tells the Ghost of Andrea it is only a seeming reconciliation. Through a dumb show, Revenge makes the Ghost understand what is really going to happen.

Act -IV

- Bel-Imperia's meeting of Heironimo

Bel-imperia meets Hieronimo and rebukes him for his utter lack of sense of obligation to his son, thus indicating his delay in avenging the murder of his son. She vows to send the hateful souls of Horatio's murderers to hell. Hieronimo apologises to Bel-Imperia for suspecting her letter. He tells her that he has been secretly thinking of some means to avenge the death of his son. Bel-imperia promises to keep it a secret and to help him in his mission of avenging the death of Horatio.

Balthazar and Lorenzo come there to meet Bel-imperia. The dissembling Hieronimo puts on a smile. In a friendly tone, Balthazar requests Hieronimo to entertain

his father with a theatrical performance when the latter visits Spain. Hieronimo readily agrees to perform a play, a tragedy, to entertain the King and makes a plea to Balthazar, Lorenzo and Bel-Imperia to act important roles in the drama. Balthazar and Lorenzo object to the performance of a tragic drama by saying that it will not suit the occasion. But they are convinced by Hieronimo who says the royal audience will be satisfied only by a serious kind of drama and not a comedy.

▶ Hieronimo's planning of revenge

Hieronimo gives the group the outline of the play written by him long ago. He tells them that it is about a beautiful Italian lady named Perseda (to be played by Bel-imperia) who is wedded to a Knight of Rhodes (to be played by Lorenzo) but wooed by Great Soliman, the Turkish Emperor (to be played by Balthazar). Soliman is to reveal his passion for Perseda to one of the courtiers, the Bashaw (to be played by Hieronimo). The Bashaw should try all means to persuade Perseda to turn her affection to Soliman. But Perseda should remain chaste and resolute in her love for the Knight of Rhodes. In anger, Perseda should slay Soliman and stab herself. Moved by remorse for his deeds, the Bashaw should rush to a mountaintop and hang himself. After intently listening to the story of the play, Lorenzo exclaims that it is "excellent".

▶ Story of the play by Hieronimo

Hieronimo's wife Isabella is almost mad with grief over the loss of her son Horatio and is distraught by the delay in justice. She decides to end her life. She cries that neither pity nor piety has moved the King to justice or compassion. In a fit of rage, she cuts down the arbour where her son was hanged, curses "Let this earth be barren" and stabs herself.

▶ Isabella's suicide attempt

That evening the court audience gathers to see the play which Hieronimo and others have to present. When they assemble at the gallery, Hieronimo insists that they to lock the door and throw the key at him. The King, thinking nothing amiss, agrees to do so. All is now ready for revenge.

▶ Hieronimo getting ready for revenge

As planned, the play is about to begin. Hieronimo has already stealthily replaced the wooden daggers with real ones. Not knowing this the enthusiastic actors -- Balthazar and Lorenzo – play their roles very well to the great appreciation of the audience. Hieronimo,

acting as the Bashaw, kills Lorenzo who plays the role of the Knight of Rhodes. Bel-imperia, by doing the role of Perseda, stabs herself. The lone survivor among the actors, Hieronimo explains to the audience the terrible realism behind this show and draws a parallel between his play and his real tragedy. He produces the body of Horatio and once again tells the audience that the deaths they have witnessed as part of the play are real. The revelation shocks the audience.

- Murder amid the play

Then Hieronimo tries to hang himself but is prevented by the courtiers. Greatly perturbed by the incident, the King and the Viceroy try to extort the full truth from him but Hieronimo resorts to biting his tongue to avoid confessing. When asked to write a confession, he gestures for a knife to sharpen his quill (pen) and with it kills himself.

- Hieronimo's suicide

The play ends with Don Andrea's Ghost summarising the whole unhappy spectacle. The Ghost who opens the play now closes the play in triumph.

- Ghost's role

Summarised Overview

Kyd based *The Spanish Tragedy* on the tragedies written by the Roman playwright Seneca, whose plays focused on murder and revenge. The emphasis was on an evil destiny that would unavoidably result in a gruesome and terrifying disaster. After an unnamed war between Spain and Portugal, in which Spain prevails, *The Spanish Tragedy* takes place. Spain intends to unite with the Portuguese royal house into one potent force through the marriage of Balthazar and Bel-Imperia. The action in the play is divided into four acts, 31 scenes, and five additions. These additions were made in the 1602 published version of the play, years after its first performances, with the goal of improving the clarity of the transitions between scenes. The Viceroy of Portugal revolted against Spanish power before the play even started. The Viceroy's son Balthazar, the Portuguese commander, was defeated in combat after killing the Spanish officer Andrea before being captured by the Spanish. Onstage during the entire play, Andrea's ghost and the personification of Revenge both function as a chorus. At the conclusion of each act, Andrea laments the injustices that have occurred, and Revenge reassures him that those who deserve it will receive it. With tales of the Classical underworld, The Ghost of Andrea and Revenge opens the play in Act 1 and closes it in Act 5. There is also a subplot involving the rivalry between two Portuguese noblemen, one of whom tries to persuade the Viceroy that his rival murdered the missing Balthazar.

Assignments

1. Why is *The Spanish Tragedy* said to be 'Senecan'?
2. Discuss Kyd's handling of the 'revenge motif' in *The Spanish Tragedy*.
3. The principal merit of *The Spanish Tragedy* is said to be its plot. Do you agree?
4. Account for the popularity of the play *The Spanish Tragedy.*

Suggested Readings

1. Philip Edwards. Ed. *The Spanish Tragedy*, Oxford UP, 1973.
2. J.R. Mulryne. Ed. *The Spanish Tragedy*, Ernest Benn, 1970.
3. K.S. Ramamurti. Ed. *The Spanish Tragedy,* Macmillan, 1980.
4. M.C. Bradbrook. *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy*, Cambridge UP, 1955.
5. T.R. Henn. *The Harvest of Tragedy*, Methuen, 1968.
6. S. Boas. Ed. *The Works of Thomas Kyd*, Oxford UP, 1967.

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1. Carter, Ronald and John McRae. *The Routledge History of Literature in English*. 1997.
2. Daiches, David. *A Critical History of English Literature in Two Volumes*. Vol. I, Secker & Warburg, 1961.
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4. Sanders, Andrew. *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*, Clarendon Press, 1994.

2.4.2 *Every Man in His Humour*

Background

Every Man in his Humour was written during the tail-end of the Elizabethan era. More widely, it is part of the English Renaissance, a rich period in English theatrical history in which Elizabeth and her successor James I encouraged close links between the art form and the court. The theatre was a hugely popular art form, comparable to television or the internet in the 20th and 21st centuries. The Elizabethan era more widely represents something of a "golden age" for Britain—a time of cultural advancement, the navigation and exploration of the globe through figures like Francis Drake, and an increase in military prowess. It was also a relatively peaceful time, in terms of the ongoing religious conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism. That said, the era was not without its conspiracies and intrigues, with multiple high-level plots against the monarch.

Keywords

Comedy, humours, acquaintance, deceit, imprisonment, celebration

2.4.2.1 Introduction

Every Man in His Humour is a comic drama in five acts which established the reputation of Ben Jonson. It was performed in London by Lord Chamberlain's Men in 1598 and revised sometime before its publication in the folio edition of 1616. With its scornful detachment and its rather academic effect, the play introduced to the English stage a vigorous and direct anatomizing of "the time's deformities"—the language, habits, and humours of the contemporary London scene.

- Social and Cultural London in Every Man in His Humour

2.4.2.2 The Life Of Ben Jonson

Ben Jonson was born in Westminster in 1573. The major period of his life was spent in London. His grandfather had settled down in Annandale, Scotland. From there, he migrated to Carlistle. He was in the employ of Henry VIII. The father of Ben Jonson was from

a Scottish family. He became a victim of the persecution of Queen Mary, a Catholic to her backbone. The father became a "Minister of gospel". Since he professed Protestantism, his estate was forfeited to the State. Subsequently, he was thrown into prison. Ben Jonson was born posthumously, a month after his father's death. After two years his mother remarried a bricklayer who had his misgivings about the literary taste of the man. It is also on record that Jonson was apprenticed to his stepfather for doing the work of bricklaying, but he found himself a misplaced man in that capacity, and he gave it up ultimately.

Fig. 2.4.2. Ben Johnson

▶ Ben Jonson's personal life

Jonson was, however, provided aid by his stepfather when he was studying at Westminster school. William Camden, held in very high esteem by the dramatist, took fancy to the young student. Much of the classical learning of Jonson is due to the inspiration and work of his revered teacher. Jonson freely acknowledges that whatever he could achieve as an artist is due to him "Camden, most revered head."

▶ Camden's impact in Jonson's life

Jonson, later on, joined as a soldier in the Low Countries. He remained in Flanders till 1592. He married Anne Lewis, "a shrew" but not without the redeeming virtue of honesty. By 1597, he started writing and performing plays. He became an actor and a 'play jobber". He died in comparative poverty on August 6, 1637, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. On his tomb are inscribed the words: "O rare Ben Jonson".

▶ Jonson's death

Jonson produced his first play, *Every Man in His Humour* in 1598; *The Case is Altered* belongs probably to the same year. The year 1599 saw the production of *Every Man Out of His Humour*, a less popular comedy, which with *Cynthia's Revels*, (1600), marked the opening of the stage war between Jonson and his fellow playwrights. Jonson attacks back with *The Poetaster*, in 1601, but the war ended in 1602, and he then turned to tragedy. *Sejanus* (1603), was his first and greater tragedy, and with the accession of James I, Jonson was established by

▶ Jonson's literary career

his thirty masques and court entertainments as the most successful for the Jacobean stage. The King, however, took offence at the reference to the Scotts in *Eastward Hoe* (1605).

▶ Jonson's tragedies and comedies

The period that followed was marked by the production of his greatest classical comedies: *Volpone* (1606), *Epicene or the Silent Woman* (1609); and *The Alchemist* (1610); and by his second tragedy *Catiline* (1611). His later comedies include *The Staple of News*, (1626), *The New Inn* (1629) and *A Tale of a Tub* (1633).

2.4.2.3 Plot Summary

▶ Edward's literary tastes

In the prologue, the speaker announces that the play is written due to the popularity of the theatre. The goal of playwrights is to please their audience. This play, the prologue continues, will not take the audience to a place far away, but will show a current time and place that will make people laugh. The opening scene finds Knowell, an old man, at his house. He tells Brainworm, his servant, to fetch his son, Edward. The father is happy that Edward is a scholar, as he himself once was, but he does not approve of his son's taste for "fruitless" arts. Master Stephen, an easily duped countryman, then arrives to visit relatives. Knowell gives him advice on how to be a better man. Shortly thereafter, Stephen departs. A servant then gives Knowell a letter meant for Edward. When he reads it, he realizes it is not for him and takes offence at the impolite, informal tone of the letter. He has the letter given to his son and decides he will encourage him, but not force him, to try to be a good man.

The next scene of Act I finds Edward receiving the letter and learning that his father has read it. Stephen enters and asks about the man who delivered the letter, who had left by then. Stephen and Edward, who are cousins, talk and then go to the city to meet the man who sent the letter. Scene three introduces the characters Mathew and Cob at the latter's house. Cob talks about respectable ancestors, and Mathew asks about locating a man named Captain Bobadill, who, Cob says, is his guest. Mathew does not believe this. Cob tells him the man slept on his bench the previous night. Cob ends the scene with a monologue that tells of the drama in his house and of Bobadill owing him money. Scene four, the final scene of Act I, unfolds in Cob's house, where

- Edward, Stephen, Mathew, and Captain Bobadill

Bobadill lies on the bench. Mathew and Bobadill talk and Mathew agrees not to reveal that Bobadill spent the night there. Mathew shares a new play, which they discuss before leaving for a tavern.

Act II opens in another part of the city. Kitely, a merchant, enters, along with his cashier, Cash, and Kitley's brother-in-law, Downright, who is a squire. Kitely tells the squire that Wellbred, his brother, has been disrespectful. Wellbred is angered. Bobadill and Mathew look for but do not find Wellbred. Next, in the Moorfields of London, Brainworm is disguised as a soldier. He wants to stop Knowell's pursuit of his son. Stephen and Knowell enter. Stephen has lost a purse containing a ring from his mistress. As the act continues, Knowell delivers a monologue about his youth and the way parents often influence their children in negative ways. He is happy that he has not been a bad influence on his son, although he believes his son has gone down the wrong path.

- Parent's influence on son

In Act III Mathew, Bobadill, and Wellbred are in a tavern. While Mathew and Bobadill talk of disliking Wellbred's brother, Downright, Edward and Stephen arrive. Wellbred, it turns out, is the one who has written the letter to Edward. They go on to discuss Stephen and Bobadill's military experiences. Cash and Kitely are engaged in a shady exchange of money. Kitely sends Cash to another job and asks to be informed if Wellbred or anyone else comes to his house. An upset Cob enters and Cash tells him it is his "humour" that is making him feel distressed. The next scene is at Justice Clement's house. Cob tells Kitely that some men have arrived at his house and Kitely worries about his wife and sister giving in to their desires. Cob attempts to put his mind at ease. Cob also wants revenge, as Bobadill has sexually used his wife. Justice Clement and Roger his clerk arrive. Cob asks the Justice to punish Bobadill, but the Justice orders Cob's imprisonment for his character and previous actions.

- Cob's character and his imprisonment

Further complications and interactions continue to drive the story until the final act, which takes place at the home of Justice Clement. Clement, Knowell, Kitely, Dame Kitely, Cash, Cob, and some servants enter. They are trying to sift through the sequence of false messages they have received. Bobadill and Mathew join the group and announce they have a warrant for Downright. Stephen,

▶ Culminating in celebration

Downright, and Brainworm, who is in disguise, also arrive. Clement wants Brainworm jailed for not serving warrants in the right way. Brainworm reveals himself and his deceitful actions are exposed. In attempting to bring closure to everything, Justice Clement instructs every person to rid themselves of the emotions that are weighing them down and they start to celebrate.

Summarised Overview

Every Man in his Humour written in 1598, performed in 1598 and published in 1616. It is a quintessential example of the "comedy of the humours," in which each character is made to represent, in Jonson's own words, "someone peculiar quality" that dominates their every action. William Shakespeare certainly acted in *Every Man in his Humour*, though which role he took is up for debate. In the play, every major character is defined by an overriding obsession, known as humour. Humours are four bodily fluids - black bile, yellow bile, phlegm and blood, which formed the basis of early systems of medicine. These fluids are associated with particular characteristics that were thought to influence a person's temperament, as well as health.

Assignments

1. Discuss *Everyman in his Humour* as a Comedy of Humours.
2. Why does Bobadill beat Cob in *Every Man in his Humour*?
3. Discuss Humoralism and poverty in *Everyman in his Humour.*

Suggested Readings

1. Chamber, E. K. *The Elizabethan Stage. 4 Volumes*, Clarendon Press, 1923
2. Halliday, F. E. *A Shakespeare Companion 1564–1964*. Penguin, 1964.

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1. Carter, Ronald and John McRae. *The Routledge History of Literature in English*. 1997.
2. Daiches, David. *A Critical History of English Literature in Two Volumes*. Vol. I, Secker & Warburg, 1961.
3. Poplawski, Paul. *English Literature in Context*, Cambridge UP, 2008.
4. Sanders, Andrew. *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*, Clarendon Press, 1994.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

Prose and Fiction

BLOCK-03

Block Content

Unit 1 - "Of Friendship" and "Of Truth" - Francis Bacon

Unit 2 - "Of Parents and Children" and "Of Marriage and Single Life" -Francis Bacon

Unit 3 - "An Apologie for Poetry" - Sir Philip Sidney

Unit 4 - *Utopia* - Sir Thomas More

Unit 1 "Of Friendship" and "Of Truth"

Francis Bacon

Learning Outcomes

As outcomes of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- comprehend an idea of the major historical events and socio-cultural contexts that shaped the literature of the century.
- develop a historical awareness of the evolution of essays as a genre in English.
- examine stylistic features of the representative text of the period.
- explain the impact of the Renaissance on the thought and literature of the period.
- explain how socio-cultural factors have influenced individual texts and how individual texts become representative of their age.

Background

Bacon lived in the age of the Renaissance. Renaissance is a French term which means rebirth, reawakening or revival. Renaissance and Reformation are two great movements that originated in Europe during the fourteenth century. Reformation was related to theology, while Renaissance meant flowering art and literature. Renaissance originated in Italy and it reached England towards the end of the fourteenth century. Its culmination can be observed in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. There was a new awakening in learning, the spirit of adventure, the rise of nationalism and the thirst for individual liberty.

The main historical events that took place during the period were the rise of English Puritanism, the defeat of the Spanish Armada, voyages around the world and the formation of the East India Company by Britain. This age, also known as the Elizabethan Age, possesses a vast treasure of literary productions, which includes the monumental writing of William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Edmund Spencer, Sir Philip Sidney and Francis Bacon. It was an age of pomp and splendour, and people spent lavishly on clothes, jewellery and decorations. Queen Elizabeth I enjoyed being surrounded by courtiers in fashionable costumes. Riding, shooting, and swimming were given due priority. For the Elizabethans, "life was a glorious adventure and knowledge was a fantastic game." Among the prose writers of the period, Francis Bacon was a prolific writer. He is considered the father of English essays, especially

of the aphoristic type. Aphoristic sentences are written in a compressed style and could be expanded into paragraphs. He wrote prolifically on literary, philosophical, scientific and legal themes. He was doubtful about the future of English, so he wrote both in English and Latin. But now he is chiefly remembered for his essays in English. His major works in English include 'The Essays' (1597), 'The Advancement of Learning'(1605), 'The History of Henry VII'(1621) and 'New Atlantis'(1626).

Keywords

Fruit of friendship, openness, favourite, solitude, cannibal

3.1.1 "Of Friendship"

3.1.1.1 Discussion

The essay 'Of Friendship' by Francis Bacon celebrates the intimacy between friends which remains unaffected during prosperous and adverse times. The advantages and disadvantages of having a friend and not having one are elaborated on in this essay. Irrespective of social stature, one needs support and advice from a friend. The theme of the essay in 1625 is the true benefit of having a friend. It details the importance of having a true friend in life. Man is a social being and he needs sincere and true friends. A person without a friend who lives in solitude is either considered a wild beast or a divine figure. A person without a friend becomes a cannibal of his own heart. Kings and great men gave much importance to friendship, and they even chose friends from simple backgrounds, which culminated in their own tragedy. Wives, children and close relatives cannot afford the comfort of friendship. Friendship doubles our joys and halves our sorrows. The counsel of a friend leads us to clarity of thought from vagueness. It is quite natural that a person is sometimes misled by prejudices and commits errors, which can be overcome by the timely advice of a faithful friend. In short, a friend is another self, a reflection and extension of yourself.

- Advantages of having friends

Bacon quotes Aristotle when he says that human nature demands company and social contact. Isolation and solitude are the traits possessed either by a wild beast or a heavenly God. Avoidance of interaction results in injustice to the natural state of a human being. There are people who are shy in a crowd and seek isolation in the wild. There are also people such as hermits who give importance to peace and contemplate profound issues. They would be on the path of self-discovery and need isolation. However, Bacon warns that the consequence of such isolation can be either desirable or detrimental.

Fig.3.1.1. Francis Bacon

▶ Benefits of having and not having friends

Bacon says that a person can feel lonely in a crowd. A big city is filled with great solitude because people there would be mentally and emotionally separated. However, a small city or town is more conducive to cultivating friendship because people mingle a lot regularly. Thus small cities develop strong and united communities.

▶ City and friendship

Bacon feels that passions and feelings are the foundation of any friendship. Friendship is the only cure for a lonely heart. The suffocation felt by a person can be removed by friendly conversation. Friendship is the panacea for an aching heart. Patients take medicines like sarza for the liver, steel for the spleen, flowers of sulphur of the lungs but for the issues of a heart, the love of a friend is the best cure.

▶ Curing effect of friendship

Friendships were bought by kings because they understood its true value. Many positions were conferred to this friend by the king. Such friends lack emotional attachment to the king, and they were also corrupt and greedy.

▶ Kings and friendship

A true quality of friendship is sharing one's problems. Bacon gives many instances from history to prove the importance given to friendship by kings. The Roman ruler Sylla made Pompey his friend by raising him to a high position. Later on, Pompey derided Sylla, rebuked him in

▶ Sylla and Pompey

public and called him a setting sun while himself as the rising sun of the Roman Empire.

Brutus gained Julius Caesar's friendship, became his most trusted advisor and this faith caused the ultimate downfall of Caesar. Augustus Caesar raised Agrippa to such a high position that he became arrogant enough to ask the king his desire to marry Princess Julia. Speaking about the friendship of Tiberius Caesar and Sejanus, it is said that an altar was constructed in honour of their companionship. Septimus Severus raised Plautianus to a high position and he wanted Plautianus to outlive him. All these historical figures were strong courageous men but they craved friendship. All luxuries were available for these men but they yearned for a doting friend.

- Julius Caesar's friendship with Brutus

> Blake said that Bacon's essays are good advice from Satan's kingdom.

Bacon quotes Pythagoras when he says "eat not the heart". A person without a friend is like a cannibal eating his own heart. A trustworthy friend is needed to share all our intimate secrets and agonies. Such a friend eases the heart but there is always a risk of faith. Moreover, by voicing vague thoughts to a friend, thoughts get clear, in fact, faster than hours of contemplative meditation. Human thoughts when shared can unlock confused minds. A comparison of the mind is made to the rich textile of Arras that needs to be unfolded in order to enjoy its beauty and craftsmanship. A true friend can ease the complexities created by inherent biases. Beware of sycophants as their counsel will be dangerous.

- Creating a clear mind by opening up

Bacon says that reading books on good conduct and morality is uninspiring. Learning through observation of other people's behaviour is not always advisable. Similarly, people cannot see their own flaws. The best remedy is advice from a good friend. It is better not to go for counsel to several friends because it will increase confusion.

- Importance of counsel from friend

The fruits of friendship are:

- Emotional support and good advice.
- Friendship is not for lifetime alone, but even in death.
- Acts as a delegation of authority.

- They act as an intermediary.
- Helps break barriers of communication.
- Enlightening and comforting
- A glorious sunlight that enhances individual quality.

Conclusion

The essay is quite lengthy when compared to the other popular essays by Bacon. The similes and the metaphors of the essay add to its charm. The Latin quotations in the essay are highly appropriate. His deep knowledge of ancient history and classical literature is paraded throughout the essay.

Summarised Overview

The essay "Of Friendship" conveys the relevance of friendship. A person without a friend is a wild beast or God. A person could feel lonely even in the midst of a crowd. Kings gave much importance to friendship at their own risk. Friendship clarifies our understanding and a true friend provides sound and good counsel. In short, friendship is an indirect prolongation of life, and a good friend is an extension of his or her partner.

Assignments

1. Explain the theme of "Of Friendship."
2. Elaborate instances taken from history to prove the importance given to friendship by kings and emperors.
3. Elaborate on the contribution of Bacon as an essayist.
4. Differentiate between personal and aphoristic essays.

Suggested Readings

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- Scott, Mary Augusta. *The Essays of Francis Bacon Edited with Introduction and Notes*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908.

Areas for Further Enquiry

- Essays by Francis Bacon
- Essays of Elia by Charles Lamb.

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1. Deleuze, Gilles., Daniel W. Smith and Francis Bacon. *Francis Bacon The Logic of Sensation*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2003.
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3. Stevens, Mark. and Annalyn Swan. *Francis Bacon: Revelations*, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2021.

3.1.2 "Of Truth"

Background

The value of truth is praised in the essay "Of Truth" by Francis Bacon. The author wishes to instil a love for truth in the mind of readers. Most people find lies to be more interesting than the truth. The first reason for this attitude is discovering truth needs hard work and man does not like hard work. Once the truth is discovered, it is difficult to follow. Truth will result in curtailing freedom. Thirdly, humans have a "natural and corrupt love" for lies itself. People are easily attracted to lies. Some people derive a sort of pleasure in uttering falsehood for financial gains. Bacon says that truth comes from God and so truth brings man closer to God, which causes to derive pleasure from truth.

Keywords

Truth, falsehood, spiritual light, enquiry, truth, knowledge, belief.

3.1.2.1 Discussion

▶ Contrast between truth and lie

The importance of truth in life is dealt with in this essay in an interesting manner. The happiness provided by adding lies to truth is another point of discussion.Truth is broad daylight but lies are like candle light. People find lies more comfortable.While truth gives bondage, lies give freedom. These points are further elucidated in the essay.

▶ Truth curtails freedom

Bacon begins the essay by stating that people generally do not care for truth. He quotes Pilate, the Roman Governor, while the hearing of Jesus Christ was going on before his crucifixion. "What is truth? ``said Jesting Pilate and would not stay for an answer." There are many reasons why people do not like the truth. The first reason is that truth is difficult to acquire without hard work. Humans are reluctant to work hard. Once the truth is acquired, it diminishes freedom because we are bound to it. Truth is like broad daylight, which shows things as it is and is comparable to a pearl. Falsehood is like darkness or candle light and it is comparable to a diamond.

Alexander Pope called Bacon "the wisest, brightest and meanest of mankind."

▶ Man's innate love for lies

"A mixture of lie doth ever add pleasure." If everything is presented as it is, without any additional praise or flattery, the society will become indolent. Each person thinks high of himself and if these vain thoughts are removed from the mind, he becomes melancholic and depressed. A bit of lie added to truth is compared to adding copper to gold in order to make it run longer but at the same time gold becomes impure.

▶ A liar is always guilty of his wrong doings

Bacon compares lie to a snake that crawls on its belly and cannot walk on its feet. A liar is always shameful and guilty of his lies. " A liar is a man who is brave towards God but is cowardly towards men." A person who upholds lies,tells lie because he lacks the courage to face the world but he is unconscious of the judgement of God.

▶ conclusion

Through this essay, Bacon has aimed to instil a love for truth in the mind of readers. It is didactic in tone, noted for its epigrammatic terseness and aphoristic style. His advice is that the inquiry of truth, the knowledge of truth and the belief of truth are the highest good for human beings.

Summarised Overview

A lot of labor is required to find out the truth. Once the truth is discovered, it is difficult to follow. It imposes restrictions on free will. Some people have a natural and corrupt love for lies itself. Truth is like clear day light while falsehood is like candle light. A lier is brave towards God but afraid of men.

Assignments

1. Write on the themes of the essay "Of Truth"
2. Why do men love a lie more than the truth?
3. What type of essay is "Of Truth"?
4. What is the truth according to Bacon?
5. What are the qualities of Bacon's essays?
6. Make a list of some oft-quoted statements from Bacon's essays.

Areas for Further Enquiry

- "Essays or Counsels Civil and Moral" by Bacon
- "Essays of Elia" by Charles Lamb

Suggested Readings

- Bacon, Francis. "Of Truth." *Essays, Civil and Moral*, The Harvard Classics, *bartleby.com*, https://www.bartleby.com/3/1/1.html.
- Lea, Kathleen Marguerite, Quinton, Anthony M., Quinton, Baron and Urbach, Peter Michael. "Francis Bacon". Encyclopedia Britannica, 20 Sep. 2022, https://www.britannica.com/biography/ Francis-Bacon-Viscount-Saint-Alban.

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1. Deleuze, Gilles., Daniel W. Smith and Francis Bacon. *Francis Bacon The Logic of Sensation*, Bloomsbury Academic, 2003.
2. Peppiatt, Michael. *Francis Bacon; Anatomy of an Enigma*, Little Brown Book Group, 2012.
3. Stevens, Mark. and Annalyn Swan. *Francis Bacon: Revelations*, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2021.

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Unit 2

"Of Parents and Children" and "Of Marriage and Single Life"

Francis Bacon

3.2.1 "Of Parents and Children"

Learning Outcomes

The objectives of this unit are to:

- understand the importance of parents who shape the life of their children.
- develop an awareness of the evolution of love and competition among siblings.
- explain the impact of parents on thought and life.
- describe how socio-cultural factors have influenced individual texts and how individuals are representative of their age.

Background

Bacon is a keen observer of parents and children. His sentences are epigrammatic and philosophically rich without any ambiguity. His ideas are universally relevant and aphoristic. His command over condensation of sentences is great.

The essay "Of Parents and Children" by Francis Bacon presents the importance of parents in moulding the life of children. The duties of parents should be carried out in an unbiased manner. A small mistake on the part of parents adversely affects the life of children. The ways in which children can be brought up successfully forms the theme of the essay. The tensions and happiness of parents are dealt with in detail. A common place topic with universal appeal is dealt with much precision. At times Bacon is prejudiced when he mentions that a childless man is socially more productive. A similar idea is expressed in the essay "Of Marriage and Single Life."

Keywords

Parents, children, posterity, memory, profession, fortune.

The essay "Of Parents and Children" provides suggestions for parents about bringing up their children. The author wants to rectify certain common practices related to children while bringing them up. The topic is a commonly discussed one with universal appeal. Bacon was a childless man and his prejudiced mind can be seen when he says notable works for the society are done by childless men.

▶ Bacon's stand on childless men

Bacon feels that it is the duty of parents to select a profession for their children but most parents give children the freedom to choose a profession according to their interest. This attitude is refuted by Bacon. Only in certain exceptional cases, a child may be allowed to decide. If the child has a strong affinity for a specific field, he may be allowed to adopt it, but it should be made as early as possible.

▶ Choice to be given to children

Children are the greatest gift from God, at the same time they make parents' condition miserable. The parent usually keeps joys and grief secretive. "The joys of parents are kept secret, and so are their grieves and fears". Parents work hard for their children to make them happy. They want children to lead a contented life. All sorts of misfortune are feared by parents because it affects the children directly. Therefore, we can say that the anxieties of parents are more. The thought that they would continue living their lives through their children makes them happy. Thus children are at once a source of joy and grief for parents.

▶ Joys and sorrows of parents

Bacon compares animals and humans. Both species reproduce, but humans alone have memory. Human beings create history and remember them for posterity. Human beings are intellectuals and they possess the ability to survive every situation. Hence, it can be said that human beings are remembered for their good deeds. While Homer is remembered for his famous poems, Aristotle is remembered for his knowledge. Ancient Roman and Greek histories are still preserved in libraries. All these prove that there is a vast difference between human beings and animals.

▶ Difference between humans and animals

Bacon further adds that people who are married and have children cannot do noble deeds for the society because their focus is their family. Thus the point that Bacon brings forward is that the path of success of the parents is hindered by children. The next point he puts forward is

parents' unequal distribution of affection for children. In some families, some children are loved more while others are loved less. This is unjustifiable. Bacon advises parents to love each child equally. "A wise son rejoiceth the father, but an ungracious son shames the mother," quotes Bacon from King Solomon. That is, "A wise son is a source of joy for the father, and an ungracious son causes sorrow for the mother." These words are true even today. When a child does something good, the father feels elevated. When a son does a shameful act, his mother is held responsible for it.

- Need for equal distribution of affection among children

Bacon did not have any children but gives effective guidance on parenting.

In most families, the eldest child will be respected, the youngest will be pampered and loved but the middle ones are ignored. In most of the cases it is the middle children who bring fame to the families. Parents should neither be strict nor liberal in matters of pocket money. If the pocket money is too low, the child will learn methods to make money by hook or by crook. Parents should not create competition among their children. Competition will lead to hatred, which changes to jealousy and children become enemies forever. Bacon quotes an example from Italians, who do not differentiate between the son and the nephew. Sometimes the nephew earns more love and respect from his uncle when compared to the real son.

- Pocket money for children

The various steps involved in bringing up children in an effective manner is dealt with deeply by Bacon. The pros and cons of effective parenting are narrated deeply.

- Pros and cons of parenting

Summarised Overview

Bacon states in the essay that the joys and sorrows of parents are kept secret from children. Children make labour delightful and they make misfortunes bitter. Childless men are the greatest benefactors of humanity. Parents should not be partial in their affection towards children. They should be liberal in granting allowances, and should not stir up rivalry among children. Also, parents should choose a suitable profession for their children.

Assignments

1. What are the grievences and joys of parents?
2. Who should decide the profession of children? Why?
3. What are the advantages of not having children?
4. Describe Bacon's writing style in the essay "Of Parents and Children."

Suggested Readings

- Bacon, Francis. "Of Parents and Children." *Essays, Civil and Moral*, The Harvard Classics, *bartleby.com*, https://www.bartleby.com/3/1/7.html.
- "OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN SUMMARY." *LitPriest*, https://litpriest.com/essays/of-parents-and-children-summary-analysis/.
- "Of Parents and Children by Francis Bacon." *Smart English Notes*, https://smartenglishnotes.com/2022/01/20/of-parents-and-children-by-francis-bacon-summary-and-analysis/

Areas for Further Enquiry

- *Essays* by Bacon
- *Essays of Elia* by Charles Lamb
- *History of English Literature* by Edward Albert
- *An Outline History of English Literature* by W H Hudson

References

1. Deleuze, Gilles., Daniel W. Smith and Francis Bacon. *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, Bloomsbury, 2003.
2. Peppiatt, Michael. *Francis Bacon: Anatomy of an Enigma*, Little Brown, 2012.
3. Stevens, Mark and Annalyn Swan. *Francis Bacon: Revelations*, Knopf Doubleday, 2021.

3.2.2 "Of Marriage and Single Life"

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion oif the unit, the learner will be able to:

- get an idea of the socio-cultural contexts that shape the need for marriage or remaining single.
- develop an awareness of the need for family.
- examine the stylistic features of the essay meant for study.
- explain how sociocultural factors have influenced family as an institution.
- identify the need for service-minded people for social upliftment.

Background

In the essay "Of Marriage and Single Life" by Bacon, he explains the need for both married men and unmarried men in our society. The professions of people are also analysed in detail. Along with this, the need for service-minded people for the upliftment of society is analysed. Bacon brings out the idea that a man can be made generous, disciplined and merciful by marrying and having a family. Unmarried men are cruel and reckless but good for society. Married men spend their time, money and energy on their family. Unmarried men make best friends, best masters, and best servants but not best citizens. Soldiers should get married but clergymen should remain unmarried. A bad husband usually gets a good wife who patiently waits for the love of her husband.

Keywords

Married life, single life, liberty, charity, discipline, virtue.

3.2.2.1 Discussion

- Social involvement of both married and unmarried men

The advantages and disadvantages of being married and remaining single is explicated in the essay in a balanced and judicious manner. This is a topic of universal appeal. Bacon states that those who remain unmarried are good for society. Married men cannot be generous since they have to take care of their wife and children.

- Unmarried men are more social than the married

In this essay, Bacon compares the merits and demerits of married persons and bachelors. Bacon begins the essay by stating that marriage is an impediment to fortune and luck. Unmarried men serve society. They are more affectionate and caring towards the public and work for their welfare.

- Reasons for men to remain single

A married man always thinks about his family, wife, children, their happiness, economic stability and their future. Some unmarried men are selfish. They neither help others nor are apprehensive of their future. Some men think that their wives and children are bills of charge that is a source of expense. Some greedy men take pride in having no children. They feel that they will be considered the richest by society because children increase expenses. Some men remain single because they give importance to liberty. Single life is the apt choice of men who consider "Girdles and Garters as bones and Shackles".

- Advantages of remaining single

Bacon declares that "Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants, but not always the best subjects". Unmarried men are best friends because they do not have a family to conquer their thoughts. They are the best masters because their money is unused and so they can help their subordinates. However, they are not the best subjects because there is a chance of them running away from a place when a problem arises since they are not prone to solving problems.

- Advantages of being married

Married men are not charitable since they have to fill their own pool first. So, it is better that a clergyman remains unmarried, then he can be more charitable since he does not have any need to satisfy. As regarding magistrates and judges, being married or unmarried does not make any difference. It is better that soldiers get married because the thought of family makes them fight well in the War. There is also a chance that single men tend to be hard-hearted and cruel because they do not know how to express tenderness. Married men, on the other hand, become more disciplined, humane and tender due to the

presence of wives and children.

- Chaste wife, right time for marriage

Bacon claims; "Chaste women are often proud and forward," because they are proud of their chastity. The best wife is one who has a blend of obedience and chastity. Bacon says, "Wives are young men's mistresses, companions for middle age and old men's nurses." Therefore, a man can decide when he should get married.

Bacon led an unhappy married life and it is reflected in the essay. His attitude to having a wife or children is utilitarian.

- Bad husbands and Good wives

At the end of the essay, Bacon expresses the view that bad husbands usually have excellent wives. These wives wait patiently for their husband's kindness because they seldom receive it. Moreover, these wives feel proud of their own patience with their husbands' bad behaviour. If these bad husbands are given a chance to select a wife, they would make a fool of themselves because they would select a wife who would match their own behaviour.

- Textual features of the essay

In the essay, the advantages and disadvantages of both married life and single life are presented in a judicious manner. Familiar ideas are also discussed which go straight to the heart of the reader. It is a typical Baconian essay with Classical allusions, Latin phrases and proverbs.

Summarised Overview

In the essay, Bacon points out that a married man is a prisoner of fortune. He cannot undertake great enterprises for society, and he would be more disciplined in life. Whereas, unmarried men are good at maintaining social relationships. They can be good friends, employers and subordinates, but not good citizens. Men who are serious are likely to be more faithful to their wives like Ulysses who rejected Calypso and the offer of immortality for his old wife Penelope. A wise husband will have an obedient and chaste wife, whereas a jealous husband will have a disobedient and unchaste wife.

Assignments

1. Describe Bacon as a moralist.
2. Did Bacon practise what he preached in his life? Elucidate.
3. What qualities of the Renaissance are found in Bacon?
4. Describe Bacon as an essayist.

Areas for Further Enquiry

- *Essays* by Francis Bacon
- *History of English Literature* by Edward Albert
- *An Outline History of English Literature* by W H Hudson

Suggested Readings

- Bacon, Francis. "Of Marriage and Single Life." *Essays, Civil and Moral*, The Harvard Classics, *bartleby.com*, https://www.bartleby.com/3/1/8.html.
- "Of Marriage and Single Life by Francis Bacon: Summary & Analysis." *englishsummary*, https://englishsummary.com/ofmarriage-single-life-francis-bacon
- Sarkar, Somnath. "Of Marriage and Single Life by Francis Bacon Summary and Analysis." *Proliterature*, 01 May 2021, https://proliterature.com/of-marriage-and-single-life-by-francis -bacon-summary-and-analysis/.

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2. Peppiatt, Michael. *Francis Bacon:Anatomy of an Enigma*, Little Brown , 2012.
3. Stevens, Mark. and Annalyn Swan. *Francis Bacon: Revelations*, Knopf Doubleday, 2021.

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Unit 3 An Apologie for Poetry

Sir Philip Sidney

(Non-detailed study)

Learning Outcomes

As learning outcomes of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- critically examine the contributions of Sir Philip Sidney as a poet, prose writer and a critic.
- develop a historical awareness of the evolution of poetry, prose and literary criticism.
- exhibit an awareness of the major historical events and socio-cultural contexts that shaped the literature of the early Renaissance period.
- Identify and explain the formal and literary features of the genre called poetry, and how they contribute to the complexity of values represented in the text.

Background

Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586) is an Elizabethan courtier, statesman, poet, patron of scholars and critic. He is an Elizabethan poet noted for his sonnets. A Sonnet is a short poem of fourteen lines in iambic pentameter. Originally there was an Italian or Petrarchan sonnet consisting of an octave and a sestet with the rhyme scheme abba, abba, cde, cde. The English or Shakespearean sonnet form consists of three quatrains and a couplet having the rhyme scheme abab,cdcd,efef,gg. The Spenserian sonnet also has three quatrains and a couplet but its rhyme scheme is abab,bcbc,cdcd,ee.

None of Sidney's works were published during his lifetime. In 1578, he composed a pastoral play for Queen Elizabeth I, *the Lady of May*. In 1582, the sonnet sequence *Astrophil and Stella* was composed which brought an Elizabethan sonnet of age. It was first published in 1591. *Arcadia* was first to be published in 1590 which is the most important prose fiction in English during the 16th century. "Apologie for Poetry" was the first major critical essay in Renaissance England which has achieved the status of a classical text and this secured his immortal place in literature.

Keywords

Defence of poetry, history, philosophy, religion, nationalism, tragedy, comedy

3.3.1 Discussion

- Reason behind the publication of "Apology for Poetry"

"An Apology for Poetry" was written by Sidney as an immediate response to Gosson's attack on poetry. It was written as a reply to Gosson's criticism of poetry because Sidney wanted poetry to be seated in a higher position. Sidney begins the essay with an introduction, then gives his definition of poetry followed by the description of major kinds of poetry by refuting Gosson's attack, and adds a conclusion and a digression on modern poetry.

"An Apology for Poetry" is the first work of literary criticism in English written by Sir Philip Sidney. It is also known as the "Defense of Poesy" and was written in 1579-80. The essay extensively defends the art of poetry, its object and its purpose in society. Acclaimed as a wonderful piece of literature, the poem was published posthumously in 1595. It was written as an immediate response to Stephen Gosson's *School of Abuse*. Gosson himself described it as a "pleasant invective" but the general feeling this book evoked was unpleasantness and coarseness. Gosson has claimed that poets lead people astray as it preaches immorality. The book was also dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney. Sidney, being an ardent lover of poetry, came forth with "Apology for Poetry," speaking about the role of poets in society.

- Role of poets in society.

In this book, Sidney praises poetry as the cradle of civilization, a channel of divine power, a tool for teaching and delighting, and as superior to history and philosophy. Sidney considers poetry civilization itself- an art form of the civilised. Sidney believes that poetry can bring a person closer to God. It gives honour to the Heavenly Maker. God is the creator and so the poet is also a kind of creator. God created the universe and poets too create their own world. For Sidney, poetry is an art of imitation, not mere copying or reproduction of facts. This means representing the real and recreating something entirely new. Poetry involves metaphor and a metaphor means comparing one thing to another, leading to view it 'a speaking picture' which aims both to teach and delight. Sidney acknowledges that

- Who is a poet? What is poetry?

teaching is an important element in poetry. Poetry should inspire noble and moral behaviour in the reader. Poetry is superior to nature or reality because an idealistic world is presented before the reader. The moral lesson imparted by a poet is accepted wholeheartedly by the reader as it is told in an entertaining manner.

- History, Philosophy and Poetry

Sidney then compares a poet to a philosopher and a historian. Poetry is superior to philosophy and history because it teaches virtues, and can make man better. What Sidney says is that poets can reach people more easily than philosophers. Philosophy is based on abstractions and so it cannot properly guide everyone. History is based on concrete facts. The concepts like virtue being rewarded and vice being punished cannot be shown in history but is possible in poetry. Sidney believes that poetry is a democratic art because it is accessible to all irrespective of their knowledge of philosophy or history. In short, the aim of poetry is to teach goodness and moral values through entertainment and delight in an attractive manner. Poets are also known as philosophers.

- Different kinds of poetry

Sidney then narrates about different kinds of poetry. Pastoral poetry depicts simple life, the miseries of common people and the cruelties of Lords. Elegiac poetry rouses pity while satiric poetry laughs at people's folly. Epic or heroic poetry inculcates virtue to the highest degree by portraying heroic and moral goodness in the most effective manner.

Sidney's *Arcadia*, a work written in the genre of prose romance, was dedicated to his sister Mary. After his death, Mary reworked the book and it came to be known as *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia.*

The four charges levelled against poetry by Gosson are

1. Poetry is a waste of time.
2. It is the "mother of lies."
3. It is immoral and "the nurse of abuse."
4. Plato had rightly banished poets from his ideal commonwealth.

3.3.2 Sidney's Reply to Gosson's Attack

Poetry is the truest form of art as it does not pretend to be true. Astronomers, Geometricians, historians, etc., all make false statements. Sidney further states that poets, at the same time, do not tell lies. Because, primarily, they never say that anything they say is true and they do not pretend to deal with truths. Though poets readily admit, whenever needed, what they write is untrue, their poetry has the ability to rouse man to virtuous action. Sidney also said that Plato was not against poetry in general, but was against a particular kind of poetry which had the capacity to harm human minds and society.

- Poets do not pretend to be true

Speaking about the pathetic condition of poetry in England, Sidney says that a negligent approach was taken towards poets and their writings during his time. To compose true poetry is an instinct skill of a poet. A perfect combination of art, imitation and exercise can make poetry successful. Sidney refers to the names of poets like Sackville, Surrey and Spencer to substantiate his claims. He speaks of Chaucer's poem "Troilus and Criseyde," but leaves out *The Canterbury Tales* and Langland's *Piers, The Plowman.*

- List of prominent poets

Speaking of drama, Sidney says that a tragedy should not be tied to history, but to poetry. The drama writer, while employing the poetic genre, would have the freedom to frame history according to his or her imaginative realm and convenience. Sidney also said that the aim of comedy should be delightful teaching and not vulgar amusement.

- Tragedy and Comedy

Sidney then praises the English language as the most suitable linguistic version for writing poetry, be it in the ancient or modern type of versification. This view on the role of the English language was proved true as the language played a significant role in the progress of poetry in the subsequent ages. Sidney further requests that poetry should not be degraded. A mercenary attitude should not be taken towards poetry, like the inferior poets, who lacked the training and practice to write successful poetry during Sidney's time, followed. The author finishes the essay by blessing people who love poetry and threatening people who are allergic to poetry.

- Praises English language as most suitable for poetry

Thus, composed in a light-hearted manner, Sidney was successful in giving an adequate reply to Gosson's puritanical approach against poetry and its function.

▶ Reply to Gosson

Now, let us explore some important themes mentioned in Sidney's essay.

▶ Themes of the essay

Major themes of the essay include the significance of poetry, superiority of poetry over history and philosophy, criticism of contemporary works of tragedy and comedy, and the defence of poetry. The superiority of poetry over other branches of knowledge is also depicted here. Sidney is of the view that the function of poetry is to delight and teach as it is a nobler kind of literature. He aims at defending poetry from the Puritans' attack. He opposes the attack that poetry is the mother of lies and Plato banished poets from his country. He wants a secure status for poetry since all forms of literature should elevate the cause of humanity. The author stresses the concept that history is full of wars and bloodshed, and philosophy is also realistic, and these two subjects cannot involve in the progress of humanity or provide human beings with universal ideas. At the same time, the messages and themes in poetry could be considered invaluable for the betterment of humanity. Also, they can be used to spread the feeling of nationalism.

Summarised Overview

The essay "An Apology for Poetry" is written in defence of the art of poetry. It was written as a response to Stephen Gosson's *School of Abuse*. Sidney, being an ardent lover of poetry, came forth with "Apology for Poetry", speaking about the role of poets in society. Sidney praises poetry as the cradle of civilization and superior to history and philosophy. He considers poetry civilisation itself and an art form of the civilised. He believes that poetry can bring a person closer to God as it teaches virtues and makes a man better. Sidney states that poets do not tell lies. A perfect combination of art, imitation and exercise can make poetry successful. The author praises the English language as the most suitable for poetry, both ancient and modern.

Assignments

1. What are the attacks made by Gosson on poetry?
2. What are Sidney's views on comedy and tragedy?
3. What does Sidney say about philosophy and history?
4. What is the aim of poetry according to Sidney?
5. What are the themes of this essay?

Areas for Further Enquiry

- *Beginning Theory* by Peter Barry
- Poems of Sir Philip Sidney
- "The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia" by Philip Sidney
- *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature* by William Peterfield Trent, et.al.

Suggested Readings

- Sidney, Philip. *A Defence of Poesie and Poems*, Project Gutenberg, 1999. https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1962.
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2. Alexander, Gavin. *Sidney's 'The Defence of Poesy' and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism*, 2004.
3. Haydon, Liam. *An Analysis of Sir Philip Sidney's The Defence of Poesy*, Macat, 2018.

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Unit 4

Utopia

Sir Thomas More

(Non detailed study)

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the unit, students will be able to:

- get an idea of the major historical events and socio-cultural contexts that shaped the literature of the century
- explain the impact of Renaissance on thought and literature of the period
- comprehend how socio-cultural factors have influenced individual texts and how individual texts are representative of their age
- identify and explain the formal and literary features of the text
- develop in students a historical awareness of the evolution of fiction in English

Background

Sir Thomas More was the first person to use the term Utopia in his fiction. It describes an ideal imaginary world and suggests ways to improve European society. Being a major figure of the English Renaissance, More was deeply concerned about the moral and political responsibilities of individuals. He held one of the highest offices of the king. But when King Henry VIII decided to separate his country from the Pope, More was against it. The King wanted More to sign the Oath of Supremacy which led the King to be more powerful than the Pope. More did not sign the oath, thus he was arrested for treason and hanged to death. He is also venerated today for his courageous and steadfast nature because he placed his principles above the demand of the King.

Keywords

Utopia, pagan, communist, fictional island, religious tolerance.

3.4.1 Discussion

Utopia is a work of fiction by Thomas More, which was originally written in Latin and published in 1516. The book was published in English in 1551. It depicts a fictional island and its social, political and religious customs. It is a pagan and communist city-state where all institutions are run by reason. This fictional island was a contrast to Europe of that time which ignored reason and aimed for power and wealth. Thus the term Utopia became synonymous with a perfect imaginary world where there is no greed or corruption or struggle for power. The idea that is put forward here is that money corrupts the government and eliminates justice in society.

Fig. 3.4.1. Sir Thomas More

▶ More's Fictional Island and Europe

The book is divided into two parts. The second part describes the utopian society and the first part serves as an introduction to the second. In the first book, we come across the early conversations between More, Giles and Hythloday. Book two is the continuation of this conversation where the utopian society unfolds.

▶ Two parts of *Utopia*

Major characters include More (a fictional character sharing the name of the author), Peter Giles (an actual historical figure), Raphael Hythloday (a philosopher and world traveller who has lived in Utopia for five years is also a fictional character), Cardinal John Morton (Chancellor to Henry VIII), Lawyer (the unnamed man who doesn't like to find fault with English society) and General Utopus (founder of Utopia).

▶ Major characters of *Utopia*

Book 1 is titled *The Best State of the Commonwealth, a discourse by the Extraordinary Raphael Hythloday, as recorded by the noted Thomas More, Citizen and Sheriff of the famous City of Britain, London*. More (not the author) travels to Antwerp as an ambassador for England and King Henry VIII. Whenever he gets time, he converses with Peter Giles on intellectual matters. One day Giles introduces More to a bearded man named Raphael Hythloday who was a philosopher and a world traveller from Portugal. The three

spend the evening in Giles' house discussing the voyages of Hythloday. The experiences of Hythloday impress both More and Giles. They suggest that Hythloday should become a counsellor to the King. He refuses it directly because it is pointless to counsel a King who wants his counsellors to accept his policies or beliefs. The king is not used to accepting the policy of others no matter how good it is, it will be looked upon as something insane. Moreover, Kings like wars and they expect advisors to be flatterers. Such an attitude can be seen even among English Kings.

▶ Summary of Book 1

Hythloday narrates his experience in England where a discussion about the need for capital punishment had taken place. In the discussion, a lawyer spoke vehemently about the need for capital punishment. Hythloday was against it and he suggested that the suitable punishment was to put thieves to work in chains. He explains that in a place named Polylerites, the robbers should repay the actual victim of the robbery and then have to go off to do hard labour for the rest of their lives. Hythloday's ideas were initially considered stupid but later on accepted since he was supported by Cardinal Morton. It infuriates Hythloday because people accept only the ideas of highly positioned ones. The above incident also proves that an official staff or employee under a higher authority needs not to come out with ideas, instead, better remain a flatterer. Here the author implicitly mentions that some reforms are needed for Europe. Readers should never think that Hythloday is a mouthpiece of the author. Hythloday further narrates the policies of the Utopian society which he considers better than the European society.

▶ Summary of Book 1

Thomas More invented the name Polylerites from two Greek words which means 'The people of much nonsense.'

Book 2 is titled *The Discourse of Raphael Hythloday on the Best State of the Commonwealth, Book 2: As recounted by Thomas More, Citizen and Sheriff of London*, which narrates that the island of Utopia is shaped like a Crescent Moon. On the one side, there was a big harbour where several ships sailed from one end of the island to the other. On the other side, the island was rocky, which functioned as a natural defence against enemies. Initially, it was not an island. It was General Utopus who conquered the Isthmus

and converted it into an island, which was roughly circular in shape. The island had fifty-four cities, and all possessed the same language, customs, institutions and laws. Each city had four districts and the marketplace occupied the centre of the city. The capital city was Amaurot, which was located at the centre of the island. The freshwater needed was provided by river Anyder. The layout of all the cities was the same as it was executed by Utopus. Their clothing was also same. Men and women followed different dressing style and so were the married and the unmarried people.

▶ Summary of Book II

People on the island were not allowed to be lazy. They had to work six hours a day. All houses were constructed in a similar style by containing a garden in the courtyard. There were no locks for the front doors and so there was nothing private. There was surplus availability of goods there and they exchanged them among themselves. All people were trained in farming. Children learned about their fathers' occupation there. More also praises the Utopian Society which was based on rational thought, where there was no poverty, class distinctions, crime, begging, or inclination towards war. Permission was needed to travel in the state. Moreover, there were no inns or taverns or brothels seen. They were healthy people who always tried to remain physically fit. Hospitals were built and good care was given to patients but they also practised euthanasia to relieve the patient from unending pain. Money was used by the authority to hire soldiers from outside since they did not want to be involved in wars. Many religions were founded in Utopia and some accepted Christianity when they heard about Jesus Christ. Hythloday considered this place superior to Europe because in the latter, there was no equality found among people, and the rich turned richer and the poor poorer. Most of the descriptions given by Hythloday seemed absurd to More. He did not admit most of Hythloday's views and felt that the conditions explained by the latter in Europe had no possibility to occur.

▶ Summary of Book II

More's *Utopia* created a new trend in narratives: Utopian or Dystopian literature.

▶ Integration of urban and rural components

The book is made unique by its combination of urban and rural settings. Many images are used by the author like gardens, farming the land surrounding the city, well-planned cities, districts and houses, all of which bring out

the integration of both urban and rural ambience in the background of the novel.

Major themes in the work include the ideal nature of a Utopian society, the search for justice, equality, and happiness. An idea put forward in the work is that money corrupts all the wealthy as well as the powerful. Law always tends to support the upper class and oppresses the poor. The ideal nature of a Utopian society, which was a contrast to European society, forms a major theme of the book. The author wants to present a world free of all hierarchies. Everything is held in common and there are no private properties. The absence of greed, corruption, theft, and power struggles make the book a unique one.

▶ Themes in *Utopia*

Summarised Overview

The fiction and socio-political satire *Utopia* written by Thomas More depicts a fictional island, where all institutions are run by reason. This fictional island was a contrast to Europe of that time which disregarded reason and went behind power and wealth. The term Utopia became synonymous with a perfect imaginary world where there is no greed or corruption or struggle for power. The book has two parts in which the second part describes the Utopian society and the first part serves as an introduction to the second. The island has fifty-four cities and all own the same language, customs, institutions and laws. Each city has four districts and the marketplace occupies the centre of the city. The layout of all the cities is the same as it is executed by Utopus. Utopian Society is based on rational thought where there is no space for poverty, class distinctions, crime, and begging.

Assignments

1. What picture of the Utopian society do you get from this book?
2. Why does Hythloday refuse to become a King's Counselor?
3. How are houses constructed in Utopia?
4. What do you know about the islanders' costume?
5. What was the islanders' attitude towards priests?

Suggested Readings

- More, Saint Thomas, and Henry Morley. *Utopia*, Project Gutenberg, 2000. https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/2130.
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Areas for Further Enquiry

- *New Atlantis* by Francis Bacon
- *Republic* by Plato.
- *History of English Literature* by Edward Albert.

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

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Critical Responses

BLOCK-04

Block Content

Unit 1 Historicising *The Canterbury Tales*

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- possess a general understanding of the sociocultural context of Chaucer's times.
- acquire insight into the historicity of *The Canterbury Tales.*
- analyse some aspects of the literary politics interwoven into the structure of *The Canterbury Tales.*
- detail the influence of literary language and class on the structure of *The Canterbury Tales.*

Background

Life in the mediaeval ages is the source of a great deal of fascination in contemporary times. Popular attention often goes to how daily life might have been carried out in those times. This might be due to the fact that many of the elements and institutions of the modern West, such as cities, universities, nation-states, and legal frameworks, have been drawn from the middle ages. In fact, across different periods, there have been resurgences in interest in the mediaeval era, particularly in the arts and literature.

In contrast to this, the mediaeval era in Europe is often cast as an 'age of darkness' — one lacking in the cultural and artistic achievements of the classical Greek and Roman empires. The term is used to emphasise the seeming absence of intellectual and scientific development in the age, as well as to suggest the prevalence of ignorance and superstition.

However, between these two disparate images, more grounded perspectives on the middle ages may often be drawn from the cultural and literary documents of the time. The representations of the world by mediaeval writers often disrupt simplistic or binarist readings of the period, highlighting very real tensions between the aforementioned notions.

In this regard, the socio-political commentary offered by the works of Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400) is significant. Writing at a time when the slow

transition towards modernity and the Renaissance era was underway, Chaucer provokes serious questions about the way mediaeval social systems interact with individuals. The current unit attempts to explore some of these questions.

Keywords

Historicity, class system, hierarchy, literary politics

Discussion

4.1.1 Discussion

▶ Social ties

It is generally understood that social and political issues are manifested within the writings of Chaucer, and have much to contribute to our study of the poet. Matters of literary taste and reception are significant in thematic explorations of his art as well. However, as we go beyond matters of content, the then prevalent notions about the structure of society have a considerable influence on Chaucer's literary works.

▶ Hierarchy

Mediaeval understandings of society took account of social degrees and tended to focus on the small number of elites at the top of the social hierarchy. For instance, Bracton, a thirteenth-century legal commentator, divides the society of the middle-ages into ecclesiastical (the pope, archbishops, bishops, and lesser prelates), civil (emperors, kings, dukes, counts, barons, magnates, and knights), and general hierarchies ('freepersons and bondpersons' or liberi et villani).

▶ Functions

These 'estates' or classes were seen as interdependent, with each category performing a specific set of sociocultural functions and contributing in its own way for the benefit of society. This was considered an organic order or state of things in the world. Each of these classes was considered to be a part of the body of the nation; this idea was often found in "sermons, statutes, ordinances, and a variety of other irregular and occasional documents" (Stroh).

There were attempts to integrate an organic view of the estates, whereby each class was interdependent on each other for the overall well-being of society. Read this excerpt from such a sermon delivered in the 1370s by Bishop Thomas Brinton of Rochester:

We are all…the mystical members of a single body, of which the head (or heads) are kings, princes, and prelates; the eyes are judges, wise men, and true counsellors; the ears are clergy; the tongue is good doctors. Then, within the midsection of the body, the right hand is composed of strenuous knights; the left hand is composed of merchants and craftsmen; and the heart is citizens and burgesses. Finally, peasants and workers are the feet which support the whole.

▶ Example showing the independence of each class

Chaucer, himself, belonged to the middle estate, performing what might be seen as 'civil service'. His career began in 1357, serving in the household of the Countess of Ulster. After his marriage to Philippa de Roet in 1367, Chaucer entered into the service of Edward III. Eventually, he took up the post of controller of customs in London, and remained active till 1377. He continued in various capacities till his death.

▶ Career

While Chaucer's position of service in the royal household would granted him great privileges, it must be noted that he belonged to an ambiguous and fluid category of employees. He did not have the security of possessing lands and rents, as powerful aristocrats, knights, or esquires did. Instead, he depended on his career in service for a living. Thus, it was essential for his livelihood and was not simply an expression of his interest or aptitude.

▶ Social Situation

Throughout the course of his career, he enjoyed frequent appointments and re-appointments, surviving the agendas and interests of the various political factions of his day. He successfully served the reign of three different monarchs, managing to remain on good terms with all parties during various political turmoil.

▶ Politically Savvy

Another aspect is that "patronage based on his literary accomplishments seems not to have been a major factor in Chaucer's civil career" (Stroh). While

several of his literary works may have been written to soothe, compliment, or please those in power, the development of his career seemed to be largely due to his non-literary talents and efforts. In fact, it is more likely that his public life in the world of political affairs and his literary life were viewed as separate.

▶ Separation of spheres

This raises questions as to how Chaucer might have conceived of his own audience, and how he might have presented his literary works to the public. Of course, this is complicated by the prevalence of oral traditions alongside newer literary cultures. Another aspect to consider is the relative rarity of literacy during the time, with only a small community of readers based on social class and vocation. Given the fact that printing technologies would be in their infancy, manuscripts and bound volumes would also be extremely rare.

▶ Reading and printing cultures

The choice of literary language, further, takes on certain political overtones. Latin was the language of theological discourse, and French was employed for administrative and record-keeping purposes. There was a demand for French literary works in certain circles as well. English was gradually emerging as a standardised language, though there were several dialects in circulation at the time.

▶ Politics of language

There were different linguistic pReferencess amongst different vocational and social groupings, with distinct tastes attributed to the aristocracy, landed elites, and urban communities. This meant that the literate population, who would make up Chaucer's readers and audience, was further segmented.

▶ Different readers

Examining the manuscripts and other historical material available from Chaucer's age, it becomes clear that the interests of different communities of readers were widely varied. Urban centres of London encouraged 'pragmatic readers' whose reading was more concerned with their business activities. There were, of course, opportunities for general reading, as seen throughout the 14th century; these included service books, legal compilations, and devotional works.

▶ Varied interests

Indeed, the boundaries between reading communities also tended to shift. *Confessio Amantis*, a work by the contemporary poet John Gower, was outwardly aimed

at civil servants and landed elites. But, there is evidence that the king was amongst its readership. William Langland, another contemporary of Chaucer, composed *Piers Plowman*, which was originally taken up by clerics. Later, its readership expanded to include literate members of the general public. In this way, Chaucer's own circle of readers might have varied as well.

▶ Changing interests

William Langland's "Piers Plowman", written in the Middle English dialect, embraced a larger possible audience. Most of its Latin quotations were paraphrased for the audience's benefit. An alternative version of Langland's poem is said to have stimulated rebellious designs among the revolters of the 1381 Peasant's Revolt. At the same time, Chaucer wrote in the East Midlands dialect which stood as the most influential in the development of Modern English. It is highly likely that Chaucer's audience might have been found from the members of his social class and civil servants. However, there is also a possibility that a wider range of readers might have had access to his literary works. The example of the fictionalised audience in *The Canterbury Tales* points to a certain degree of social mixing amongst readers; the Canterbury pilgrims in his poems, who listen to each other's stories, are from various vocational groupings and different social stations.

▶ Intermixing of classes

The social context of Chaucer's time finds mention within his poetry, though his works do not directly address the topical issues of his day. For instance, it is common to seek historical validity in the poet's portrayal of the pilgrims as well as the stories they narrate. However, recent critical understandings place those characterisations as mostly drawn from satirical material and other literary sources.

▶ Depiction

The entire scope of *The Canterbury Tales*, with its pilgrims, does not represent the whole of English society in any way. The middle strata of fourteenth-century English social class find a very full representation, with certain sections epitomised by particular characters. For instance, the population that worked the land are represented by the Ploughman while the civil estate

▶ Scope of representation

is represented by the Knight. The spiritual classes are represented by the Prioress, the Monk, and the Parson.

While the pilgrims to Canterbury are not faithful to the numbers or proportions of fourteenth-century society, they are presented in such a way that confirms a vital understanding of society at the time. Specifically, they evidence a relationship between social position and public behaviour. Jill Mann points out that the actions and beliefs of the pilgrims, as well as the stories they tell point to a society in which individual work conditions, or shape personality and the perspective from which a person sees the world.

- Social experience and behaviour

The pilgrimage can be seen as a social and religious event, where individuals interact on the basis of their social perspectives as expressed by their class, rank, or work. In other words, they behave in ways that suggest certain contemporary ideas about their social station. For example, the representatives of traditional estates, ones that are higher up in the hierarchy, do not seem to mingle with other pilgrims. Even those who are somewhat elevated in the social ladder, such as the Prioress and the Monk, are outwardly dignified and behave with decorum. The Knight and the Parson, too, follow this model with their selfless acceptance of the responsibilities of their social roles.

- Propriety and class

The overall idea of the pilgrimage, however, is the establishment of fraternity; it shows the possibility for "vital and egalitarian social interchange" during the age of Chaucer. While the threat of quarrels and animosities is present throughout *The Canterbury Tales*, the ethics of the pilgrimage is about transforming "rancour" and "disease" into accord. In a society that was rapidly becoming more mercantile and profit-oriented, the pilgrims show civil behaviour that would be crucial for the development of different social and economic transactions.

- Civility

The behaviour of the pilgrims also bring issues of gender and sexual orientation into the frame, as read by recent critical and theoretical emphases. Of course, these were evident in certain ways in the mediaeval settings of the poem. An unconventional figure such as the Wife of Bath, whose approach to the gender relations of the age is non-normative, forces the reader

- Disruptions

to rethink the mediaeval framework of gender. Further, the Pardoner, whose sexuality often appears to be unclassifiable, breaks with the status quo. In their own way, the subtle hypocrisies and disruptive attitudes displayed by the different pilgrims pose a challenge to the rigid social order of the Middle Ages.

- Nature of tales

The social orientation of the pilgrims is reflected in their tales. The Knight, the Parson, the Prioress, the Monk, and all members of elite estates share traditional and educational stories that support the social hierarchy. Pilgrims from the middle strata of society relate tales that contain more explicit material, often highlighting the situational nature of their ethics.

- Fluid social groups

While the above-mentioned states and nature of tales point to an oversimplification of the state of affairs, it was probably designed to suggest this socially conditioned view. The divergences in literary tastes and social considerations between the different estates, as depicted in *The Canterbury Tales*, suggest another reality. It shows evidence of the fact that "social description and social practice in Chaucer's day were moving from the static and the hierarchical to a more fluid and less hierarchical state."

- Changing hierarchies

Indeed, *The Canterbury Tales* reveals the penetration of emergent social classes into the existing hierarchy of mediaeval life, leaving society more and more diverse. In fact, it shines a light on the pervasive social experience where a hierarchy is "established" or suggested, only to be deconstructed in other ways. Thus, even as the representations of the pilgrims serve a metaphorical or symbolic purpose, the framing of the narrative itself throws light on the complicated socio-literary scene in which Chaucer lived and worked.

Summarised Overview

This unit explores the social and political issues manifested within the writings of Chaucer that happened at his age, particularly based on his iconic work *The Canterbury Tales*. The social ties, hierarchies and functions of the age are elaborated on in the unit. It also details the reading and printing evolution of the time, the politics of languages used at the time, and the varied interests of the society, including its behaviour and culture. The civility and disruptions that emerged in the community at that time and their reflections in the literature of the time are also covered in the unit with References to *Canterbury Tales*.

Assignments

1. How does *The Canterbury Tales* implicate mediaeval class structures?
2. In what way is Chaucer's own social position interwoven into the narrative of *The Canterbury Tales*?
3. Examine the representation of the pilgrims in *The Canterbury Tales*.

Suggested Readings

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3. Rigby, S. and Alastair Minnis. *Historians on Chaucer The General Prologue to The Canterbury Tales*, OUP, 2014.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

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Unit 2

From Elizabethan to Metaphysical Poetry

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- contextualise the literary backdrop of the period.
- acquire a critical understanding of the legacy of the selected poets
- critically analyse the socio-cultural background in which the selected poets wrote.
- detail some of the major theoretical perspectives relevant to the selected poets and texts.

Background

The transition of English literature from the Elizabethan age, popularly known as the Golden Age of English literature among historians, to the sixteenth century saw many outstanding pieces of literary narratives. English poetry of the sixteenth century is significant in world literature for many reasons. It is popularly tied to the figure of William Shakespeare, who produced masterpieces such as *Hamlet* and sonnets. While Shakespeare remains undoubtedly a literary icon of the era, the period also saw other developments in the genre of poetry.

The 'national poetry' of Edmund Spenser and Sir Philip Sidney came into public prominence during this time, as did the metaphysical poetry of John Donne. The works of these poets transformed the landscape of English poetry, bringing their own unique voices to the fold.

While the textual and individual readings of the poems of this period offer tremendous value, there is equal significance in exploring the different contexts that surround these works of literature. This allows a two-fold analysis wherein it is possible to discern the shaping power of socio-political institutions on these texts as well as their interrelations with earlier artistic traditions and conventions. In this context, the current unit seeks to examine the poetry of Edmund Spenser and Philip Sidney, alongside the works of John Donne and

other Metaphysical poets, with special emphasis on political and aesthetic significance.

Keywords

Form, style, national poet, court poetry, Metaphysical poetry

4.2.1 Discussion

Elizabethan poets often employed different poetic forms to structure and outline their own roles as artists. They place themselves in context against the nation as well as the literary traditions they see themselves to be part of. Edmund Spenser conducted his literary career on the basis of form, emphasising his aspiration to become the poet laureate in England.

▶ Politics of form

In Spenser's 1595 marriage volume, the minor English poet Geoffrey Whitney Jr. writes a commendatory poem. Here, Whitney Referencess Spenser's use of three poetic forms — the pastoral, the epic, and the lyric. In this sense, Spenser's technical ability to work with the demands of these diverse poetic genres, as well as to meet the aesthetic demands of a wider audience is being highlighted.

▶ Versatility

Each of the forms, of which there are corresponding works in Spenser's literary career, is connected to a public role for the poet. The pastoral *Shepheardes Calender* (1579) is viewed as a work that communicates with other writers about the art of poetry. The epic *Fairie Queene* (1590) places the poet as a counsellor to the monarch, offering prudent and philosophical advice. Spenser's lyrics and love poetry, as seen in *Amoretti* (1595) locates the poet as expressing his sincere desire.

▶ Roles

Edmund Spenser's literary career is built on these roles, contributing in questions of national identity in relation to literature, politics, and sexuality. As noted by Patrick Cheney, Spenser devoted his life to writing, using "major canonical forms, on behalf of his country, in the context

▶ Writing as vocation

of national destiny, and for the purpose of literary fame" (234). Thus, through the careful assembling of a literary career, Spenser could ascend to the function of 'national poet'.

▶ Political purpose

The poem "Prothalamion" becomes notable because of its allusions to Spenser's own role as a national poet. In the first stanza, the poet is presented as withdrawing from the court, walking discontentedly along the Thames to alleviate his pain. In the following stanzas, he experiences a vision where he sees nymphs collecting flowers, while two swans swim down the river. The nymphs are then depicted as garlanding the swans, who sail eventually into London. This prompts him to identify the city as "my most kyndly Nurse, / That to me gave this Lifes first native sourse".

▶ Defining role

The poem concludes when the two swans transform into "two faire Brides" (176), who are then greeted by their respective grooms: "Each one did make his Bryde,/Against their Brydale day, which is not long:/ Sweete Themmes runne softly, till I end my Song" (178–80). In this way, the poet's voyage from the pastoral world (signified by the meadow) towards the epic world (signified by the city) is linked by a lyric about chaste, married love. The three forms that marked Spenser's role as a national poet thus find References in the last poem of his literary career.

▶ Symbol

Sir Philip Sidney, a courtier, politician, and poet of the Elizabethan era, has been the focus of many myths. In the period immediately after his death, he was considered an icon of Elizabethan idealism. During the later Victorian era, he was portrayed as a 'gentleman'; in the transition to the modern period, he has been represented as a figure who is caught between two contradictory world views.

▶ Significance

In short, Sidney's writings allow readings through varied and complex linguistic and ideological lenses, as much of Renaissance literature does. The thematic and stylistic contents of his works, as well as the gaps in his materials, have been read as central to the modern understanding of Elizabethan literature and culture.

The question of how Sidney's contemporaries viewed his poetry has often been raised. In particular, the

sonnet sequence titled *Astrophil and* Stella has been brought up to denote a transformation in the literary scene of the age. Sidney is often portrayed as a "young, ambitious poet" acting against the poetic conventions he criticised in the manifesto the *Defence of Poesie*.

▶ Poetic Revolution

In the *Defence of Poesie*, Sidney complained about the quality of poetry in his times: "Poetry almost have we none…but that lyrical kind of songs and sonnets… which if I were a mistress, would never persuade me they were in love…" It is in a seeming attempt to remedy this situation that he produced the very first Petrarchan sonnet sequence in English - *Astrophil and Stella*.

▶ Challenging conventions

His poetry was not published during his lifetime but was circulated amongst an influential courtly circle of family and friends. He was primarily a courtier and statesman, before a poet. In other words, while he was committed to his writings, it was not a vocation or career for him. However, it did provide him with an outlet for sharing private thoughts on a wide range of subjects including his own political frustrations.

▶ Role of poetry

Astrophil and Stella marks the first adaptation of the Petrarchan sonnet into English aristocratic culture. The form had always been popular as a vehicle of love. As such, this sonnet sequence uses Petrarchism to powerfully convey different erotic, poetic, political, religious, and cultural strands. It opens itself to rich, varied readings.

▶ Varied aspects

He was also the central figure in the 'Sidney Circle', a loosely linked group of courtiers, poets, divines and educators who were dedicated, before and particularly after his death, to his ideals for the reform of literature and to an intriguing mix of political and religious ideals. They included his sister Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke; his younger brother, Robert, later Earl of Leicester; along with, at various times, such poets as Spenser, Dyer, Greville, Breton, Daniel and Fraunce.

- The politics of poetry

Court poetry, in the manner that Sidney produced, often emphasises a broader cultural and political commitment. It had certain social uses; for instance, the figure of the ideal poet of the age was one who hailed from a noble family, representing their ambitions and aristocratic ideals. Sidney's poetry could be put to play within the court in ways that he could not fully control, given that his works also expose some of the pretensions of courtly life.

- Influence of the outside world

Indeed, Sidney's poetry engages precisely with the class and gender contradictions that the Court, or indeed the political establishment was eager to control. Rather than presenting self-contained descriptions of courtly life, his poems trace the influence of the outside world on courtly life. This can be witnessed in *Astrophil and Stella*, where the "royal household arrangements", "religious and political controversies", gossip, and the presence of "courtly nymphs" are evoked in relation to the court.

- Protagonists

Despite frequently being projected as the ideal Renaissance courtier, Sidney's political career faced great disappointment and humiliation because he was often caught between public duty and private desire. The heroes of his works typically grapple with the problem of authority and submission. They are often young, noble, well-educated and well-intentioned, but become confused as they deal with the complexities of the world.

- Conflict

The autobiographical nature of the poems in *Astrophil and Stella* requires serious consideration. The poems generally show a concern with Astrophil's self-consciousness as a lover, poet, and courtier. Here, it is possible to see this exploration of selfhood as deeply tied to both the protestant faith and the Petrarchan form. The autobiographical work also highlights the constant tension between the practical demands of court life and the religious cause of Protestantism.

Travelling in Europe, Sidney discovered Protestant courts where poets, scholars and musicians were encouraged more than in England. Shortly after his return, his sister Mary became the Countess of Pembroke and established at Wilton what one of her followers termed a 'Little Court', dedicated, both

before and after his death, to the renaissance of English courtly culture. A glance back into Wilton and its earnest group that comprises poets, theologians and philosophers evince their dedication to the ideals of Sidney. The 'Little Court' also challenged and eventually overwhelmed the hegemony of the Royal Court. In other words, in the very movement that was attempting to establish and glorify the domination of what was perceived as traditional courtly values lay the elements that were to challenge and shatter it.

▶ Narrative

The sequence of 108 sonnets and 11 songs revolves around the love of Astrophil, a young and self-conscious courtier, for Stella, a lady in the court. The lover states his aim in the opening sonnet, where he claims: "I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe/Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertaine."

▶ Traditions

The sonnets follow the established conventions and tropes of the Petrarchan sonnet: Astrophil is "the doubting, apologetically aggressive lover…" and Stella "the golden-haired, black-eyed, chaste, (usually) distant, and (finally) unobtainable." They delve into themes of hope and yearning with concentrated energy. In typical fashion, within these works, desire and yearning are temporarily resolved by the act of writing.

▶ Technique

Stylistically, Sidney's poetry uses a wide range of devices such as direct addresses, dialogue, irony, and shifts in decorum. In a sense, he tries to continually combine formal verse with the spontaneity of speech, intermixing parody, wit, and literary cliches. This becomes particularly important in terms of his self-examination through the course of the sonnet sequence.

▶ Male desire

Stella, on the other hand, is portrayed within a male-dominated narrative. Like other Petrarchan objects of desire, she is reduced to the workings of Astrophil's consciousness or perspectives. In some ways, she seems to be the product of her poet lover's desires, mostly silent in terms of her own desires. Indeed, the romantic association of poetry as 'sincere' or 'genuine' representations of experience lends authenticity to the depiction of Stella.

A recurring contradiction is also seen within these poems between the world of political obligations and the space of erotic desire, between the 'public' and the 'private'. Astrophil blurs the boundaries between the two by placing his internal struggles as debates between desire and reason, love and duty. Sidney is thus seemingly caught between his courtly responsibilities and his self-indulgence in pursuing his love for Stella.

▶ Binaries

The sonnets offer a way of exploring the relationship between the courtier and the monarch, providing an analogue to the same in the ambiguous connection between the lover and the object of his desire. There are possibilities of loyalty, subjection, frustration, and rejection in both relationships. Powerful cultural forces such as religion and politics interact in the background of both relations.

▶ Metaphorical value

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, a new aesthetic was introduced into the English poetic tradition, that of Metaphysical poetry. The term itself was born only in the seventeenth century when the critic William Drummond of Hawthorndon attacks poetry with "metaphysical ideas". Roughly in the same period, the poet-critic, John Dryden criticises Donne for "affect[ing] the metaphysics" in poems in a way that reduces the significance of nature and confuses the mind of the "fairer sex" with philosophy.

▶ New Aesthetic

Samuel Johnson objects "metaphysical poets" like Donne who pursue the "discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike," yoking "the most heterogeneous ideas" by "violence."

Subsequently, the term "Metaphysical poetry" became relevant when discussing the works of a host of writers including Donne, George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, Andrew Marvell, Henry Vaughan, Thomas Traherne, and others. Throughout the poetry of these writers, there were commonalities such as the use of irregular metres, complex stylistic elements, far-fetched metaphors, and ingenious intellectual arguments. These features contested the idealising narratives of the Petrarchan sonnet as well as the broader poetic traditions of Spenser and Sidney.

▶ Challenging conventions

John Donne's poetry is an illustration of the same, representing a philosophical view of desire in a complex and intellectual language. He presents intimate sexuality as a heightened form of spirituality, often contrary to the demands of political and religious institutions. The philosophy of his poetry may best be understood through the phrase: "the feeling of thought" (Byatt 256). This mingling of thought and feeling, however, stands in stark contrast to the dominant poetic tradition in English.

▶ Paradox

It is interesting to note the trajectory from the ornate Petrarchan form, where the detachment of the genders is romanticised, to the metaphysical style wherein bodily intimacy and sexual desire become central. In fact, within metaphysical poetry, Donne explores the spiritual value of sexual intimacy.

▶ Focus on intimacy

A writer in the Metaphysical style, George Herbert had been long considered a limited devotional poet. Recent studies have focused on his work as subtle and self-reflexive, with the experimental use of themes, language, and form. His wordplays, puns, and revisions point to an inventiveness within the genre. In the context of mediaeval Christianity, Herbert's poems signify a fluidity of experience and thought.

▶ Fluidity

In a similar vein, Vaughan, Herbert's disciple, uses his spiritual leanings in an intimate, private manner within his poetry. Influenced by Hermeticism, he presents a powerful vision for an organic, non-mechanistic universe in it. His poems also carry an intuitive knowledge about natural objects, emphasising both the harmony and the changes contained in nature.

▶ Organic view

Studies about Richard Crashaw have often revolved around his extravagant imagery, which offers a kind of intellectual pleasure even though they are deliberately far-fetched. T.S. Eliot has referred to this type of imagery as a "…conscious perversity of language…" comparable to the interior of St. Peter's Chapel. Another aspect of Crashaw's poetry that arises in critical discussion is the question of the erotic. Often, as in the typical Metaphysical fashion, the passion for the Divine is connected with human passion in Crashaw's writings.

▶ Strategies of writing

▶ Contextual connections

The poetry of Andrew Marvell lies intimately connected with history and politics. He draws on a wide range of writings and literary traditions, as well as socio-cultural contexts, uniquely rendering human encounters with the world in his poems. Further, he carried interest in the small and the ironic, the result being poems laden with the quality of self-closure, ie, all imageries and meanings of the poem would contain within itself.

▶ Shaping experience

The strength of the Metaphysical tradition lies in its power to reveal the interconnection between experiences that are ordinarily seen as separate or disparate. In fusing the intellect and imagination, the genre uses Metaphysical conceit, far-fetched analogies, and experimental language to give shape to the poem and its imaginative and intellectual realms.

Summarised Overview

This unit mainly analyses the nature of the transition of poetry from the Elizabethan age to the metaphysical period. Major literary figures like William Shakespeare and Edmund Spenser and Metaphysical poets like George Herbert are included in the critical analysis of the chapter. The poetic forms, versatility, and symbols along with the political functions and purpose of the works of important poets of the mentioned ages have been discussed. The transition of poetic style and content into metaphysical ideas has been explored with References to their nature of challenging traditional poetic conventions and introducing new techniques and aesthetic values into poetry.

Assignments

1. Explore how the use of form is connected to Edmund Spenser's role as 'national poet'.
2. How does Sir Philip Sidney engage with the contradictions between desire and duty in *Astrophil and Stella*?
3. Examine the role of metaphysical poetry in challenging the poetic conventions of the Elizabethan era.
4. Discuss Spenser's "Prothalamion" by focussing on its themes and form.

Suggested Readings

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

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Unit 3

Dramatic Traditions from Kyd to Marlowe

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- acquire a general understanding of the dramatic traditions of the period
- possess a general insight into the dramatic legacy of the selected dramatists
- detail the socio-cultural backdrop of the selected texts
- analyse the selected texts in terms of relevant critical perspectives

Background

The origin of English drama is ambiguous. There is no concrete proof of its birth. However, it can be dated to the century that followed England's conquest by the Normans in 1066. The term drama was originally derived from a Greek word that meant "action," "to act," or "to do." "Drama is an old story spoken in the eye, a story put into action by living performers," claims William J. Long. Revenge Tragedies/Tragedy of Blood is one of the categories of drama. Seneca had used "lengthy accounts of offstage actions by messengers" to depict the brutality, but Elizabethan dramatists compelled them to perform live on stage to appease the appetite of the audience for horror and violence. Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (1590), Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1586), and Christopher Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* (1592) are a few examples.

Keywords

Drama, tragedy, revenge tradition, morality, the question of choice

Discussion

- Modern play-houses

'Modern Drama', in the true sense of the term, arrived in the second half of the 1580s in Elizabethan England. It was around this time that the English playhouses achieved some of their first popular successes. Among the first of these plays were Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1586) and Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (1594).

- Iconic of the age

These plays would not only define audience taste for a long time afterwards but also remain culturally significant in their own right. While *The Spanish Tragedy* engages with a tale of crime and politics in a fictional modern court in Spain, *Doctor Faustus* is a tragic Morality play wherein the magic-obsessed protagonist is lost to hell at the end. The vengeful Hieronimo and the ambitious Faustus are significant figures in the cultural discourse of the period.

- Dramatic traditions

There are readily apparent commonalities within both plays. Both works use elements of theatres of the past. For instance, *Doctor Faustus* employs concepts and stage devices from Miracle and Mystery plays, which are seen as elements such as the Good and Evil angels. The orientation towards murder and revenge evidenced in *The Spanish Tragedy* is drawn from the ancient Senecan tradition.

- Verse form

The styles of Kyd and Marlowe evoke a sense of novelty in that they were closer to the dramatic verse of Shakespeare and other prominent Elizabethan writers. The blank verse could be effectively used for serious dramatic writing in a way that other established forms could not. Further, it is noted that the new verse form also suited the acoustics of the London amphitheatres (Martin Wiggins).

Despite the old nature of their subject manner, both Kyd and Marlowe enjoyed commercial success. In fact, Marlowe penned a sequel to *Tamburlaine the Great*, taking advantage of the popularity of the latter. Later, after the success of *Doctor Faustus* and *The Spanish Tragedy*, many plays addressed the dangerous fascination with the occult and magic or the socio-political and ethical dilemmas of revenge. Many older playwrights took on

▶ Influence

newer methods and styles in their creations and extended their range, following the styles of Kyd and Marlowe.

Apart from the aesthetic and technical shifts caused by Marlowe and Kyd, there were fundamental artistic, ethical, and political changes in the drama of the period. In general, the purpose of drama was seen to be a moral one. This moral consciousness reinforced existing demands for subordination, either to the monarch, religious power, or socio-cultural authority. Such a simplistic morality could not, however, be ascribed to *Doctor Faustus* and *The Spanish Tragedy* due to its themes and narrative components.

▶ Moral grey area

However, there are elements of exciting human empowerment in both plays. In *The Spanish Tragedy*, Hieronimo is a victim of unequal power relations in his society. Despite being a senior judge, he is unable to bring his son's murderer Lorenzo to justice. Being a member of the royal family, Lorenzo cannot be indicted in a public court. This leaves Hieronimo to turn to personal revenge. In *Doctor Faustus*, the doctor exceeds all human limits in his pursuit of knowledge. He is willing to forsake everything else in his quest for power. In both cases, although in different ways, it is human potential that is explored.

▶ Human-centric

The action in *The Spanish Tragedy* exists on two levels, with the main events being watched by an on-stage audience who discusses the plot at the end of the play. Amongst this audience is the personification of Revenge who brings the ghost of Don Andrea to witness the destruction of his enemies. Here, Revenge is placed outside of temporal experience and tells the ghost: 'imagine thou / What 'tis to be subject to destiny'.

▶ Role of Revenge

Though the play reveals a liberating and subversive potential, it emphasises human submission to fate. The focus is on a human who is alienated and powerless in a hostile environment. His suffering and torment, arising out of being dependent on an unjust mechanism, is at the core of the story. When the King, does not offer justice in his first course of redress, Hieronimo turns to Divine Providence: "Ay, heaven will be revenged of every ill, Nor will they suffer murder unrepaid. / Then stay, Hieronimo, attend their will, For mortal men may not appoint their time."

▶ Destiny

While Hieronimo begins to act out his private revenge, he also becomes the agent of supernatural justice. His vengeance destroys not only Lorenzo, but also Balthazar, and thus it functions as the medium for unseen powers. It is this harnessing of suffering and injustice for a greater purpose that gives *The Spanish Tragedy* its subversive edge.

▶ Reversal

Further, there is a shift away from the conventional thrust of tragedy, which is the fall of noble characters. Kyd centralises the tragic experiences of a lower-ranked man and evokes engagement and sympathy among a wider audience. Further, it is to alleviate the protagonist's emotional responsibility to the dead that revenge is carried out, and this allows the audience to take an intimate view of the revenge.

▶ Empathetic portrayal

In *Doctor Faustus*, the question of sin and punishment is established clearly. The images of angels and devils, and the certainty of absolute Divine judgement are present throughout the plot. In a sense, the play revolves around Christian theology and appears to guarantee a conventional moral education. The closing lines of the play portray the fall of a man who knowingly chooses to reject all that is deemed acceptable in society and religion.

▶ Moral tale

Faustus' declaration that "A sound magician is a mighty God" throws light on his attraction to power as well as his need to subvert existing sources of authority. A prototype of the Renaissance scholar, the doctor's need to be all-knowing places him as the "other", deliberately embracing eternal damnation. In doing so, he breaks out of the moral patterns instituted by society and religion.

▶ Othering

Herein, Faustus represents the perennial question of the freedom of choice. The yearning that he possesses for knowledge and the power that it would confer on him, can be read as an aspiration for greatness. The aim, by its own merits, is not "wicked", though the chosen ends to the goal leave Faustus to face eternal punishment. In a sense, it leaves his exercise of free will indistinguishable from sin.

▶ Questions

Interestingly, his choice to court the occult and sin is the result of an intellectual debate that he has with himself. He has exhausted the limits of available and accessible

knowledge systems, and wishes to transcend them; he arrives at the conclusion, that for his purposes, "When all is done, divinity is best." In fact, he uses phrases and arguments from *The Bible* to reach this conclusion.

▶ Rationale

The figures of the two angels play an important role in the story. Though they outwardly stand in as abstractions of "good" and "evil", they project the inner turmoil that Faustus experiences. It has to be noted that Faustus attempts to resolve all his ambiguities using magic as it is revealed that confusion stems from his psychology. He forever attempts to be 'resolute' but fails both morally and practically.

▶ Internal conflict

In his search for true knowledge, Faustus tragically comes to understand the true nature of hell. Earlier on in the play, he asks Mephistopheles the following question: "And what are you that live with Lucifer?" He receives the following reply: "Unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer, Conspired against our God with Lucifer, And are forever damned with Lucifer." Thus, Faustus is made intensely aware of the consequences of aligning with the devil.

▶ Foreshadowing

In continued discussions, Mephistopheles conveys that hell is a psychological state rather than a material place. He states: "Why this is hell, nor am I out of it", arguing that the knowledge of being deprived of divine bliss is the torment of the underworld. This describes Faustus's mental state since the brokering of the contract with the devil. He is constantly aware of the eternal damnation that awaits him.

▶ Awareness of fate

The appeal of Faustus lies more in his desire than in his actions, making it difficult to cast him as a typical tragic hero. His initial fantasies about magical power were grand, but remain unfulfilled- "Germany is not given a defensive wall of brass, the university's poor students do not receive silken clothes, and he does not make himself the world's most powerful secular ruler" (Wiggins).

▶ Failure

Instead, the potential is wasted and desires are twisted. He plays amusing but trivial pranks such as giving an insolent knight a pair of horns or fetching out-of-season fruit to satisfy a Duchess' pregnancy craving. He cannot enter into theological discussions and his astronomical explorations reveal that the works of earthly scholars had faithfully mapped everything. There is no new learning available to him as he has already mastered everything.

▶ Trivialities

This theme of ambition and social mobility runs throughout Doctor Faustus. The play serves equally as an allegory for an individual who battles against the limits and injustices of a social system and is defeated by its very structure. The tragedies of Hieronimo and Faustus run parallel to each other because of this shared quality. They are both people who encounter the boundaries of the social and material station assigned to them and decide to contest that fate despite the clear, grave consequences.

▶ Individual's struggle

Of course, this is one of the enduring themes of tragedies - an isolated individual's fight against destiny, that ends in disappointment both for the protagonist and the audience. *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Doctor Faustus* focus on the sixteenth century's philosophical sense of the boundless potential of humanity, and the ambivalent role of religion and science prevalent at the age. The tragic heroes of these plays form their own self-identity and their own destiny in the face of the status quo.

▶ Tragic principle

Here, unlike in earlier tragedies, the greatness of birth or office is not enough to define the scope of the tragedy. Rather, it is their wasted potential that marks the extent of the tragic loss. This is furthered by the fact that their destruction is born from their exercising of free will, contrary to the pattern of classical tragic plots. Rather than an act of significant error, which Aristotle referred to as hamartia, the actions that lead to tragedy in *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Doctor Faustus* appear willed.

▶ Agency

Thus, the strand of Elizabethan dramatic tradition in which both these plays were forged appears to be humanistic and deterministic at once. They explore the bondage of circumstances in interaction with human will and creative energy so that the notion of choice appears to be both inevitable and illusory. It is in this respect that these plays can be said to focus on a dimension of reality which is indifferent to individual human pain and striving.

▶ Realities

Summarised Overview

This unit has focused on the major characteristics of modern drama, especially focusing on the dramatic features of Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1586) and Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (1594). The theme of revenge found in both dramas is analysed majorly in the unit. The destiny of human beings, reversal of actions, the morale of the actions, foreseeing of one's fate and failures being met in life are also analysed. Both dramas also go through the tragic elements and the agency of Hamartia. Human pain and suffering are extensively portrayed in the plays.

Assignments

1. Detail the deployment of the trope of revenge in *The Spanish Tragedy.*
2. How does *Doctor Faustus* implicate the ambivalences of the Renaissance era?
3. Explore the ways in which *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Doctor Faustus* dramatise the plight of the individual within a world that is indifferent to human pain and striving.
4. Discuss *Spanish Tragedy* and *Doctor Faustus* with reference to Aristotle's hamartia.

Suggested Readings

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Self Assessment Questions and Answers

Objective Questions

1. The Norman Conquest of 1066 began with which historical event?
2. Who introduced the feudal system to England after 1066?
3. The medieval Church primarily influenced which aspects of English society?
4. The Crusades aimed to recover which geographical region from Muslim control?
5. The conflict between Pope Gregory VII and Henry IV was related to which issue?
6. The Black Death reached England in which century?
7. The Peasants' Revolt of 1381 took place during whose reign?
8. The Wars of the Roses were fought between which two houses?
9. The decline of feudalism was accelerated by which major economic change?
10. The English Renaissance was first inspired by which continental movement?
11. Who initiated the English Reformation?
12. The establishment of grammar schools in Tudor England primarily aimed at promoting which form of learning?
13. Who introduced the printing press to England?
14. The first English book was printed in which year?
15. Which English monarch first encouraged overseas maritime exploration?
16. The Arthurian legends are mainly associated with which cultural ideal?
17. Geoffrey Chaucer is best known as the author of which major work?
18. Who wrote *Piers Plowman*?
19. John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* is written primarily in which language?
20. Thomas Wyatt introduced which poetic form into English literature?
21. Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* was written as an allegory celebrating which monarch?
22. The term "metaphysical poetry" was first used by which later critic?
23. John Donne's poetry is most notable for which stylistic feature?
24. George Herbert's *The Temple* is an example of which kind of poetry?
25. Henry Vaughan was influenced mainly by which religious movement?
26. Andrew Marvell's poem "To His Coy Mistress" explores which central theme?
27. Richard Crashaw's poetry is distinguished by which aesthetic quality?
28. The earliest English plays were performed mainly in which setting?

29. The term "interlude" in drama refers to what?
30. The classical model for the Elizabethan revenge tragedy derived from which Roman author?
31. *The Spanish Tragedy* was written by which dramatist?
32. *Doctor Faustus* was written by which playwright?
33. The "University Wits" included dramatists educated at which institutions?
34. Ben Jonson's comedies are based on what theory of character formation?
35. *Every Man in His Humour* was written by whom?
36. The term "Jacobean drama" refers to plays written during whose reign?
37. *The Duchess of Malfi* was written by which dramatist?
38. Francis Beaumont often collaborated with which playwright?
39. Philip Massinger's plays are best known for exploring what social issue?
40. Thomas Dekker's plays commonly depict life in which city?
41. Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* was originally written in which language?
42. John Wycliffe was associated with which major religious movement?
43. William Tyndale is most remembered for which literary achievement?
44. Which English version of the Bible was authorized during King James I's reign?
45. *An Apologie for Poetry* was written by which English Renaissance figure?
46. Francis Bacon's essays were first published in which year?
47. Roger Ascham's *The Schoolmaster* focuses mainly on what subject?
48. John Lyly's prose style is known as what?
49. Richard Hooker's *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* defends which institution?
50. Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* blends science with which other discipline?
51. In *The Canterbury Tales*, the pilgrimage begins at which location?
52. Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* is written in which poetic form?
53. Edmund Spenser's "Prothalamion" celebrates which kind of event?
54. John Donne's "The Canonization" deals primarily with what theme?
55. In "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," Donne compares lovers to what object?
56. The protagonist of *Doctor Faustus* sells his soul to which character?
57. In *Doctor Faustus*, the duration of Faustus's pact with Lucifer lasts how many years?
58. Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* consists primarily of what poetic form?
59. George Herbert's "Easter Wings" is an example of what poetic device?

60. Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" belongs to which poetic genre?
61. *The Spanish Tragedy* helped establish which dramatic sub-genre in England?
62. Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour* belongs to which dramatic type?
63. In Bacon's essay "Of Friendship," he praises friendship for which intellectual function?
64. Bacon's essay "Of Truth" begins with a quotation from which ancient philosopher?
65. "Of Parents and Children" emphasizes which social virtue?
66. Bacon's essay "Of Marriage and Single Life" contrasts what two modes of living?
67. *An Apologie for Poetry* defends poetry on which main ground?
68. In *Utopia*, the fictional island is discovered by which traveller?
69. *The Canterbury Tales* offers a cross-section of which medieval institution?
70. The phrase "From Elizabethan to Metaphysical Poetry" describes what major shift in poetic focus?
71. The revenge theme in Elizabethan tragedy was derived chiefly from whose plays?
72. Which English monarch's reign marked the height of Renaissance humanism?
73. The Black Death significantly affected which aspect of medieval social structure?
74. The invention of the printing press led to what major cultural transformation?
75. The Reformation in England resulted in the establishment of which church?
76. Edmund Spenser's verse form in *The Faerie Queene* is known as what?
77. The "conceit" is a defining device of which poetic movement?
78. "The Canonization" by Donne portrays love as comparable to which spiritual state?
79. The morality plays primarily aimed to teach what?
80. "The University Wits" preceded which major English dramatist?
81. "To His Coy Mistress" conveys which philosophical attitude toward time?
82. *The Spanish Tragedy* influenced which of Shakespeare's plays most directly?
83. Bacon's style in his essays is best described as what?
84. Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* is divided into how many books?
85. *Doctor Faustus* exemplifies which literary theme of the Renaissance?

86. The Authorized Version of the Bible was completed in which year?
87. *The Canterbury Tales* uses what narrative device to frame its stories?
88. Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* was influenced by whose sonnets?
89. *Prothalamion* is a celebration of what occasion?
90. George Herbert's poetry typically reflects which religious denomination?
91. Andrew Marvell's poetry reflects which major political event in England?
92. Francis Bacon's essays advocate which method of reasoning?
93. Richard Hooker's work sought to defend the Church of England against which groups?
94. Thomas Browne's prose style belongs to which historical period?
95. The poem "Easter Wings" employs which visual technique?
96. "The Canonization" and "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" are both examples of what poetic form?
97. *Doctor Faustus* was first published in which decade?
98. Ben Jonson's comedies are set primarily in which city?
99. The "Historicising The Canterbury Tales" approach belongs to which modern critical method?
100. The term "Metaphysical Poetry" was popularized by which critic?

Answers

1. Battle of Hastings
2. William the Conqueror
3. Religion and education
4. The Holy Land
5. Investiture controversy
6. Fourteenth century
7. Richard II
8. Lancaster and York
9. Growth of money economy
10. Italian Humanism
11. Henry VIII
12. Humanist education
13. William Caxton
14. 1476
15. Henry VII
16. Chivalry
17. *The Canterbury Tales*
18. William Langland
19. Middle English
20. Sonnet
21. Elizabeth I
22. Samuel Johnson
23. Use of conceits
24. Devotional lyric poetry
25. Christian mysticism
26. Carpe diem / transience of time
27. Baroque imagery
28. Churchyards or pageant wagons
29. Short play between acts
30. Seneca
31. Thomas Kyd
32. Christopher Marlowe
33. Oxford and Cambridge
34. Theory of Humours
35. Ben Jonson

36. James I
37. John Webster
38. John Fletcher
39. Moral and social corruption
40. London
41. Latin
42. Lollardy
43. English Bible translation
44. King James Bible
45. Philip Sidney
46. 1597
47. Education / pedagogy
48. Euphuism
49. Anglican Church
50. Religion
51. Tabard Inn
52. Rhyming couplets in iambic pentameter
53. Marriage
54. Sacred nature of love
55. Compass
56. Lucifer / Mephistopheles
57. Twenty-four years
58. Sonnets
59. Shaped (pattern) poetry
60. Metaphysical love lyric
61. Revenge tragedy
62. Comedy of Humours
63. Intellectual consultation and clarity
64. Pilate / classical reference to skepticism
65. Duty and responsibility
66. Married vs. celibate life
67. Moral and educational value of poetry
68. Raphael Hythloday
69. Medieval social hierarchy
70. From external themes to introspection
71. Seneca

72. Elizabeth I
73. Decline of serfdom
74. Spread of literacy and standardization
75. Church of England
76. Spenserian stanza
77. Metaphysical poetry
78. Religious devotion / sainthood
79. Moral instruction
80. William Shakespeare
81. Seize the day / mortality
82. *Hamlet*
83. Aphoristic and concise
84. Two books
85. The conflict between knowledge and faith
86. 1611
87. Frame narrative / storytelling contest
88. Petrarch
89. Marriage
90. Anglicanism
91. The English Civil War
92. Inductive reasoning
93. Puritans and Catholics
94. Seventeenth century
95. Shaped verse
96. Metaphysical lyric
97. 1590s
98. London
99. New Historicism
100. Samuel Johnson

Model Question Paper Sets

Model Question Paper Set-01

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

QP CODE : …… **Reg. No : ……**

Name : …….....

Third Semester - Discipline Core Course

MA English Language and Literature

M21EG01DC – Chaucer to the Elizabethan Age

(CBCS - PG)

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours **Max Marks: 70**

Section A

Answer any five of the following questions in one or two sentences each. Each question carries 2 marks.

(5x2=10 Marks)

1. What was the impact of the Crusades on medieval English society?
2. Mention two ways in which feudalism influenced the social structure of England.
3. Identify any two distinguishing features of Spenser's poetic style.
4. What moral lesson does *Doctor Faustus* convey about human ambition?
5. Name any two characteristics of metaphysical poetry.
6. What was the major contribution of the Authorised Version of the Bible to English prose?
7. Who was Roger Ascham, and what was his contribution to English education and prose?
8. State two major characters in Chaucer's "Prologue to The Canterbury Tales".

Section B

Answer any six of the following questions in half a page each. Each question carries 5 marks.

(6x5=30 Marks)

9. Discuss the role of the Church in influencing medieval English literature.

10. Examine the significance of the Peasants' Revolt in shaping social awareness in literature.
11. Compare and contrast Chaucer's realism with Spenser's allegorical style.
12. Explain the elements of tragedy in *The Spanish Tragedy.*
13. Evaluate Donne's "The Canonization" as a representative metaphysical poem.
14. Discuss the didactic purpose of Francis Bacon's essay "Of Parents and Children."
15. How does *Every Man in His Humour* reflect the social manners of the Elizabethan age?
16. Examine Philip Sidney's *An Apologie for Poetry* as a defence of imaginative literature.
17. What is the significance of Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* in the development of English prose?
18. Analyse the influence of the Renaissance spirit on Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus.*

Section C

Answer any two of the following questions in four pages each. Each question carries 15 marks.

(2x15= 30 Marks)

19. Discuss the major social, religious, and political transformations from the Norman Conquest to the Renaissance and their influence on English literature.
20. Analyse Chaucer's contribution to the rise of English vernacular literature with reference to *The Canterbury Tales.*
21. Examine the evolution of poetic thought and style from Spenser to the Metaphysical poets.
22. Discuss Francis Bacon's views on friendship and truth based on his essays "Of Friendship" and "Of Truth."

Model Question Paper Set-02

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

QP CODE : …… **Reg. No : ……**

Name : …….....

Third Semester - Discipline Core Course

MA English Language and Literature

M21EG01DC – Chaucer to the Elizabethan Age

(CBCS - PG)

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours **Max Marks: 70**

Section A

Answer any five of the following questions in one or two sentences each. Each question carries 2 marks.

(5x2=10 Marks)

1. What was the immediate outcome of the Wars of the Roses?
2. Mention two ways the Renaissance contributed to the growth of humanism in England.
3. Define the term "allegory" and explain its relevance to *The Faerie Queene.*
4. Identify two key differences between medieval morality plays and Elizabethan drama.
5. What is the significance of the "Holy Sonnets" in John Donne's poetic career?
6. What is metaphysical conceit?
7. How does *Every Man in His Humour* exemplify the Comedy of Humours?
8. Who are Scottish Chaucerians?

Section B

Answer any six of the following questions in half a page each. Each question carries 5 marks.

(6x5=30 Marks)

9. Discuss the role of the Reformation in shaping English religious and literary thought.

10. Examine Chaucer's use of irony in *The Prologue to The Canterbury Tales.*
11. Trace the features of courtly love in medieval and early Renaissance poetry.
12. How does Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* illustrate the conflict between faith and reason?
13. Evaluate Bacon's essay "Of Friendship" as a reflection of Renaissance humanism.
14. Analyse the imagery in George Herbert's "Easter Wings."
15. Comment on the influence of Senecan tragedy on Elizabethan drama.
16. Discuss the critical transition from Elizabethan to Metaphysical poetry.
17. Explain the humanist ideals represented in More's *Utopia.*
18. How does *An Apologie for Poetry* serve as a response to the critics of imaginative literature?

Section C

Answer any two of the following questions in four pages each. Each question carries 15 marks.

(2x15= 30 Marks)

19. Analyse the socio-political and intellectual background of the English Renaissance and its impact on literature.
20. Discuss Chaucer's *General Prologue to* the *Canterbury Tales* as a mirror of 14th-century English society.
21. Describe how Doctor Faustus reflects Renaissance themes of humanism, ambition, knowledge, and conflict with medieval values.
22. Examine the transition in prose style and purpose from medieval religious writings to the secular essays of Bacon and More.

സർവ്വകലാശാലാഗീതം

വിദ്യയാൽ സ്വതന്ത്രരാകണം
വിശ്വപൗരരായി മാറണം
ഗ്രഹപ്രസാദമായ് വിളങ്ങണം
ഗുരുപ്രകാശമേ നയിക്കണേ

കൂരിരുട്ടിൽ നിന്നു ഞങ്ങളെ
സൂര്യവീഥിയിൽ തെളിക്കണം
സ്നേഹദീപ്തിയായ് വിളങ്ങണം
നീതിവൈജയന്തി പാറണം

ശാസ്ത്രവ്യാപ്തിയെന്നുമേകണം
ജാതിഭേദമാകെ മാറണം
ബോധരശ്മിയിൽ തിളങ്ങുവാൻ
ജ്ഞാനകേന്ദ്രമേ ജ്വലിക്കണേ

കുരീപ്പുഴ ശ്രീകുമാർ

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