PREFACE

In the curricular structure introduced by this University for students of Bachelors Degree Programme, the opportunity to pursue under graduate studies in subjects introduced by this University is equally available to all learners. Instead of being guided by any presumption about ability levels, it would perhaps stand to reason if receptivity of a learner is judged in the course of the learning process. That would be entirely in keeping with the objectives of open education which does not believe in artificial differentiation.

Keeping this in view, study materials of the BDP level in different subjects are being prepared on the basis of a well laid-out syllabus. The course structure combines the best elements in the approved syllabi of Central and State Universities in respective subjects. It has been so designed as to be upgradable with the addition of new information as well as results of fresh thinking and analysis.

The accepted methodology of distance education has been followed in the preparation of these study materials. Co-operation in every form of experienced scholars is indispensable for a work of this kind. We, therefore, owe an enormous debt of gratitude to everyone whose tireless efforts went into the writing, editing and devising of a proper lay-out of the materials. Practically speaking, their role amounts to an involvement in invisible teaching. For, whoever makes use of these study materials would virtually derive the benefit of learning under their collective care without each being seen by the other.

The more a learner would seriously pursue these study materials, the easier it will be for him or her to reach out to larger horizons of a subject. Care has also been taken to make the language lucid and presentation attractive so that it may be rated as quality self-learning materials. If anything remains still obscure or difficult to follow, arrangements are there to come to terms with them through the counselling sessions regularly available at the network of study centres set up by the University.

Needless to add, a great deal of these efforts is still experimental-in fact, pioneering in certain areas. Naturally, there is every possibility of some lapse or deficiency here and there. However, these do admit of rectification and further improvement in due course. On the whole, therefore, these study materials are expected to evoke wider appreciation the more they receive, serious attention of all concerned.

Prof. (Dr.) Subha Sankar Sarkar
Vice-Chancellor

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BACHELORS DEGREE PROGRAMME: ENGLISH
[BDP: EEG]

New Syllabus effective from July 2015 Session
Paper - 1

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Module 2
Unit 1 Bisweswar Chakraborty
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Unit 3 Madhumita Mazumdar

Module 3
Unit 1 Debamitra Kar
Unit 2 Debamitra Kar
Unit 3 Debamitra Kar

Module 4
Unit 1 Sibasis Jana
Unit 2 Sibasis Jana
Unit 3 Sibasis Jana

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Netaji Subhas Open University

EEG-I

EEG 1. From the Beginnings to Chaucer: Literature and Language in Evolution

Module 1 - History of English Literature - Old and Middle English

Module 2 - Select Textual Representations of the Periods

Module 3 - Philology

Module 4 - Phonetics, Rhetoric and Prosody

General Editor's Foreword

It has been a rewarding experience coordinating the syllabus revision exercise and the induction of new Self Learning Materials (SLM) for the EEG Programme under the aegis of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences of our University. The new syllabus and its attendant study materials are the result of concerted endeavours through workshops, repeated interactions, shared leadership and above all, protracted labour on the part of everyone who has been associated with this project.

The need for a thorough syllabus revision for BDP English was a long standing one, as the existing framework had long stood its time and needed to take a fresh look at the dynamically altered literary scenario. In framing the new syllabus, experts have been guided by the rationale of putting in place a curriculum that would effectively serve as proper foundations for a Graduation level course in English Literature, which by itself has come to be seen as a widely interdisciplinary area. The Learning Objectives envisaged in this syllabus include a periodic knowledge of History of English Literature spread across Papers that will be divided mainly in a chronology - genre pattern; acquaintance with literary texts in a similar sequence and logic; primary knowledge of relevant literary criticism/theory; essentials of History of Language and basics of pronunciation; and an introduction to the basics of Indian Writing in English which is the least that one can think of from the New Literatures arena at this level.

Being a University dedicated to Open and Distance Learning, the creation of SLM's is a corollary to the formulation of a new syllabus. This has traditionally been the mainstay of Student Support Services at NSOU and efforts have been made to produce SLM's that can be as learner friendly as possible. While the print material shall be inducted to begin with, there is in the pipeline a project for introducing multimedia learning aids for relevant portions of the syllabus, to augment SLM's at the earliest possible instant. This could include live audio-video interactions on select topics, on-screen and on-stage footage clips, readings of poetry and prose, recordings from classrooms and the like; all of it for the widest possible dissemination among our learners. We would welcome suggestions on this from our BDP counsellors as well. It is hoped that since our Study Centres are now mostly ICT enabled, learners will be able to enjoy their studies with the help of both versions of study tools. While they can look upon NSOU materials thus provided through offline and online modes as primary aids, they will however be expected to equip themselves with thorough reading of texts and references on the lines indicated in the SLM's. After all, we presume that as a student of literature by choice, one has a predilection for literary texts and has taken up this Programme to augment his/her levels of understanding, along with the necessity of acquiring a degree that shall stand in good stead in life.

On behalf of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Netaji Subhas Open University, I stand to thank the experts on the Syllabus Committee, the content writers and the Paper editors for their constant support and adherence to timelines, the valuable academic inputs they have provided, and the numerous ways in which they have embellished the final print materials, their own engagements notwithstanding. It has I'm sure, been a labour of love for all of you, and we acknowledge your support for enabling us to see through the successful implementation of the entire project.

To all our learners, my dear students, I congratulate you on your choice of NSOU as the preferred institution for enhancing your academic pursuits. Here's hoping and wishing that you will make the most out of our blend of the serious acquiring of knowledge amidst flexible conditions and achieve your cherished goals in life. Let us make learning an enjoyable activity.

Dated: Kolkata
The 10th March, 2014

Srideep Mukherjee
Assistant Professor of English
School of Humanities & Social Sciences

Introduction to Paper I

Dear Learner,

The editors of this SLM welcome you to the Bachelors Degree Programme of Elective English studies of Netaji Subhas Open University. This is the Paper you are going to study first. You must be feeling simultaneously excited and apprehensive as you prepare yourselves to go through your study materials! So this is just to share a few words on how best you could go about.

Since we have decided to follow a chronological pattern of the development of English Literature in shaping the syllabus, in Paper 1 we take you to the beginnings of the English language and its literature. A little knowledge of English history will help you greatly as you begin your acquaintance with the literature written in English. For your convenience, we have provided a tabular sketch of significant happenings of the socio-cultural-literary backgrounds for the period under study. This sketch will provide you a bird's eye-view of the phase-wise history of England from all these perspectives. Please remember that the knowledge thus acquired, far from being extraneous to your studies in English literature, is rather an essential component that will help you locate the texts that you study, in their proper contexts.

The First Paper is divided in the following manner:

Module I - Old and Middle English Literature

Module II - Select Textual Representations

Module III - Philology

Module IV - Phonetics, Rhetoric and Prosody

You may initially encounter some difficulties since modern English as we know and use it, is very different from Old and Middle English. The commentaries accompanying the texts are aimed at helping you to ease out such difficulties. As for Module IV, Phonetics will help you not only to speak better English, but also to be able to read and understand the sound effects of speech and poetry much better. Your knowledge of Figures of speech and the metre and rhythm of English verse will provide you the groundwork for effective study of all kinds of poetry, including those of your own times.

Let us conclude with a few words on how to go about with the examinations, both Assignment and Term-End. In the Comprehension Exercises at the end of each Unit, we have tried to follow the pattern of questions you can expect for your examinations. For Modules I, II and III of Paper 1 you will be required to answer:

a) 2 essay type questions out of 4 of 20 marks each

b) 3 mid length questions out of 6 of 10 marks each

c) 2 short questions out of 4 of 5 marks each

Module IV will have short answer type questions of a total of 20 marks based on practical applications.

Welcome once again, and Happy Reading …

Module 1 - History of English Literature: Old and Middle English

Unit 1 ❑ Anglo-Saxons and the Continental Invaders in Britain

1.1.0 Introduction

In this unit we are going to study Anglo- Saxon or Old English Literature. The Old English language was very different from English as we know it now. In this unit we are going to learn about the early inhabitants of Britain, their history, culture, language and literature. We shall see how the Romans during their occupation civilised the ancient Britons and how, after their withdrawal, Germanic tribes, first from the continent across the English Channel and then from the Scandinavian countries in the north invaded Britain, gradually settled there and how from the mixture of many Germanic tribes the English people came to be.

1.1.1 Early Britain and the Roman Occupation

Pre-historic Britain was peopled by a group of rustics who had migrated from western Russia and the shores of the eastern Baltic. They introduced farming, had the prudence of storing surplus grains and could hill forts. They were the Celts who after their arrival in Britain found out the use of iron. One division of these primitives called themselves Brittones and gave the name Britain to the island. It was the Celts who fought the great Roman General, Julius Caesar, on the sea-beach when he invaded Britain with his legions in 55 and 54 B.C. But the disturbances in Gaul1 kept the Romans busy with the result that the Celts in Britain were left alone for another hundred years. But Caesar's invasion

exposed the island to other races. Pressed by the Roman army, the Gauls, the Celts' kinsmen, came over in small batches. The pattern of society of both the Celts and the Gauls was tribal and their chieftains were constantly fighting among themselves. They failed to put up a united resistance when, in 43 A.D., the Roman Emperor Claudius, took earnest steps for a systematic domination of the island. The Romans had encountered stiffest resistance among the Welsh Mountains and the northern moors. The savages of northern England and of Caledonia (Upper Scotland) held out against the highly drilled Roman army for more than a century until Emperor Severus (193 - 211A.D.) gave up the thought to conquer Scotland.

The Romans stayed in England for four hundred years and exerted an intense influence on the life of its inhabitants, particularly in the south and the east. Tribal feuds were systematically controlled; population increased; trade and commerce flourished; towns sprang up; Christianity got a foothold and a sense of unity gradually developed. Roman engineers laid firm roads, remnants of which still exist. The Britons learnt how to build villas with windows. The British blood that was already a fusion of the pre-historic primitives' and Celts' got a dose of Roman blood into it from the soldiers, the merchants and the courtiers of the Empire. Many city dwellers also began to take up Latin way of life-style in their daily affairs.

1.1.2 Invasion by the Germanic Tribes

In the early years of the 5th Century the Romans were compelled to leave England in a bid to defend Rome against the barbarians of the East. With their departure fresh invasions from across the sea took place. The Angles, the Saxons, the Jutes and the Franks swarmed to the island from the continent in succeeding waves for about seven hundred years. The invaders belonged to the same ancestral stock as the Celts, had allied languages and customs. Their poetry too sang of the same racial heroes. The first specimens of the poetry of these people show clearly that their culture was similar to the Celts of Britain than to the Romans or the Greeks. The Jutes were the first to arrive and came from Jutland, the Angles came probably from north-west Germany and south Denmark and the Saxons from west Germany. As the Angles and the Saxons were the most numerous, the entire body of migrants is called 'Anglo-Saxons'. Writers writing in Latin in the 9th century first used the term 'Anglo-Saxons' to refer to these people in order to distinguish them from their kinsmen on the continent.

The Anglo-Saxons were fierce sea-rovers who were not afraid to face challenges from a harsh nature. They were fierce fighters and a large section of the native inhabitants

were killed by them. Their conquest was so thorough that the civilisation and language of the ancient Britons disappeared completely. The remaining natives were driven to the jungles and mountains of western England. The Anglo-Saxons did not adopt more than half a dozen words of the ancient Britons. There was a fresh mixture of blood as the invaders captured British women and married them. This time the racial stock changed. The Anglo-Saxons called their new home 'Angle-land' which, in course of time, changed to 'Engle-land' and finally England.

1.1.3 Introduction of Christianity

During the last two hundred years of the Roman rule the Christian Church was established in England and the Celts were converted to Christianity. The Anglo-Saxons were pagans and their invasion drove it to the mountains of Wales. From Wales a Roman-Briton, St. Patrick, took it to Ireland and became the patron saint. It was from Ireland that the gospel travelled back to Scotland. For various reasons this church did not succeed in spreading Christianity in Britain. In 597, a chosen band of missionaries under St. Augustine sent by Pope Gregory (Pope, 590-604) landed in Kent which is the part of Britain nearest to continental Europe. The Anglo-Saxons who had first set up small kingdoms subdued the whole island within the span of a century, except the mountainous Wales, the remote Cornwall (South-West) and Strathclyde (North-West). These kingdoms gradually merged into larger political units viz., Essex, Sussex, Wessex, Kent, East Anglia, Mercia and Northumbria. The then King of Kent had married a Christian princess of France. Under the queen's influence, the king, Ethelbert, became one of Augustine's first converts

With the conversion to Christianity England came in closer touch with Mediterranean culture and mainstream Western civilization. It marked a turning-point in English literature, language and history. The Roman Church, an international organisation, consolidated its hold in England for the first time. It increased the Anglo-Saxon's natural enthusiasm for music, taught him not only Latin but also law and charity. The monasteries became centres of learning. With books brought from overseas they opened libraries. English universities owe their origin to the intellectual pursuits of Christian monks. The Anglo-Saxons wrote in runes3, the monks taught them the Latin alphabet and made writing easier. The monks wrote and transcribed all the oral songs and folktales of the Anglo-Saxons and preserved them.

1.1. 4 The Scandinavian Invasion

Anglo-Saxon invasion of England was not the last of its kind. In the middle of the 9th

century, fresh hordes of pagans from Scandinavia invaded England and all but destroyed her new faith and learning. They came from Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. They are known by the common name of 'the Scandinavians'. At first they came to plunder and left as soon as their boats were filled with gold and valuables accumulated in the shrines and monasteries near the sea. Then, having denuded the coasts they penetrated inland. The Anglo-Saxons were no match for these ferocious invaders. By 871 A.D. the Scandinavians had destroyed Northumbria and Mercia and besieged Wessex

The history of domination shows that soldiers of one generation turned landowners in the next. The Scandinavians too were no exceptions to this rule. They learnt agriculture from the Anglo-Saxons and improved upon what they had learnt by virtue of their superior discipline and organisation. They never lost their vigour and fierce spirit of independence and would have uprooted the Anglo-Saxons completely but for the statesmanship of the Anglo-Saxon king, Alfred the Great.

Alfred (849-900?) was the King of Wessex when the Danes laid siege to it in 871. He belonged to the oldest Saxon dynasty. The fall of Northumbria, Kent and Mercia, brought the Anglo-Saxons together. At the Battle of Ashdown (Jan.871), Alfred halted the invaders and gave his land peace for five years. In the battle of Ethandune Alfred inflicted heavy losses on the enemy and forced them to terms. Under the Treaty of Wedmore (878 A.D.), the leader of the Danes, Guthram, had to remain satisfied with 'Danelaw' i.e., Northumbria, East Anglia, South-East Midlands and parts of Mercia - about two-thirds of England. He and his followers also accepted Christianity.The Treaty gave England peace for the following fourteen years. To prevent fresh incursions by other batches of Danes, Alfred fortified the coasts and built a navy. But shortly after Alfred's grandson England had to accept a Danish king, King Canute .Gradually the Anglo-Saxons and the Scandinavians merged into one people. The Scandinavians, unlike the Romans , were not culturally superior, so their contribution to English life consists of mainly a large number of everyday words. You will learn more about this in the Module on Philology.

1.1.5 The Norman Conquest

The last major invasion of Britain came from the Scandinavians who during their raids had settled in Northern France. They adopted French language and culture, intermarried with the French and came to be known as Normans . The Dukes of Normandy had developed an efficient feudal system. They were good at war tactics as well as patrons of literature and culture. On the death of Edward the Confessor, Alfred's last descendant,

William, the Duke of Normandy, claimed the English crown on the basis of a promise of king Edward. The king of England, Harold, a Dane, had an even weaker claim. William crossed over to England. In the battle of Hastings (October, 1066) England's fate was decided in the hands of the Norman Duke whom history came to famously recognise as William the Conqueror. He took a small span of only two years to conquer the rest of England.

The conquest brought no new race to England because the Normans were also of Scandinavian descent. But they came with a superior culture and a literature and language of their own. They seized the land of the Saxons, built castles with Saxon labour and introduced a system of land tenure on military service. They did not disturb the system of the Saxons' local government. For many years the conquerors lived apart, treating the native population and their culture with contempt. So the fusion between the Normans and the Anglo - Saxons took a long time. Finally, by the 15th century , the people of Britain emerged clearly as a racial and cultural unit.

1.1.6 Summing up

You can understand, from this early history of England, how the English people combine several races and have a composite cultural tradition in which Roman and Germanic, Pagan and Christian elements are inextricably mixed. When you study the language and literature of England you will notice how these various elements interplay in the English life and literary imagination.

1.1.7 Select Bibliography

1. Campbell, James (ed.), The Anglo-Saxons, Oxford, 1982.
2. Stenton, F. M., Anglo-Saxon England, Oxford, 1971.
3. Whitelock, Dorothy, The Beginnings of English Society, Pelican History of England II, Harmondsworth, 1952.

1.1.8 Comprehension Exercises

A. Essay type questions (20 Marks each):

1. Write a note on how the Celts, the Gauls and the Romans lead to the formation of the Anglo-Saxon regime in ancient Britain.

2. Describe how the Roman Church was established in Britain and how did it contribute to the introduction of Christianity in ancient England.
3. Narrate historically the events leading up to the Battle of Hastings in 1066.

B. Mid length questions (10 marks each):

1. What information do you get about the nature of the Scandinavian invaders?
2 How did King Alfred try to unite the Danes?
3. What was the immediate effect of the introduction of Christianity in England?

C. Short-answer type questions (5 marks each):

1. How did the name England come into being?
2. Who were the ancient Brittones?
3. Evaluate the role of the first-established Church in the introduction of Christianity.

Module 1

Unit 2 ❑ Old English Literature - Poetry and Prose Beginnings

1.2.0 Introduction

The Anglo- Saxons did not get linguistic or cultural independence from their Germanic origins until after they had migrated to and settled down in Britain. From very early times, roughly from the 6th century, we find that the language used is called English. The term 'Anglo-Saxon' is a recent and learned coinage for the more common 'Old English', dating from the 17th century, and used by scholars to mean the earliest form of the English language. English is descended from Germanic, which is an offshoot of Indo-European, a hypothetical tongue. In this Unit, you will be introduced to the beginnings of Old English literature, first their poetry and then prose. Notice for yourselves how such literature mirrors the life of a society in a phase of gradual and complex transition.

1.2.1 The Language

The main challenge for you, is that if you take a look at any piece of Anglo Saxon writing, it will not make any sense apparently. The English language has changed almost beyond recognition during the intervening centuries. So it is necessary to know some facts about it. The vocabulary was for the most part native, but there were some early

loan words from Latin. Words from Scandinavian languages gradually mixed into Anglo-Saxon. Since both were Germanic languages, it is not always possible to say which are native Anglo-Saxon and which came from the Scandinavians. The grammar had declinable (receding in numbers) nouns, pronouns and adjectives. The system of verbs with change of tenses and subject-verb agreement was far more elaborate than it is now. There were four main dialects; Northumbrian, spoken and written in the north; Mercian, the language of the midlands; Kentish, used in the south-east, over an area much larger than modern Kent; and West Saxon, the language of Wessex, the country of King Alfred. Due to the political supremacy of Wessex this became the 'standard' dialect and almost all the extant texts are preserved in this dialect. You can well use your understanding to realise how the system of power equations has always worked to give centrality to some languages and a marginal nature to its sister dialects!

1.2.2 Anglo-Saxon (Old English) Literature: Sources

There is no record of literature of the ancient Britons or of the Celts before the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons. The earliest specimens of English literature are folk-tales brought to England in the fifth century A.D. by the invaders from their homeland on the continent. These tales were kept alive by oral tradition and hence are wholly poetic. Some of them are connected with events that took place before the migration.

The folk-tales turned into poetry by the scops (wandering minstrels/singers of song who rendered their tales in lyric) were not written down till centuries after. After England's conversion to Christianity (c.665) Christian clerics collected the poems of pagan times and put them down in manuscripts. As they did so they retouched them, replacing many of the pagan references by Christian ones, and toned down the fierce note that was in them. Themselves the descendants of Vikings and warriors, they were not, however, entirely successful in altering the spirit of the old poetry. So Anglo-Saxon poetry in the form we know it shows a curious mixture of primitive and Christian elements.

Anglo - Saxon (A.S.) literature exists in manuscripts, since printing had not yet been invented. The most important of the manuscripts so far discovered in which Old English (O.E.) poetry has survived are four:

1. The Exeter Book, given to Exeter Cathedral (Devonshire, England) by Bishop Leofric. It contains only verse.
2. The Beowulf Manuscript, now in the British Museum, containing both verse and prose.

3. The Junius Manuscript, first printed by 'Junius' (Francis Du Jon, librarian to Lord Arundel) in 1665, now in Bodleian Library, Oxford. It contains verse only.
4. The Vercelli Book, discovered in the library of Vercelli Cathedral (Northern Italy) where it is preserved. It has both verse and prose.

1.2.3 Classification of Old English Literature

In a study of old English literature dates are not important for good reasons. First, the dates are uncertain; there is a wide range of divergence of opinions amongst the best scholars over them. Secondly, this literature is nearly always anonymous and its writers had little scope for originality as we would understand it in the modern day. This is so because they were mostly working with a body of tales handed down to them across generations more as part of a culture that had undergone several layers of transition and even been subjected to cross cultural elements by way of inflexions through religion.

The surviving specimens of old English literature are generally divided into the following groups according to theme and treatment.

(a) Old English Epic / Heroic Poetry

(b) Old English Lyric Poetry consisting of Elegiac and Personal poems:

(c) Old English Religious Poetry

(d) Old English Prose

1.2.4 Old English EPIC/Herotic Poetry

The important specimens of this group are: (a) Widsith, (b) Beowulf, (c) Waldere, (d) The Fight at Finnsburgh; and of a much later date (e)The Battle of Brunanburgh, (f) The Battle of Maldon.

(a) Widsith (i.e., The Far Traveller): A travel book of 143 lines, it narrates the experiences of a wandering scop. He has visited many tribes and many princes of whom he produces a list. But the difficulty is that the princes he names lived centuries apart and no one could meet them in a single lifetime. Widsith encourages his fellow scops by referring to the rewards he got from the princes and praises his own profession. The first part of the poem is much older than the second, and is clearly the earliest piece of English verse. Its literary value springs from a competent arrangement of proper names. The view of life presented is a reflective one.

(b) Beowulf: It is an epic of 3,182 lines and the most interesting and impressive monument of Old English literature. It must have been composed not later than the eighth century and written down about a hundred years after by Christian monks. The poem presents the life and fortunes of a hero who however is not English - Prince Beowulf who is a prince of a Swedish clan. The poem shows the common Germanic roots of the Anglo-Saxons and the Scandinavians.

The Story: The main narrative of *Beowulf* has been woven out of three separate folk-tales with which have been mixed up episodes of tribal feuds. The first tale describes Beowulf's fight with the monster, Grendel who lives in a moor (marshy land) beneath the cliffs. Every night he comes out of his den to visit Heorot - a hall built on the edge of the moorland by the king of the Danes called Hrothgar - and carries away the king's followers to devour them. Grendel's attacks continue for twelve winters. Beowulf is Hrothgar's kinsman and a prince of the Geats in Sweden. He hears about his kinsman's troubles and crosses the sea with fourteen followers to sleep in Heorot. At night Grendel appears. As no weapon can penetrate the monster's body, Beowulf wrestles with him and tears off one of his arms. Grendel flees to his den and dies. Here the first tale ends.

In the second, Grendel's mother comes up to avenge her son's death. She seizes one of Beowulf's followers and runs back. Next day, Beowulf follows her track and dives into the waters of the moor. His men and the Danes wait on the shore. As Beowulf reaches the bottom, he is dragged into her cave by Grendel's mother. Other sea-monsters also set upon him but Beowulf's armour saves him. The hero is about to be crushed by Grendel''s mother when his eyes fall on a magic sword hung on the cave's wall. With this sword he kills the monster, severs the head of Grendel lying dead in the cave and returns with the prize.

The two tales are related to each other. The second comes as a climax to the first. Between the first two and the third there is a long gap of time. Beowulf, in the third tale, is a king who has ruled his people wisely for fifty years. In a corner of his kingdom lies an ancient hoard of treasure guarded by a fire-breathing dragon. A part of the treasure having been stolen the dragon starts burning and killing in the neighbourhood. Beowulf feels obliged to come to the rescue of his people, though he is now an old man. As he prepares for the fight, his instincts tell him that his end his near. He kills the monster but is mortally wounded. Before his death he finds noble consolation in the thought that he has laid down his life for his people. The poem closes with an account of the hero's funeral.

The Literary Value of *Beowulf*: The material of the poem is largely Scandinavian.

Names of early Swedish kings found in Beowulf correspond to names in a Scandinavian folk-tale. Many incidents too are common.

The poem opens with a prologue in the true epic fashion and its manner of narration is as direct and simple as in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The various descriptions of pagan rites are vivid. Beowulf is almost a demi-god with human longings. In the midst of death agony he regrets the absence of a son he might bequeath his armour to. In the last part, the warrior-king attains the nobility of an epic hero. There is calm acceptance of fate and satisfaction that he has given his people peace. His last anxiety is to serve his men even in death. And he leaves instructions for a memorial that would inspire them with courage and confidence.

> An epic (from Greek epos, originally meaning "word" but later "oration" or "song") is a long narrative poem, composed in a grand manner, dealing with the trials and accomplishments of a great hero or heroes. The epic celebrates merits of national, military, religious, cultural, political, or historical importance.
>
> Critics talk of two kinds of epics. The first, the **primary epic**, evolves from the mores, milieu, legends, or folk tales of a populace and is initially developed in an oral tradition of storytelling. **Secondary epics** are literary. They are written from their inception and designed to appear as whole stories. Under this definition, *Beowulf* comes as a primary epic, the finest evidence being that it first existed in the oral tradition. Moreover, *Beowulf* does employ digressions, long speeches, journeys and quests, various trials or tests of the hero, and even divine intervention, as do classical epics.

Scholars disagree as to whether *Beowulf* is an epic or not. These is also the opinion that if it is to be called an epic, then it must be treated as one in the making. This is because it does not afterall, possess the excellence and grandeur of the famed classical epics. Its theme is not lofty enough to be worthy of an epic. Numerous episodes and digressions woven into the central theme divert the reader's attention and hamper the unity of design. In a true epic the narrative is continuous; in *Beowulf* there is a long gap in the middle. The boasts of the hero, the elaborate ritual are in epic tradition but the fierceness of many incidents is romantic in impact.

Beowulf is nevertheless quite impressive and forceful, suggestive of a long literary tradition. Its diction moves with a dignity reminiscent of Virgil. The language has the rough picturesqueness of primitive poetry, with abundant use of periphrastic metaphors

(Kennings) e.g., whale-road (for sea), the game of blades (for battle), the lance-bearer (for soldier). The outlines of scenes and personages drawn are vivid and clear. The speeches are stately although their effect has been toned down by deliberate understatement. The unrimed alliterative verse it uses is common to early Germanic poetry.

One important feature of *Beowulf* is the strong presence of the sea. The poet has coined fifteen names for the sea. This note was to persist in English literature and give it so much colour and variety. The poem's setting is Scandinavian, yet strangely enough, it contains no specific Scandinavian words. Judged by modern standards, this primitive poem might appear repetitive and monotonous. Its manner of narration is at times confusing and characterisation lacks complexity. This is however not to detract the significance of the text as a record in narrative of the life and times of the people it talks about.

The Historical Value of *Beowulf*: The events narrated in the poem are loosely based on an historical event - the raid of Hygelac, king of the Geats, against the Frisians in the sixth century. The Geats lived in what is now southern Sweden. Hygelac led a plundering expedition up the Rhine and was ultimately stopped by the Frisians.Hygelac had a nephew, Beowulf, who is said to have distinguished himself in this expedition. But the historical Beowulf could never do such impossible feats as the legendary Beowulf does. Various northern legends current at the time the poem composed, celebrate a certain Beowa, a demi-god who fights the monster Grendel. These legends must have influenced the poet of Beowulf. The fight of Beowulf against Grendel has been variously interpreted. Grendel might stand for evil forces - the fever rampant in damp marshes, the wild bear of the forest, the cruel sea, the fog and so on.

More important is the picture of Anglo-Saxon life and society that the poem unfolds. We have in it a glimpse of the very difficult and joyless life that the forefathers of the English people lived in primitive times. There is no mention of the British Isles in the poem. Instead we have descriptions of Seeland, the land of the Danes, of southern Sweden and of the North Sea, the Teutonic settlements, their ships and expeditions, their tribal relationship, their fights and feasts. They were a brave people unafraid of death which was always at hand, fond of music, respectful to their women, courteous and affectionate to their brethren, loyal to their chief, cruel to their foe, loving to their land and eager for glory in adventure. Superstition played a large part in their imaginative life; all misfortunes like sickness, death and defeat were ascribed to evil spirits. They believed in the all powerfulness of Wyrd or fate yet submitted to it without a struggle.

This sense of fatalism gave them a certain tragic dignity and also a sense of pathos. Against fate their weapon was valour. Beowulf is the ruler of a people who take life seriously. The land of their birth was far from comfortable. To the north was the sea troubled by storms and mists, on other sides were marshes and forests swarming with enemies, both beasts and men. There is a curious mixture of brutish and moral tendencies in their literature. No wonder that the predominant attitude is one of melancholy. Yet it would be wrong to believe that the Anglo-Saxons lived an austere life. The banquet scenes given in Beowulf are quite splendid and evocative of a rich courtly tradition.

(c) Waldere: The manuscript is divided into two fragments of thirty-two and thirty-one lines. In the first part Waldere's sweetheart, Hildegund exhorts him to battle with Gunther. She is sure Waldere would win for righteousness is on his side. The second fragment presents the dialogue between Waldere and Gunther and includes the former's challenge to the latter to take his sword that he got from his father.

It has been supposed that the fragments are parts of a poem on the story of Walter of Spain, belonging to the great tradition of Scandinavian sagas.

(d) The Fight at Finnsburg (The Battle of Finnsburg): An epic fragment of forty eight lines, it reproduces an account of the battle between Finn, king of Frisians and Hnaef, a leader of the Danes. Hanaef is first invited and then treacherously attacked. He and his followers give a tough fight but Hanaef is ultimately slain and a truce has been made. His followers resume the feud and avenge his death. The episode in Beowulf, called the Finnsburg Episode, appears to be a sequel to this poem whose end is lost. Frankly inspired by the martial instincts, the poem is told briskly and pointedly.

(e) The Battle of Brunanburh: This poem and its companion, *The Battle of Maldon* both written as late as the tenth century - show that the tradition of the heroic epic persisted for many centuries after Beowulf. It describes in a typical Anglo-Saxon fashion a battle between the English under Athelstan and a combination of Norsemen and Scots. Written to celebrate a national victory, it heaps ignominy upon the defeated and extols the victorious highly. Intoxicated by the joy, the poet gloats over the fearful slaughter of the enemy. The narration is swift, the diction lucid. It is the first poem singing of patriotism in English literature. For, while the earlier heroic poetry is devoted to the praise of individual heroes, The Battle of Brunanburh celebrates a national victory. It is also the only epic fragment in which short regular stanzas appear. This and the next poem find a place in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

(f) The Battle of Maldon: The poem gives the story of a defeat the English suffered at

the hands of the invading Danes in 991. Byrhtnoth who led the English forces as he strove to drive back a band of Northmen whose ships were coming up the Blackwater, a little to the north of the Thames was killed and the Saxons were defeated.. We have only a fragment of 325 lines of this poem, which seems, since it does not name a single one of the enemy, to have been written soon after the fight. It is not a lyrical song, but a detailed epic narrative which, by its rhythm and general shape, recalls the battles of the Iliad.

1.2.5 Old English Lyric Poetry: Elegies & Personal Utterances

In Anglo-Saxon poetry there are also some poems which contain themes that are more personal, poems which seem to be more of an expression of the emotional state of the poet. A. S. Poetry does not have the lyric form, but these poems have the tone and temper of the lyric proper. So they are referred to as A.S. lyrics, or, because of a general note of melancholy in them, as elegies. The poems reflect a melancholy view of life, a sense of impending fate and threatening nature. Here we find little of the Christian hope that lies in thoughts of a Hereafter. A very early example of this primitive lyric is *Deor's Lament*. As in *Widsith*, the scop speaks directly to the hearer (or reader). He is sad. He has been robbed of his inheritance and the favour of his lord by Heorrenda, who has replaced him as the chief court singer. But, as he says, all misfortune passes, and he cites the sorrows caused by love and violence in the lives of the other men, and how these things passed. He reflects upon the fact that Our Lord can make the sorrowful happy and can bring the haughty to low estate. The poem has a refrain at the close of each section.

In *The Wanderer*, we meet a homeless man whose life is that of an exile, condemned by fate to sail across the unfriendly sea waves and seek the companionship of the screaming sea-birds. Not for him are the comforts of the mead hall and the protection of a king. He recalls his old life of cheer and happiness and how all that fell about him in ruin. Life is like that on this earth where man is a toy for fate to toss about. All earthly things are transitory and fleeting.

In *The Seafarer,* probably of the 8th century, an old and weary sailor confronts a young man, enthusiastic but ignorant of the trials and tribulations that his hard life upon the sea brings to a man. The old seaman curses the sea in one breath and in the next reveals his feeling of inseparability with it. When at sea he longs for the land, and when ashore, neither the love of woman nor the lure of the pleasures of the world can satisfy his deep longing to be back upon the rolling waves. Back to the whale road for him and let

others have their lives of ease upon the shore! It is one of the earliest examples of the Englishman's love of the sea. In another very fragmentary poem, The Ruin, the poet looks upon the ruined buildings of an ancient race and wonders at the pride these men must have felt in their great accomplishments and how little they dreamed then that he would look upon these stones that can no longer even give any identifying characteristics of what their owners were like.

There also remains a trio of interesting lyrics containing highly personal note. *The Wife's Lament* is a rather subtle piece in which the wife has been accused by her husband's relatives of infidelity or magic. The husband is forced by the tribal code to banish her to a lonely spot in the woods. She knows that he must be grieving for her and she remembers their once happy home together. She still loves him and thinks that he, even though he thinks her guilty, must still love her. That would make his grief far greater than her own, for she remains firm in protests that she was faithful to him and has a clear conscience. *The Husband's Message* is carved runes on a wooden staff and these runes speak the message. This rune stick has carried many a message over the seas to highborn people. Now it brings a message of love from a man exiled from his people and from his beloved wife. It begs her to listen for the coming of springtime in the song of cuckoo and come to him in a distant land where he has established himself, amidst wealth and prosperity, and has many brave warriors who serve him. He does not care for kings' daughters; life is empty for him without his beloved wife. Scholars are especially interested in the poem *Wulf and Eadwacer*. It has a strophic (a rhythmic system composed of two or more lines repeated as a unit) structure and a refrain, like *Deor's Lament*. The speaker, a woman, desires her lover Wulf, and expresses disgust for her husband Eadwacer. This brief poem is intense and passionate, one of the very few pieces in Old English Literature with high sexual content. Some parts are however confusing and difficult to interpret. Given that we are here talking of a very old literary era, the abundance of and fervour with which women's utterances are narrated is an interesting point to note.

A.S. secular poetry also has many riddles in which objects are described in vague and suggestive terms, the objects to be guessed by the reader. Many references to life and customs of the Viking northland are to be discovered among these interesting little compositions. A horn is described as a proud warrior when decked in gems and trappings. Here it travels with the tribe over the seas and there it hangs and there it hangs on the mead-house wall. Sometimes it is full of wine. Sometimes it must swallow the breath of men and invite valiant warriors to assemble or drive away enemies. The description ends with the inevitable: "Ask what my name is."

1.2.6 Old English Religious Poetry

With their conversion to Christianity, the Anglo-Saxons acquired a vast and diverse collection of stories written in the Bible and other sacred texts and proclaimed orally through the liturgy (set of rituals in the Christian church) and preaching. They also inherited the belief that understanding these narratives was essential to lead good lives and to ensure salvation. Although much of Christianity was still new, Old English poets adapted their own poetic language with its traditional themes to this material, often selecting subjects that would fit within existing conventions.

(a) Caedmon: *In his Historia Eccelesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (*Ecclesiastical History of The English People*) Bede tells the story of the first Christian poet of England: Caedmon. According to Bede, Caedmon was an unlettered cowherd who received divine inspiration to sing of the Creation and to turn the Old Testament into song. He has been credited by some critics with a number of poems paraphrasing biblical passages. Following in the tradition of the great Caedmon, other anonymous poets have left us poems and fragments of poems from the period, rendering various Old Testament passage into verse. That is all we know about the life and works of Caedmon; but in the Junius manuscript a series of religious paraphrases was found in the year 1651. In subject they correspond rather closely to the list set out by Bede, and they were ascribed to Caedmon. The poems consist of paraphrases of the *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Daniel*, and *Judith* as also three shorter poems, the chief of which is *The Harrowing of Hell.* Modern scholarship recognizes that the poems are by different hands, but the works can be conveniently lumped together under the name of Caedmon. The poems appear in the West Saxon dialect. Caedmon belonged to Northumbria and must have written in his own dialect. But the difficulty is got over by pointing out that a West Saxon scribe might have copied the poems.

In the manuscript of Bede's work, a poem in the Northumbrian dialect of which Bede gives the Latin paraphrase, has come down to us and this is supposed by some scholars to be Caedmon's first work and a part of his *Genesis*. It is a hymn in praise of God. He sings the praise of God like a scop singing the glories of his feudal lord. The poems written by Caedmon or by poets who may be loosely called poets of his school are all based on Old Testament stories. *Genesis* tells the story of Satan's rebellion, God's wrath and the expulsion of the rebel angels, God's creation of hell and his plan of Creation. Exodus deals with the story of Moses. *Christ and Satan* tells the story of Creation and the Fall of Man. *Judith*, also from the Old Testament, gives the dramatic story of Judith bringing the head of Holofernes the tyrant to the Jews and the battle between the Jews

and the Assyrians. In merit Caedmon's poems are unequal, but they are strong and spirited pieces with some vivid descriptive passages.

(b) Cynewulf: In 1840 the scholar Kemble lighted upon three runic (or pre-Roman) signatures which appear respectively in the course of the poems called (1) *Christ* (2) *Juliana* (in the Exeter book) and (3) *Elene* (in the Vercelli book). The signature reads 'Cynewulf' or 'Cynwulf.' In 1888 a signature 'Fwulcyn' was discovered in (4) *The Fates of the Apostles.* This is all we come to know of Cynewulf. Yet an elaborate life has been built up for the poet, and other poems, similar in style to the signed pieces, have been attributed to him. The Phoenix, The Dream of the Rood are the most significant of the additional poems.

Christ deals with the threefold coming of Christ and ends with a picture of the Last Judgment. ***The Fates of the Apostles*** gives the narration of how the twelve apostles spread Christianity in different parts of the world and how they died. ***Juliana*** is the story or how the pagans tortured and finally killed the martyr St. Juliana. In ***Elene*** the poet tells a different kind of martyr story. It is about the mother of the Roman emperor Constantine, the first emperor to convert to Christianity. Constantine, winning a battle by the grace of Christ, learns the Christian lore and sends his mother Helena to Jerusalem to find the cross on which Christ died. Helena finds the cross and builds a church on the site where the cross had been buried.

Phoenix, in the Exeter Book, is an interesting example of how Eastern stories made their way to England where the poets put them to allegorical or didactic use. The poem describes an earthly paradise in the east and a fabulous bird, the phoenix, which flies to Syria , every 1000 years , to renew its youth. After a renewal by fire, the bird returns to paradise. The later part gives an allegorical treatment of the fable. The phoenix is likened to (1) the Elect among Adam's descendants, i.e. men and (2) Christ. The poem ends with praise of God and a description of the rewards for good people in the life to come. The most interesting poem among O.E. religious poetry is ***The Dream of The Rood***, which used to be ascribed to Cynewulf, but is now considered to be by some anonymous poet. It is a very early example of a dream or vision poem. It has three parts: the opening words of the dreamer, the words spoken by the Rood or the Cross on which Christ was crucified, and the words of the dreamer after the dream is over. The True Cross tells the dreamer its history from the time it grew as a tree , how it bore Christ at Calvary and how , centuries after the Crucifixion, it was found by St. Helena. The dreamer finally says how the dream changed his life. Ever since, he has devoted himself to the cult of the True Cross and hoped to gain heaven by his good deeds. The poem has a moving

description of the Crucifixion. Some of the lines, in modern English translation are quoted below for you.

"They pierced me with dark nails:the places are on me still
The wicked wounds are open. "

These Christian poems are of little interest to the average reader today but many of them have passages with power and grace. They also offer us a curious treatment of biblical personages, Christ being pictured, for instance, as a hero like Beowulf , valiant rather than gentle. These poets, although they lived in monasteries, retained much of the spirit of the scop and gleeman of heroic times and their poems are close to heroic epics, even though the personages and the events are taken from the Christian Bible.

Caedmon shows an earlier tone and spirit than Cynewulf. Caedmon is more heroic and less Christian in spirit. His subjects are generally taken from the Old Testament, while Cynewulf's are from the New Testament and the lives of the saints, thereby admitting of greater Christian faith and ideas. In Caedmon the interest is primarily in retelling the Biblical stories. In Cynewulf there is greater interest in didactic teaching. Caedmon is simpler and perhaps, more fresh; Cynewulf is more artistic and even more artificial. He is more scholarly and has assimilated foreign influence in more thorough going manner. In Cynewulf we find a subjective note, full of tender sentiment and pathos, which we miss in Caedmon, who is purely objective. In description of nature and the surroundings Cynewulf is more artistic and finished than Caedmon.

1.2.7 Characteristics of Old English Poetry

Old English verse did not have rhyme or metre as we now have in English poetry. The poets used the alliterative measure of old Germanic poetry. There were no definite number of syllables to a line. A verse line usually contained four accented syllables and three alliterative syllables. There were two kinds of run-on lines. In one, the sentence goes to the next line without a syntactical pause; in another it goes on with a syntactical pause. The style is generally diffuse, although when something greatly moves the poet he can be simple and direct. The "kenning" is a strong feature of the language. A kenning is a two-word circumlocution for a noun. For example 'bird's joy' for feather, or 'whale way' for the sea. We also find the 'heiti' , a one-term substitute for an ordinary noun, for example 'wood' for spear or 'iron' for sword. The poetry was generally sung.

1.2.8 Old English Prose

A great deal of prose was written in Britain during the early centuries in Latin. The Anglo-Saxon priests continued this tradition throughout their entire period generally. Most of their prolific work consists of scholarly writing devoted principally to theology and history. The Venerable Bede produced the first of the great historical writings of scholarship in his Ecclesiastical History of the English People (731). Bede's contribution to didactic writing in Latin is the most notable on the Old English scene until King Alfred came to the throne of Wessex in 871.

Alfred's Contribution

Alfred devoted his life to two purposes: securing the nation from the Danish invasion and civil wars, and the promotion of scholarship and literature through the establishment of an educational programme for his people. Though preoccupied with trying to secure his kingdom and in ill health, he did a great job of fostering the cause of learning. Alfred learned Latin principally in order to be able to translate the great Latin works into West Saxon. He was England's first great humanist monarch who was a patron of the scholars.

Alfred himself laboriously translated Boethius's Consolations of Philosophy, Pope Gregory the great's Pastoral Care, Orosius's Universal History, Bede's Ecclesiastical History. He took the help of other scholars, as he himself mentions.Alfred's method of translation is very original. He does not translate literally. He omits passages, condescends, sometimes even adds portions if he finds the original lacking . For example, the geographical passage on Germany and Scandinavia in Orosius' History of the World seemed to him inadequate so he added a long and valuable section. His aim was not to reproduce the originals faithfully but to give his subjects what was good for them and easy to understand.

In addition to his translations, Alfred's influence is felt in many other directions. He stimulated research and urged the priests of his kingdom to teach in the vernacular. He encouraged the keeping of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and saw to it that the events of his reign were given proper attention in this running record of events which was kept until 12th century. Alfred also did much to preserve the oral traditions of his people. He left a book of proverbs and we have record of Handbook, a treasury of his wisdom which has been lost.

Aelfric and Wulfstan: Others attempted to continue the stimulus toward the creation

of a native literature of vitality. Aelfric is one notable name with his Catholic Homilies and his Colloquy on the Operations,which was a follow up of his Grammar and Glossary and Wulfstan, with equally didactic and unloving treatises, are among those who tried to carry on the work of Alfred.

Aelfric is the most notable prose writer in Old English. In Catholic Homilies he wrote a large number of sermons, each sermon meant to be used for a suitable occasion of church service. His sources were religious writings in Latin, especially the writings of St. Augustine, Pope Gregory the great, and the Venerable Bede but he treated his sources with great freedom, adapting them whenever he needed. In the Heptateuch he wrote English versions of the first seven books of the Bible. Although he was a monk and wrote in response to practical necessities of trying to impart christianteachings to his people, Aelfric 's writings show him as a master of various kinds of prose styles. His purpose was didactic but his work has a high level of artistic competence.

Wulfstan was Aelfric's contemporary. He was also a churchman, serving as Bishop of London, Bishop of Winchester and Archbishop of York. His fame rests on a famous homily written probably in the year 1014. , the Sermo Lupi ad Anglos (The sermon of the Wolf to the English). Though the title is in Latin, the work is in English. Wulfstan begins with a vision of Doomsday and tells the English people that they had brought misery and troubles upon themselves by their sinful ways. The sermon reflects the contemporary events. During this period England was devastated by waves of Viking raids . The Danes looted monasteries, destroyed the countryside. The payment of money to the Danes impoverished the English. King Aethelred had to escape to take shelter in Normandy for a short time. These terrible events moved Wulfstan to his exhortation.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

The Chronicle or The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is a remarkable specimen of Anglo-Saxon prose . As the first t written historical record of a Germanic people it has immense historical value. Its literary value is also immense, because it enables scholars to trace the development of A.S. prose over a very long period of time. Its beginnings were sketchy. Some churchmen had begun to maintain sketchy records of important happenings . At first the records contained simply the dates of the birth death of different kings and the records of warfare. The Chronicle in its earliest stage was certainly not a literary work .It was hardly even a history. It was during Alfred's reign and most probably under his guidance that the Chronicle became a continuous narrative, tracing the history form their settlement in Britain to the year of compilation. There are also references to

other events, in Britain and elsewhere. The earliest event recorded is Julius Caesar's invasion of Britain. The compilers used earlier annalistic records and oral records. None of the original manuscripts have survived. There are seven extant versions, all of which have come down, in one way or other, from the compilation of the year 891 A.D.As time went on, new entries were added to the manuscripts by successive annalists. The records continue till the 12th century in different monasteries.

The literary quality of the early part of A.S. Chronicle is poor. The annalist of 775 for example had a very interesting story of inter-tribal rivalry, the story of Cyneheard, Cynewulf and Osric but does not give us a good narrative. By the 9th century the language had developed a lot. The writers express themselves simply and clearly and show skill in avoiding the monotony that is often found in mere chronicles. At the time of King Aethelred the Unready (early 11 th century) it reached great heights. By the 11th century very good prose was being written. Had this development continued, the 12th and 13th centuries would have produced great prose literature in English. But the Norman Conquest of 1066, introduced the use of Norman French for use in all important spheres of English life and Anglo-Saxon was driven underground, although it continued to be written upto the 12th century. Middle English literature is dominated by poetry, Literary prose had to wait several centuries to flower again.

1.2.9 Summing Up

In all languages, poetry makes its appearance before prose, and that was also true about Anglo-Saxon literature. Anglo-Saxon prose however fared much better than its counterpart - Anglo Saxon poetry. English literary prose developed actually as late as 9th century under King Alfred's patronage. Anglo-Saxon poetry was archaic and a bit complicated, but Anglo-Saxon prose was comparatively modern and simple. About Anglo-Saxon prose, two specific features must be noted. In the very first place it has an essentially national appearance. In the second place, it is much closer to modern English than Anglo-Saxon poetry is. Anglo-Saxon prose started humbly in the form of some laws, moral codes and historical records. Its beginnings had no much literary merit. Aelfric and Wulfstan are the most prominent prose writers of the Anglo-Saxon period. Catholic Homilies is a famous book of Aelfric. There are other prose works like the Blickling Homilies, a group of nineteen sermons, contained in a manuscript, and some other homilies and fragmentary prose works. Like Anglo-Saxon poetry, Anglo-Saxon prose was wrecked by the Norman conquest of 1066.The prose literature of England was silent for more than a hundred years.

1.2.10 Word-Notes

1. Gaul: Latin Gallila, ancient name of roughly what is now France.
2. Welsh: adj. From Wales - the name of the western provinces of Great Britain and also of the language.
3. Runes: Ancient Germanic alphabets, developed in the 2nd or 3rd Centuries and current among all northern tribes of Germany at the time.
4. Constantinople: Former capital of the Byzantine and Ottoman empires in Asia Minor.
5. Danes: Of the Scandinavians, those from Norway mainly went to Scotland and Ireland; those from Denmark (the Danes), to England.
6. Scop: The Anglo-Saxons lived in tribes, each under a chieftain. Every tribe had its scops or minstrels who made verses as well as recited them. There was also another class of singers called gleeman who only recited verses made by the scops. The word scop (Old Norse skop, Old High German, scoph) means 'a jest' and 'gleeman' is derived from Anglo-Saxon gleo which means 'fun'. So it is believed that the chief function of scops and gleemen was to provide entertainment to the tribe. They sang verses to the accompaniment of the harp. The scops are the first poets of English literature.

1.2.11 Select Bibliography

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1.2.12 Comprehension Exercises

Essay-type (20 marks)

1. Give an account of Old English heroic poetry.
2. 2. Indicate the importance of Beowulf to the student of English literature.
3. Show the range and variety of Anglo-Saxon poetry.
4. Discuss the characteristics of Anglo-Saxon Religious poetry.
5. Briefly discuss the characteristics of the language and literature of the Anglo-Saxons.
6. Trace the development of Anglo-Saxon prose.

Mid-length questions (10 marks)

1. What was the impact of the invasion of the Germanic tribes on Britain?
2. Discuss characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon lyrics or elegies
3. What are the literary qualities of Beowulf? Can it be called an epic?.
4. Assess Alfred's contribution to English life and literature.
5. How big a role did the Christian church play in the development of Anglo-Saxon literature?

Short questions (5 marks)

1. Write a note on The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.
2. Comment on the note of melancholy in A.S.Poetry.
3. Write notes on ;

   a) The Seafarer b)Deor's Lament c)The Dream of the Rood (d) Sermo Lupi ad Anglos(e)Catholic Homilies (f) The Battle of Brunanburh (g)Widsith (h) The Norman Conquest.

Module 1

Unit 3 ❑ England From 1066 AD to 1400 AD (Middle English Period)

1.3.0 Introduction

In this unit we shall be looking at the Middle English period, specifically from 1066 AD to 1400 AD. However, we will also study a bit of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and try to understand the important literary activities of the times. This unit will cover a historical background of the age, the influence of Norman Conquest on the English language, Middle English Poetry, Middle English Prose and Middle English Drama. You will definitely notice in course of your reading how different the literature of this period is from the earlier Old English period and its Anglo Saxon Literature. We hope you will be able to relate the 'why' and the 'what' of this transition, as you read on. Do keep in mind right from the beginnings of your systematic study of literature that it is always integrally related with the life and times of which it is necessarily a product.

1.3.1 Background

This period witnessed several developments in the history of England - the establishment of the Norman dynasty; the internal conflicts among king, nobles, clergymen and common people; and several wars both at home and abroad. From the literary point of view far more significant were the general movements of the times: the rise of religious orders; their initial enthusiasm and eventual decline; the growth of the spirit of chivalry and romance; sympathy for women and the poor; the Crusades and the increase in the

European outlook which would ultimately lead to the rebirth of the intellect, better known as the Renaissance. All these hinted at the growth of intelligence that was palpable in the literature of the Middle English Period.

1.3.2 The Norman Conquest and the English Language

The Norman Conquest refers to the invasion and conquest of England by William, Duke of Normandy in the year 1066 A.D. The last Saxon king, Edward the Confessor died without an heir and Duke William laid claim to the throne of Wessex on the basis of a promise once made to him by King Edward. Edward had been succeeded by his kinsman Harold II who rejected his claim. William crossed the Channel and in the Battle of Hastings Harold and the Saxons were defeated. William became England's king and for a long period that followed, the kings of England were also, simultaneously, Dukes of Normandy. This political situation very naturally made for closer connections between England and the mainland of Europe, especially, because Normandy, (now a province of France) lay in the north of France and shared a close border with England. A look at Plate 6 in Module 3 Unit 1 will give you an idea of the route that the Normans traversed to reach England.

The Norman Conquest of England in 1066 is considered to be one of the landmarks in the history of England. It imposed a French-speaking ruling class on England. French retained its position of being the regular language of the aristocrats for more than two and a half centuries after the Conquest. As a result Norman-French developed as the literary language of the highest social classes. Later when English ousted French as the language of the literature of England, it was a language changed in many ways - it had enriched itself with French vocabulary and had lost Anglo-Saxon inflections, though it had not wholly lost connection with its Anglo-Saxon tradition.

With the Norman Conquest, the heroic age with its heroic ideals was bidden adieu. There was the emergence of a new Europe. By the beginning of the twelfth century, a Christian civilization was established in this new Europe. Thus came in a stable culture with its own norms of politeness both in life and literature. With the passing away of the heroic age, new kinds of courtly sophistication prevailed over the heroic ideals. With the Norman Conquest, England came into contact with continental civilization, particularly French culture. As a result English literature acquired polish, new ease and skill. Also there were significant changes in pronunciation and word structure. Any reader of English literature of this period can note a number of different Middle English dialects. After the Conquest, Wessex lost its political and cultural importance and its

dialect, West Saxon, that had earlier been the most important literary language, lost its position. Since French became the language of the aristocracy, writers in English used the language of their own region and this led to the emergence of diverse dialects as written language. When French started to recede from the limelight, English gradually started to become popular and a new standard form of literary English began to evolve. By the end of the Middle English period, the dialect of London became the most influential English dialect. This dialect was basically a Southern dialect in origin. However, by the time of Chaucer it had become East Midland in character. As a result modern English derived from the East Midland dialect which had become the standard literary language. (For details of the changes in English language, please refer to Module 3 Unit 1 in this paper).

1.3.3 Middle English Poetry

It is difficult to trace the course of poetry during the eleventh and twelfth centuries since very little is available. Some fragments of didactic and religious poetry indicate a continuation of Anglo-Saxon alliterative kind of poetry, though in a looser form. A striking breakthrough in the tradition is *Orrmulum* written by an Augustinian canon named Orm about the year 1200. The poem is of enormous length (around ten thousand extant lines have survived) and is preserved probably in the writer's autograph copy itself. It consists of several religious homilies addressed to a fellow canon. It is composed in north-east Midlands dialect. Each line has the same metrical pattern with fifteen syllables and a 'feminine' ending and is, as a result, very monotonous. The poem has an original phonetic spelling which is complicated because of the frequent use of double consonants. *Cursor Mundi* is another lengthy (thirty thousand lines) religious poem dealing with all the significant incidents of the Old and New Testament stories and other religious topics as well. The poem is encyclopaedic in nature and exhibits immense ability and skill of the writer to handle such a vast panorama of materials. This didactic writing is made interesting by the employment of variety in the metre which is primarily in short couplet. This poem serves as a suitable introduction to the medieval view of world history. The literary convention of verse debate, so popular in Latin and French, was employed with immense success in *The Owl and the Nightingale* where the two birds are engaged in a long argument which is not only spirited but also full of legal tricks present in a twelfth century lawsuit. The birds are used allegorically to point at the monastic and the secular ways of life and also to bring out the differences between didactic and amorous kinds of poetry. The focal points of interest lie in the dramatic quality of the narrative and the ease with which the short rhyming couplets make the

dialogues interesting. The vividness of character delineation is another reason for the popularity of the poem.

Alliterative Poems

The alliterative tradition of Anglo-Saxon literature can be observed to be popularly used in Layamon's *Brut*, a late twelfth century metrical history of Britain based on Wace's *Roman de Brut* , a French poem, which in its turn, was derived from the Latin *Historia Regum Britanniae* (History of the kings of Britain) by Geoffrey of Monmouth. Brut is of particular interest because the story of King Arthur, retold in a number of Middle English romances, makes its first appearance here. A more impressive usage of the alliterative tradition is found in a unique manuscript preserved in the British Museum- the manuscript containing four alliterative poems written in West Midland dialect. These poems are *Pearl*, *Purity*, *Patience* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.* The first three are religious poems among which *Pearl* is both an elegy on the poet's deceased daughter and also an allegory of the Christian faith. It contains beautiful, moving passages marked by sincerity and passion. It is one of the most interesting allegorical religious poems of the Middle Ages. Purity and Patience are more didactic and exalted. *Patience* is a homily on the virtues of patience and the story of Jonah helps the poet to explain those virtues. These poems are marked by long alliterative lines which bear testimony to the poet's skill.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is considered to be one of the best of all Middle English allegorical romances. In this poem the poet excels in characterization, descriptive details, handling of plot and use of alliterative long lines. Lyrical element is also introduced through the depiction of the movement of seasons. The story element has connections with folklore and is subjected to multiple allegorical interpretations. The main adventure involved in the plot is the challenge of an exchange of blows with the Green Knight, a challenge that is accepted by Gawain, a knight in King Arthur's court. . Consequently the Green Knight visiting Arthur's court on the occasion of New year's feast is beheaded by Gawain but the former picks up his head and promises to return a similar blow to Gawain one year later at the Green Chapel. During his search for the Green Chapel, Gawain takes refuge in a castle and is entertained by the lord and the lady of the castle. Every morning when the lord goes away for hunting, Gawain is tempted by the lady. However, he retains his courtesy and at the same time repulses her advances. But on the third day he accepts a green girdle which, according to the lady, Gawain would require during his encounter with the Knight. Gawain is hit three times

at the Green Chapel by the Green Knight who reveals himself as the lord of the castle. The wound caused on Gawain's neck by the third hit is for hiding the truth about the girdle he received from the lady. Gawain, being humiliated, reproaches himself for this and after his return to Arthur's court tells this story as an example of moral failure, not as a heroic exploit. There is an unmistakable sophistication in the grace of the narrative, technical skill of versification, charm and humour in conversations and sheer brilliance in depiction of the hunting scenes and the changing beauties of nature. It is a perfect example of an Arthurian romance which is enriched through the ideals of courage and heroism. The poem is a harmonious blending of the folk elements of the Celtic, the vigour of the Anglo-Saxon and the sophistication of the French.

Middle English Lyrics

Another significant form of Middle English poetry is the Middle English lyric. You will remember that the most natural expression of Old English poetry is in epic and other types of narrative verse but not in lyric. A few O.E pieces like *The Husband's Message*, The *Wife's Lament* and The Seafarer possess certain lyrical elements but cannot be considered as lyrics in the sense that later generations have come to define the term. A few lyrical fragments which date back to the thirteenth century are primarily the result of liturgical and clerical inspiration. In the Middle English period lyrics can be distinguished into two categories- the religious and the secular. The religious lyric is not restricted to any national boundary and belongs to literary and ecclesiastical traditions. On the other hand, the roots of secular lyric can be traced in the native soil, in the secular Latin lyric or in French and Provencal poetry. The native influence on Middle English lyric form is palpable in folk songs. Though specimens of such songs are not readily available but evidences are there that popular songs were sung by women accompanied by dancing. There are records in the deeds of the twelfth century chronicler Hereward the Exile that a parish priest in Worcestershire was so inspired by singing and dancing that took place in the churchyard for a whole night, that the next morning during the service he sang the refrain 'Swete lamman dhin are' (Sweet leman [beloved], thy favour)) instead of the regular and rigorous Dominus vobiscum a Latin phase meaning ‘The Lord be with you’. There are various other references to popular songs in the later centuries as well. However, there is practically no evidence of any direct influence of Provencal (of Provence, an area in Southern France by the Mediterranen known for poetry, music, song, dance and good wine) poetry upon English lyric. Some elements of the troubadour lyric of France which can be located in the English lyrics probably reached England with the help of French poets.

Among the English secular lyrics one of the most melodious deals with the poet's happiness over his good fortune that has helped him to fall in love with Alysoun. There is a vivid description of her brown eyes, fair hair and 'middel smal'. The lyric also expresses the apprehension of the lover that his beloved might be snatched away from him: 'Icham for wowing al forwake,/ Wery so water in wore,/ Lest eny reve me my make'. A favourite theme of these lyrics is the contentment of the lover to dwell happily on his lady's graces. In one lyric the poet compares the beauty of the lady-love with flowers, gems, birds and even medicinal herbs and then concentrates on describing her teeth, mouth and every detail of her physical beauty. Sometimes despair is also expressed by the poet: 'Foweles in pe frith/ Pe fisses in pe flod./ And I mon waxe wod./ Mulch sorw i walk with/ For beste of bon and blod.' A common French convention employed in these lyrics is the poet-lover coming across a love adventure during the course of his wandering: 'Nou sprinkles the sprai:/ Al for love icche am so seeke/ That slepen I ne mai.' There is a long history of lyrics being associated with spring. Cuckoo Song, one of the most famous lyrics of the Middle Ages, expresses pure delight at the return of spring: 'Sumer is i-cumen in,/ Lhude sing, cuccu!/ Groweth sed and bloweth med/ And springth the wde nu./ Sing, cuccu!' Just as spring symbolises mirth, winter is associated with the poet's melancholy mood over some wrong meted out to him: 'Mirie it is while sumer ilast/ With fugheles song,/ Oc nu necheth windes blast/ And weder strong.'

Unfortunately, Middle English secular lyrics are not preserved abundantly, perhaps because religious orientation governed culture and thereby literature in a big way, at least till Chaucer stormed into the scene. The great majority of lyrics of this period that are found are therefore overtly religious or moral in nature. The religious lyrics are marked by sincerity and are sometimes brilliant examples of imaginative fervour and beauty. The devotional aspect of these lyrics is blended with emotional exuberance. Though all these lyrics are primarily appeals to Christ or the Virgin Mary for salvation of the soul , there are several variations. Many of these lyrics addressed to Virgin Mary are full of praises for her. She is depicted as the tender mother, the source of bliss and the Queen of Heaven. The way in which she is described, as the 'flower of all' or the 'brightest in bower', reminds us of secular love lyrics. These religious lyrics deal with diverse situations of the Virgin's life and she is regarded as the connecting thread between God and the human beings. The lyrics dealing with the grace of Christ are full of praises where the poet fervently pleads to Christ for salvation. Richard Caister's Ihesu, lord, pat madist me is a brilliant example of this category of religious lyric. Another lyric, Quia amore langueo, is marked by sheer beauty:

In a valey of this restles minde
I sought in mounteine and in mede,
Trusting a trewe love for to finde.
Upon an hill than I took hede;
A voice i herde, and neer I yede,
In huge dolour complaininge tho,
'See, dere soule, how my sides blede,

Quia amore langueo.'

There are several religious lyrics which focus on the sacrifice that Christ made for man. Sometimes Christ is portrayed as complaining that man has discarded him and many a times he is shown to be merciful, forgiving man for all the wrongs committed. Later poems on Christ attain a spirit of happiness and rejoicing when these lyrics are linked up with festivities like Christmas and Epiphany: 'Now may we singen as it is/ Quod puer natus est nobis.' The popularity of the carols brings in the mood of joy even more: 'Make we mery, bothe more and lasse/ For now ys the tyme of Crystymas.' Thus Middle English lyrics, both secular and religious, contribute significantly to the development of Middle English poetry

Middle English Romances

The shift from Old English heroic poetry to medieval verse romance marks a remarkable transformation in temperament. While heroic poetry is realistic, romance is escapist in nature where characters fight either on principles or as a ritual and the primary emphasis is on the hero's character. Medieval romance is divided into three categories- **'Matter of France', 'Matter of Britain'** and **'Matter of Rome'** which includes tales of Alexander the Great. This division was made by the late twelfth century trouvere Jean Bodel based on the subject matter of these romances. The earliest amongst these is the 'Matter of France' which deals with the diverse activities of Charlemagne and his knights. A brilliant example of this is Chanson de Roland. However, with the growth of this 'Matter', the focus shifted away from the folk legends of Charlemagne to the exploits and adventures of individual warriors who were associated with him. These romances were sometimes produced by the monks who considered these romances to be a means to attract patronage by identifying their patrons with Charlemagne's heroes. The 'Matter of Britain' is centred on the Arthurian stories whose references can be found in the historic writings of Geoffrey of Monmouth's History of the Kings of Britain and Layamon's Brut. Most of the later Arthurian romances have evolved from the Breton legends and not from the English

chroniclers. These romances deal with the different adventures of the knights of the Round Table and focus on the ideals of courtly love quite elaborately. Among the surviving English 'Matter of Britain' special mention should be made of Morte Arthure and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight for their literary qualities. The subject matter of the 'Matter of Rome' romances is the ancient classical world as perceived from the medieval perspective. The handling of ancient classical stories by medieval romancers helps us to peep into the minds of the medieval people. It is the depiction of classical culture tempered by medieval sentiment and the sources from which the stories are derived are not from the mainstream classical literature. For example the story of Troy is derived not from Homer, but from the fourth century Latin writer Dictys Cretensis. These romances deal with destruction of Troy, the grand personality of Alexander the Great, Dido's pathos and so on. These romances are of primary interest to modern readers not for their literary quality; rather because they provide an insight into the medieval imagination. Another very significant 'Matter' which Jean Bodel did not mention is a group of romances,which because of their subject matter , are included in **'The Matter of England'.** This group deals with material from Germanic sources of English history, particularly a portion of oral legends celebrating English heroes as Offa, Earl Godwin and Eadric the Wild. King Horn is the earliest extant romance belonging to this group which is a brilliant instance of discarding courtly elements of the French by the English romancers who gave more emphasis on adventure in comparison to the love element. Another notable romance belonging to this group is Havelock the Dane which also focuses on adventures and is worth-mentioning because of its vitality.

Apart from these four 'Matters' there are other miscellaneous romances which deal with independent subjects. Floris and Blancheflour revolves around a popular love legend of the east which came into Europe through the Crusades. Another such medieval romance is Sir Orfeo in which the classical story of Orpheus and Eurydice is treated in the fashion of a Breton lai and thus transformed into a fairy tale far distant from the Greek myth of Hades. It is a translation from a French original in the south of France. The setting is changed from Greek to medieval. The romance is marked by simplicity and naivety and the story is well-constructed.

There are several other unclassified Middle English romances dealing with diversified themes as tolerance of abused woman, conventional courtly situations, history and folklore. The verse forms of all these romances vary from short rhyming couplets to complicated stanzas. The stylistic variations are also remarkable. Another interesting aspect of these romances is the clue that modern readers get about the practices and

temperaments of the medieval times. Just like the verse romances there are several Middle English prose romances. A famous example of this is Morte d' Arthur. This will be discussed in Middle English Prose.

Given below is an illustrative chart of the major Romances based mainly on Bodel's division. This will help you identify the main trends that you can back up with your detailed study of the Middle English period from the suggested reading list:

Matter	**Major work(s)**	**Leading figure(s)**	**Features**
Matter of France	*Chanson de Roland*	Charlemagne and his Knights	Written by monks, who considered these as means of attracting patronage; hence focus often shifted away from folk legends of Charlemagne to adventures of individual warriors associated with him.
Matter of Britain	*Brut; Morte Arthure, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*	King Arthur	Adventures of Knights of the Round Table; ideals of courtly love.
Matter of Rome	*King Alisaunder; Siege of Thebes*	Alexander; Aeneas; Trojan War; Oedipus and the city of Thebes	Depiction of classical culture tempered by medieval sentiment.
Matter of England	*King Horn*	Offa; Earl Godwin; Eadric	Adaptations from Germanic sources of English history; cutting down on French elements and focussing on adventure.
Miscellaneous Romances		See text above	

Chaucer, Gower and Langland

The three great writers of the Middle English Period without whom any discussion of

Middle English poetry remains incomplete are Geoffrey Chaucer, William Langland and John Gower. Geoffrey Chaucer is undoubtedly that poet of the Middle English period in whose capable hands both English language and literature attained maturity. His range, complexity, humorous tone, essentially humane outlook and technical brilliance place him much above the other poets of his times. His acquaintance with European literature enabled him to deal in English with themes and attitudes prevalent in European literature. He was a keen observer of human nature and portrayed it with a balance between sympathy and irony. His training in courtly and diplomatic lifestyle helped him to present diverse characters in his works with utmost conviction. His poetry also depicts the classical world of Greece and Rome tempered by medieval imagination. He was inspired by the tradition of courtly love embodied in the famous medieval French allegorical poem *Romaunt de la Rose* and the later French developments on it. During this period, when the influence of French courtly poetry is most marked on him, he translated a part of the Romaunt de la Rose. The other important poems of this phase are *The Book of the Duchesse* which is probably Chaucer's earliest composition and dates back to 1369. It is written in dream allegory tradition on the death of Blanche, the Duchess of Lancaster. Other poems of this period include *An A.B.C.*, *The Compleynt of Mars* and *The Compleynt unto Pite*.

The next stage of his poetic career, sometimes referred to as the Italian period is marked by significant advances upon the French stage in Chaucer's increasing sense of perception, greater technical expertise and originality. *Anelida and Arcite* and *The Parliament of Foules* belong to this group of poems. The latter uses the convention of dream allegory and the demande d'amour and is marked by a celebration of St. Valentine's Day. It is a marvellous example of Chaucer's comic spirit revealed through the characterization of the birds. *The House of Fame* is one of the significant poems in English, particularly from the perspectives of character delineation and conversational elements. This work of Chaucer in inspired by Dante's *Divina Commedia* and departs from the environment of trance, though the dream framework is still retained. *Troilus and Criseyde* is considered to be Chaucer's best narrative work. The intense feeling of pathos and the deft employment of the rhyme royal elevate the stature of this Chaucerian work to a masterpiece. The narration of a love story enriched with psychological intensity, use of controlled digressions, acute sense of structure and handling of detail bring this work very close to the genre of the novel. It is inspired by Boccaccio's *II Filostrato*. The Italian group also includes *The Legend of Good Women* where Chaucer plans to tell nineteen tales of virtuous and loving women but ultimately finishes eight of them. Here Chaucer comes back to the love vision and regards this work as a penance for having

written heresies against love and portraying faithless women earlier. This poem is the first example of Chaucer's use of the heroic couplet, and that too, with skill and freedom.

The English period of Chaucer is considered the time of his greatest achievement when he composed one of the landmarks of English literature, *The Canterbury Tales.* Chaucer was deeply influenced by Boccaccio for the general idea of this poem but that influence was tempered by his English sensibility. It deals with twenty-nine pilgrims who are going to pay a visit to the tomb of Thomas a Becket at Canterbury and during the course of this journey they meet at the Tabard Inn in Southwark where they decide to tell tales from diverse literary and folk sources to while away their time. Chaucer, with his keen power of observation and knowledge of human character, chooses the pilgrims from all ranks of society, from the chivalrous knight to the humble ploughman. This gives Chaucer the opportunity to blend his literary knowledge with his observant nature. **The General Prologue** succeeds to set the scene and establish the characters. The poem is unfinished but it is marked by a fresh approach to literature, brilliant use of irony, humour and spontaneity. Chaucer's followers lacked both his range of vision and the technical skill and it was only after the arrival of Shakespeare on the English literary scene that Chaucer's unique combination of broad genial humour, penetrating insight into characters, range of knowledge and sheer technical mastery could be found again. You will definitely enjoy the peek into Chaucer's power of drawing secular characters in the Portrait of the Wife of Bath that follows in Module 2.

Whatever information we can gather about William Langland is from the manuscripts of his poem *The Vision of William concerning Piers the Plowman* or the poet's own remarks during the course of the poem. These manuscripts appear in three forms, respectively the A, B and C texts. The A text is the shortest with about 2500 lines, while the B text is a longer one containing more than 7200 lines and the C text, based upon B, is even longer with nearly 7300 lines. Earlier it was presumed that all these three texts were composed by Langland. However, recent researches prove that though the A text is undoubtedly the writing of Langland, the other two contain additional material by later writers.

The poem is based on the poet's vision on the Malvern Hills in which he saw Piers the Plowman. In this trance the poet perceives a fair 'feld full of folk'. The first vision blends into various other scenes dealing with the adventurous engagements of different allegorical beings and abstract figures like Wit, Study and Faith. Before the advent of the Messianic deliverer, Piers the Plowman, all these virtuous powers suffer terribly. It is only Piers who succeeds in bringing back the balance correctly. There is an undercurrent

of criticism running throughout the poem against all forms of vices practised in the Church. The poet also focuses on the virtues of common people and sympathetically portrays their struggle in life. It becomes evident through the poem that Langland is concerned with religious, social and economic problems of his time. *Piers the Plowman* is marked by simplicity, energetic rhythm and the easy handling of alliterative lines. The poem is remarkable in its vividness of description of contemporary life and is a harmonious blending of popular imagination and individual vision.

John Gower is a typical representative of his times, drawing inspiration from the materials that were readily available to him. He was more of a conservative and moralist poet who lacked originality and imaginative fecundity. His first work is *Speculum Meditantis* which is composed in French. It is primarily a manual of sins and sinners where the poet offers a detailed description of vice being the result of man's corrupt nature. The poet suggests repentance to be the only remedy of such vice. Gower's next work, *Vox Clamantis* is in Latin. It is a dream allegory based on the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. It narrates the story of violence and anarchy and stresses upon the corruption rampant in the contemporary society. His last work, *Confessio Amantis*, written at the command of the King, is in English. This poem, employing an allegorical setting, talks of the seven deadly sins. This poem uses several stories dealing with multiple subjects. Though Gower lacks richness of imagination, he presents a brilliant picture of his age and proves himself to be a master story-teller.

1.3.4 Summing Up M.E Poetry

It is difficult to trace the course of poetry during the eleventh and twelfth centuries since very little is available. Some fragments of didactic and religious poetry indicate a continuation of Anglo-Saxon alliterative kind of poetry, though in a looser form. A striking breakthrough in the tradition is *Orrmulum* written by an Augustinian canon named Orm about the year 1200. *Cursor Mundi* is another lengthy (thirty thousand lines) religious poem dealing with all the significant incidents of the Old and New Testament stories and other religious topics as well. The literary convention of verse debate, so popular in Latin and French, was employed with immense success in The *Owl and the Nightingale*. The alliterative tradition of the Anglo-Saxon literature can be observed to be popularly used in Layamon's *Brut*. More impressive usage of the alliterative tradition is found in a unique manuscript preserved in the British Museum-the manuscript containing four alliterative poems poems, namely, *Pearl, Purity, Pateince* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is considered to be one of the best of all Middle English allegorical romances and is a harmonious

blending of the folk elements of the Celtic, the vigour of the Anglo-Saxon and the sophistication of the French. Another significant form of Middle English poetry is the Middle English lyric which can be distinguished into two categories- the religious and the secular. The religious lyric is not restricted to any national boundary and belongs to literary and ecclesiastical traditions. On the other hand, the roots of secular lyric can be traced in the native soil, in the secular Latin lyric or in French and Provencal poetry. These lyrics, both secular and religious, contribute significantly to the development of Middle English poetry. The shift from Old English heroic poetry to medieval verse romance marks a remarkable transformation in temperament. Medieval verse romance is divided into three categories- 'Matter of France', 'Matter of Britain' and 'Matter of Rome'. 'Matter of France' deals with the diverse activities of Charlemagne and his knights. 'Matter of Britain' is centred on the Arthurian stories. The subject matter of the 'Matter of Rome' is the ancient classical world as perceived from the medieval perspective. Another very significant 'Matter' is a group of romances called 'The Matter of England'. This group deals with material from Germanic sources. The three major poets of Middle English Period are Geoffrey Chaucer, William Langland and John Gower. In Chaucer's hands both English language and literature attained maturity. His range, complexity, humour and an essentially humane outlook and technical brilliance place him much above the other poets of his time. William Langland is famous for his Piers the Plowman. John Gower is a typical representative of his times drawing inspiration from the materials that were readily available to him.

1.3.5 Middle English Prose

The sermons, translations and several didactic works which are essential parts of Middle English prose, though of little literary interest, are quite important for the philologists and the historians. The earliest writings of this category after the Norman Conquest are those titled as the Katherine Group. These include the lives of three saints, Katherine, Margaret and Juliana, a treatise discussing the advantages of virginity and the disadvantages of marriage, a homily where Wit (the informed master) is in conflict with Will (the foolish mistress) over the control of the Soul. The prose style is alliterative with a rhythmic effect. The writings are addressed to women, like *Ancrene Riwle* which is a manual of instruction for three young girls who are would-be-anchoresses. It is a prose work written probably about 1200 and is rich in didactic and devotional material. It is also a very realistic historical document describing matters of daily life. The prose style is made interesting by the use of proverbs, anecdotes and character sketches. Walter Hilton's prose work *The Scale of Perfection* is another significant document of English

prose style. It debates the claims of active and contemplative life. Michael of Northgate's *Ayenbite of Inwyt* (Prick of Conscience) is a translation of a thirteenth century didactic work. The translation is marked by dullness and inaccuracy. However, from the linguistic point of view, it is significant as the author's own autograph copy is preserved. It is also considered to be a seminal text in the South-eastern, particularly Kentish dialect.

John Wyclif, another important prose writer of the Middle English period, was an active controversialist, politician, philosopher and reformer. He attacked certain important practices of the Church and issued a large number of pamphlets dealing with the social injustices of the time. He wrote many Latin books to support his revolutionary opinions. He is famous for the first complete translation of the Bible in English. Though the entire translation was not done by Wyclif himself, it was done under his inspiration and influence. Nicholas of Hereford is thought to have translated part of the earlier of the two versions (completed between 1382 and 1384) and John Purvey the later (completed soon after 1388). The translation is from the Latin text of the Vulgate and does not possess much grace or life. However, it has a simplicity and pointedness that makes it appealing to the readers.

John Mandeville's best-known book is *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*. It is a translation from a French work written between 1357 and 1371. The French work was translated into various languages, including English. The English version has a preface which introduces the author as Sir John Mandeville. Recently the existence of an actual Mandeville has been denied and the real author is considered to be Jehan de Bourgogne who died in 1372.'Travels' is now regarded as a compilation from several popular books based on voyages, including those of Friar Odoric and Marco Polo. The book includes incredible details of the writer's experiences in different countries. The prose style is straightforward and clear with colloquial touches here and there. It is a book marked with a distinct literary style and flavour which includes short, freely dispersed and tersely phrased narrations.

Sir Thomas Malory's reputation is largely dependent on his famous work *Morte d' Arthur* which was written as late as the ninth year of the reign of King Edward IV in 1469. Almost whatever we know about Malory is contained in the preface of Caxton, the first printer of the book. Like the *Travels* of Mandeville, *Morte d' Arthur* is also a compilation made from a number of French romances dealing with King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table. Malory treated his materials skilfully to suit his purpose. Though the sources of the book are diverse, a uniform dignity is maintained throughout. The entire book is suffused with the essence of romance and medieval chivalry. The blending of

dialogue and narrative makes the writing lively and colourful. The style has a simple clarity and transparency and is full of poetic cadences.

1.3.6 Middle English Drama

The history of English drama begins with priests beginning to expand the rituals of the Catholic church with some dialogues spoken by the priests themselves, which dramatized some of the rituals of Easter and Christmas. It also had other sources like pre-Christian seasonal festivals, St. George and Robin Hood plays, Maypole dances and other folk activities, but we do not have enough surviving material about them. We cannot even draw a line of continuity between the origins of English drama in the Middle English period and the classical drama of Greece and Rome which had much earlier stopped being a vital force. The only remnant of classical drama can be located in the mimes or professional strolling players who were found throughout the Middle English period in diverse parts of Europe. However, Middle English drama owes very little to them.

Major dramatic elements were present in the rituals of the Christian Church where celebrations of Christmas and Easter involved all the dramatic moments of Christ's life from birth to Resurrection. As early as the tenth century Easter representations of Christ's empty tomb were made interesting with the help of dialogue between one figure sitting outside and three others who come in, as if in search of something. Such representations were considered to possess instructional lessons and were popular at Easter and such other feasts. The writers also sought sources in New Testament stories like the Annunciation and the Nativity and in the popular stories of the Old Testament such as those of the Fall, Noah and Daniel. Gradually liturgical drama which was enacted within the Church underwent expansion, with additional characters and dialogues and came out to the courtyard. Then with the clergymen dissociating themselves from such plays, it moved to the village square or to the marketplace. Once this shift took them outside the church premises, Latin easily gave way to English, for the demand for vernacular modes of representation was a long standing insipient longing. These plays were performed in the open. By this time the liturgy or church service element was almost gone. The plays had begun to tell long, elaborate stories and included a number of characters, not only Biblical, but sometimes ingenuously devised. But the religious element remained strong, since the Bible stories were dramatized. These are called the Miracle plays.

Miracle plays developed quite rapidly in the thirteenth century and by the fourteenth century there was an evolution of complete cycles of plays. Since the enactment of the

plays were now not confined within the church, suitable seasons were required for the performances. The feast of Corpus Christi (in May or June) established in 1264 and confirmed in 1311, was considered to be a perfect day for the performance of miracle plays, both because of the time of the year and also because it was a procession in which dramatic performances were staged on wagons ('pageants') which moved to different spots of the locality. As drama gradually came to acquire secular dimensions, control of performances passed to the trade guilds which were responsible for the dramatic productions. Each guild selected a separate episode from a cycle and it involved not only considerable expenditure but also ingenuity as far as the arrangement of the superstructure and stage properties were concerned. Nearly complete cycles of miracle plays survive from those of Chester, York and Wakefield. The Chester cycle, composed between 1350 and 1450, contains twenty-five plays beginning with the *Fall of Satan* and ending with the *Day of Judgement*. The plays are written in eight-line stanzas with rime couee or tail rhyme. The stories are simple with realistic touches here and there. However, the dialogues and the action are immature. From the York cycle forty-eight plays have survived, though originally there were fifty-four. A distinction can be made amongst these plays which can be divided into four groups. The first group is crude and didactic in tone. The second group shows the influence of the alliterative revival and indicates the writer's metrical skill. The third group introduces elements of humour and finally the last group contains powerful dramatic elements. The Wakefield cycle is also known as Towneley Plays (because the manuscript was owned by the Towneley family) and contains thirty-two plays. These are marked by a strong sense of realism and have better literary qualities than the plays of other cycles. Some of the plays reveal note of real poetry while others possess ironic humour and realistic characterisation. Among these are included a Noah and two shepherd plays (the First Shepherds'Play and the Second Shepherds'Play). You will be studying the second of these is one of your forthcoming Units.

While miracle plays were still very popular, another dramatic form, with more direct links with Elizabethan drama, evolved. This form is called the morality play and it is remarkably different from miracle plays since it has no connection with biblical stories. Morality plays deal with personified abstractions of Virtues and Vices which are in constant struggle for the possession of a man's soul. Abstractions like Justice, Mercy, Gluttony are other common characters. The morality play borrows from contemporary homiletic technique and deals with subjects which were popular among medieval preachers. A very common theme of these plays is the 'Dance of Death' which portrays Death as God's messenger who summons all and sundry. References to morality plays

are found in the fourteenth century. However, the fullest development of these plays is found in the fifteenth century. The earliest complete extant morality play is *The Castle of Perseverance* written in about 1425. It is quite elaborate, involving thirty-four characters. The theme is the conflict between the central character Mankind's Good Angel and his supporters on the one hand and his Bad Angel supported by the Seven Deadly Sins on the other hand. *The Castle of Perseverance* is one among the three plays found in the Macro MS. The other two are Wisdom and *Mankind*. The best-known morality play is *Everyman* where the personified abstractions play their parts with dramatic logic and the action involves simple dignity. The characters are portrayed effectively and there is a noble pathos running throughout the play:

O all thing faileth, save God alone;

Beauty, Strength, and Discretion;

For when Death bloweth his blast,

They all run from me full fast.

This play is the most appealing of all the surviving morality plays of the fifteenth century. Everyman, the central character, is summoned by Death to undertake a prolonged journey from where he can never return. Everyman fervently searches for friends who can be his companions but nobody like Fellowship, Goods, Kindred, agrees. Only Good Deeds becomes ready to be both his guide and companion. However, she is weak because of the sins committed by Everyman. So she recommends him to her sister Knowledge, who again leads Everyman to Confession. After Everyman does penance, Good Deeds becomes strong enough to be his companion, along with Discretion, Strength, Five Wits and Beauty. But when the time arrives for Everyman to enter into his grave, all other companions except Good Deeds, refuse to join him. An angel announces the entry of the soul of Everyman 'into the heavenly sphere' and a 'Doctor' points at the moral.

This play is sometimes considered to be a translation of a Dutch morality play titled *Elckerlijk*.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century a kind of morality play developed that dealt with moral problems in more realistic and comic way. This kind of secular play is called the Interlude which is the latest predecessor of the drama proper of Elizabethan age. By the sixteenth century the Interlude included scenes far removed from the medieval

morality plays. It introduced real characters, broad farcical (sometimes coarse) humour and set scenes, an innovation in English drama. The Interlude continued to be written and staged well into the Tudor period. By the time of Henry VIII it had begun to be used for political satire and lost much of its humour.

It is difficult to trace the transition from medieval religious drama to Tudor secular drama since many of the texts have been lost. However, there is continuation of dramatic tradition from the simple native drama enriched by foreign influences to more sophisticated and secular drama. Particularly interesting is the transformation of the personified character of 'Vice' that develops from a horrifying tempter to a purely comic figure. It is undoubtedly true that the Interlude was an immense advance upon the morality play. The most accomplished writer of the Interlude is John Heywood. The Play Called *the Four PP* (pronounced 'pees') is his best creation where there is a description of a lying match among a Palmer, a Pedlar, a Pardoner and an Apothecary. The play is composed in doggerel verse. Another play of Heywood *A Merry Play* between Johan the Husband, Tyb his Wife, and Sir Johan the Priest deals with the conventional theme of a meek husband, a shrewd wife and her lover, a priest. This play is a farce and has sharp wit and clever sayings. In both the plays of Heywood, the plots are rudimentary where the writer does not succeed in developing a sustained dramatic structure. Drama in its fullest form started to appear around 1550 where the influence of Seneca and other classical dramatists could be observed. This dramatic form would reach its zenith in the Elizabethan era.

1.3.7 Summing up M.E Drama

Major dramatic elements were present in the rituals of the Christian Church. Liturgical drama, which was enacted within the Church, gradually grew more secular and moved to the marketplace or other convenient locations. Once outside the church premises, English replaced Latin. These plays were performed in the open and were largely separated from the liturgy, but the Bible provided the subjects. These were called the miracle plays. Nearly complete cycles of miracle plays survive from the towns of Chester, York and Wakefield. While miracle plays were still very popular, another dramatic form, with more direct links with Elizabethan drama, evolved. This form is called the morality play. It is remarkably different from miracle plays since it has no connection with biblical stories. The Morality play deals with personified abstractions of Virtues and Vices which are in constant struggle for the possession of a man's soul. Abstractions like Justice, Mercy, Gluttony are other common characters. Towards the end of the

fifteenth century a kind of morality play developed that dealt with moral problems in more realistic and comic way. This kind of secular play is called the Interlude which is the last predecessor of the drama proper.

1.3.8 Recommended Reading

1. A.C. Baugh. Literary History of England Vol 1. London: Routledge, 1994
2. Boris Ford. The Pelican Guide to English Literature: The Age of Chaucer. Penguin Books, 1971
3. David Daiches. A Critical History of English Literature Vol 1. Ronald Press Company, 1960. Repr. Random House India, 2007
4. Legouis and Cazamian. A History of English Literature Vol 1. Macmillan, 1927

1.3.9 Comprehension Exercises

Essay Type Questions (20 marks):

1. Who are the three great poets of the Middle English period? Discuss their contribution in the development of Middle English poetry.
2. Why is Chaucer considered to be one of the most important poets of the Middle English period?
3. What are the three major groups of Middle English drama? Discuss the growth and development of them.
4. Write a brief assessment of Middle English poetry.

Middle-Length Questions (10 marks):

1. Why is Middle English lyric considered to be one of the significant forms of Middle English poetry?
2. What are the three categories of Middle English Romance? Discuss them.
3. Write an essay on Middle English Prose.
4. How do the miracle and morality plays contribute to the development of Middle English drama?

Short Questions (5 marks):

1. How did Norman Conquest influence the English language?
2. Discuss Sir Gawain and the Green Knight as a remarkable example of allegorical romance.
3. Comment on the contributions of John Mandeville and Sir Thomas Malory in the development of English prose.
4. Name the best-known morality play. Why is this play considered to be the most appealing of all morality plays?

Module 2 - Select Textual Representations of the Periods

Unit 1 ❑ Extracts from Beowulf

2.1.0. Introduction to the Unit

In Module 1 Unit 1 of, you have read about Anglo Saxon Heroic poetry. We would suggest that you refer to that section where you were told about Beowulf as the most interesting example of A.S. Heroic poetry. In that section you have been given a summary of the entire poem. It also discusses the literary merits of Beowulf and points out the various details of the way of life of the Germanic people that we find embodied in the poem. In this Unit we have selected for you three extracts from Beowulf, simplified into modern English for the pleasure of reading. Old English, as you already know from Module 1, was a highly inflected language. It also used two letters which have gone out of use. Moreover, the vocabulary has undergone extensive changes. These are aspects that you will learn more about in the sections on Philology. Suffice it to say right now that if you desire the flavour of the original, you will need to learn Old English as a different language altogether. However, even from the modernised version, you can get an idea of the kind of poem that Beowulf is.

2.1.1. Brief look at *Beowulf*

The extracts are from the Prologue, from the parts that narrate Beowulf's fight with Grendel, and a description of Beowulf's funeral, which concludes the poem. The poem, an oral composition long before it was given written form by Christian monks, should not be judged by our literary standards. The *Beowulf* poet uses a large number of digressions which we may find bewildering since they apparently disturb the unity of the narrative. But then, such things are standard devices even in later epic poetry, mainly because the essence of an epic is to formulate a comprehensive picture of the times and the society in which it is set. Just as there are several digressions in the verse of Milton's *Paradise Lost,* similarly you will find quite many episodes in the full text of Beowulf that can stand independent of the general drift of the story. The original listeners who listened to the scop (poet) were familiar with such stories and would have enjoyed them. Besides, an oral narrative is most often loosely structured, and when it flows from generation to generation, you find several new elements making way and it finally becomes impossible to ascertain how the 'original' narrative would have sounded like!

But even by our standards, *Beowulf* is by no means a crude primitive poem. The brief summary and the extracts will give you a sketchy idea of how the poem shows a patterning. The poem begins when the hero is young and full of vigour. It closes when the hero is old, his prowess at an ebb. A parallel is established with Hrothgar, the great grandson of Danish king Scyld. Hrothgar has had a hall named Heorot lavishly built to house his army and as a place for community celebrations. It is to save this hall from the nightly ravages of Grendel the monster, that the help of Beowulf, the young and famed Geat prince is sought. When the poem begins, Hrothgar is old and exhausted after a lifetime of battles to protect his people. But we hear in retrospect about Hrothgar's feats of bravery when he was younger.

When Hrothgar bids farewell to victorious Beowulf, the older man says some wise words to the hero who has achieved for him what he himself could not----the safety of his subjects. Hrothgar tells Beowulf that old age and decay are inevitable and so he must not be vain. The words are prophetic as Beowulf too loses his former strength in old age, and is fatally wounded in his last battle. The poem focuses on the qualities that the Germanic people venerated. Loyalty was a prime virtue. So were bravery and physical prowess. The subjects, especially the king's men at the court were supposed to be faithful to their liege-lord. In return, the king gifted them ornaments, weapons etc. Both Hrothgar and Beowulf are generous givers of gold.

Towards the end of the poem, Wiglaf, Beowulf's loyal follower, bitterly criticizes the ten cowardly Geats who run away instead of helping Beowulf during his fight with the dragon. There is a hint in the poem that the reason Beowulf sailed all the way from Geatland to Denmark to save Hrothgar's kingdom was not merely that he was seeking adventure and glory and the rewards he was sure to receive. He was also paying a debt of loyalty. In the past, Hrothgar had once given shelter to Beowulf's father, Ecgtheow, and saved him. While women were not considered very important, at the court at least there was a gracious atmosphere of courtesy. Queen Wealtheow moves among the courtiers, distributing mead. She is called 'free-born woman', 'noble-hearted'. She makes speeches and distributes ornaments. Family values were strong. Wealtheow requests Beowulf to be friends with her sons. Beowulf mourns that he has no son to succeed him. He also mentions before he dies, among his virtues, that he never killed a kinsman. The poem thus shows the poet's skill in drawing characters with a fine dramatic touch.

ACTIVITY FOR THE LEARNER

Make a chart of the different characters in *Beowulf*. Show how each is related to the other, not by blood directly but by ties of kinding ad community. You will get a picture of how bonds were created in A.S. society.

2.1.2. BEOWULF: Extract from The Prologue

PROLOGUE: THE RISE OF THE DANISH NATION

So. The Spear-Danes' in days gone by

and the kings who ruled them had courage and greatness.

We have heard of those princes' heroic campaigns.

There was Shield Sheafson, scourge of many tribes, s a wrecker of mead-benches, rampaging among foes.

This terror of the hall-troops had come far.

A foundling to start with, he would flourish later on as his powers waxed and his worth was proved.

In the end each clan on the outlying coasts beyond the whale-road had to yield to him and begin to pay tribute. That was one good king.

Afterward a boy-child was born to Shield, a cub in the yard, a comfort sent by God to that nation. He knew what they had tholed, is the long times and troubles they'd come through without a leader; so the Lord of Life, the glorious Almighty, made this man renowned.

Shield had fathered a famous son:

Beow's name was known through the north.

And a young prince must be prudent like that, giving freely while his father lives so that afterward in age when fighting starts steadfast companions will stand by him and hold the line. Behavior that's admired is the path to power among people everywhere.

Shield was still thriving when his time came and he crossed over into the Lord's keeping.

His warrior band did what he bade them when he laid down the law among the Danes: so they shouldered him out to the sea's flood, the chief they revered who had long ruled them.

A ring-whorled prow rode in the harbor, ice-clad, outbound, a craft for a prince.

They stretched their beloved lord in his boat, laid out by the mast, amidships, the great ring-giver. Far-fetched treasures were piled upon him, and precious gear.

I never heard before of a ship so well furbished with battle-tackle, bladed weapons and coats of mail. The massed treasure was loaded on top of him: it would travel fat- on out into the ocean's sway.

They decked his body no less bountifully with offerings than those first ones did who cast him away when he was a child and launched him alone out over the waves. And they set a gold standard up high above his head and let him drift to wind and tide, bewailing him and mourning their loss. No man can tell, no wise man in hall or weathered veteran knows for certain who salvaged that load.

Then it fell to Beow to keep the forts.

He was well regarded and ruled the Danes for a long time after his father took leave of his life on earth. And then his heir, the great Halfdane, held sway for as long as he lived, their elder and warlord.

He was four times a father, this fighter prince: one by one they entered the world,

Heorogar, Hrothgar, the good Halga, and a daughter, I have heard, who was Onela's queen, a balm in bed to the battle-scarred Swede.

The fortunes of war favored Hrothgar. Friends and kinsmen flocked to his ranks, young followers, a force that grew to be a mighty army.

So his mind turned to hall-building: he handed down orders for men to work on a great mead-hall meant to be a wonder of the world forever; it would be his throne-room and there he would dispense his God-given goods to young and old- but not the common land or people's lives.

Far and wide through the world, I have heard, orders for work to adorn that wallstead were sent to many peoples.

And soon it stood there finished and ready, in full view, the hall of halls.

Heorot was the name he had settled on it, whose utterance was law.

2.1.3. Prologue : Synopsis

Scyld Scefing, when only a child, was put afloat on the sea in a boat filled with many rich treasures. He floated to Denmark, grew up there, and gained fame and power by conquering many of the neighbouring tribes. These tribes used to send him tribute. The Danes had previously suffered greatly because they had no king. God then comforted them further by giving Scyld a son called Beowulf (or Beow). Beowulf (Please remember, this Beowulf is not the hero of the poem *Beowulf*. This Beowulf is of the Danish royal family, the grandfather of Hrothgar. The hero is a prince, later king, of the Geats and was famous in his lifetime and beyond. He wished to insure the loyalty of his own followers. He gave them many gifts even before he came to the throne in the hope that they would remember to serve him later in war. When Scyld died one winter, his body was placed in a ship filled with treasures and his followers sent the ship out on the open sea and no one knows where the ship went. Beowulf comes to the throne and is succeeded by his own son, Healfdene. Healfdene has three sons, Heorogar, Hrothgar, and Halga. He also has a daughter who marries Onela, a Swedish prince. Hrothgar becomes king after the death of his elder brother.

2.1.4. The Importance of the Prologue

The story of Scyld's arrival and departure are narrated historically. Scyld Scefing is

posited as a Germanic fertility God whose appearance stands for abundant growth of crops and increase in livestock wealth and whose exit in the winter refers to the death in vegetation. His son Beowulf is also modelled after fertility gods as Beow means grain. The pagan funeral custom is also noteworthy. It was probably believed that the ship carried the dead to the other world.

The Prologue's importance lies in the historic details of the Danish royal family it provides us with. The hero of the poem is probably a mixture of myth and some dimly remembered feats of early tribal heroes. But the Swedish and Danish royal personages mentioned in the prologue and elsewhere in the poem were most of them historical. So too are most of the tribal feuds between the Danes , Swedes and Geats the poem refers to or describes in detail. The hall Heorot, an Old English word for Hart, probably stood at Leire at the island of Seeland. Its name derived from the antlers on its roof, which bore evidence of the Teutonic people's love of hunting. The prologue shows an interesting blend of pagan and Christian elements. For example the Biblical Creation story is mentioned and Grendel is said to be the spawn of Cain, who slew his brother Abel. The poet says that Grendel had been condemned by God to sojourn in the sea-monster's home. One reason for the mixture could be that when Christian monks wrote down an early pagan poem they added the Christian elements. But it is also possible that the original poem itself held both pagan and Christian components. The introduction of Christianity did not at once drive out all old beliefs and customs. The prologue is thus interesting in the way it shows the co-existence of of the old and the new among the Anglo-Saxons in the 6th and 7th centuries.

2.1.5. Extract from Beowulf's Fight with Grendel

BEOWULF AND GRENDEL

Then out of the night came the shadow-stalker, stealthy and swift.

The hall-guards were slack, asleep at their posts, all except one; it was widely understood that as long as God disallowed it, the fiend could not bear them to his shadow-bourne. One man, however, was in fighting mood, awake and on edge, spoiling for action.

In off the moors, down through the mist-bands God-cursed Grendel came greedily loping.

The bane of the race of men roamed forth, hunting for a prey in the high hall.

Under the cloud-murk he moved toward it until it shone above him, a sheer keep of fortified gold. Nor was that the first time he had scouted the grounds of Hrothgar's dwelling- although never in his life, before or since, did he find harder fortune or hall-defenders.

Spurned and joyless, he journeyed on ahead and arrived at the bawn.The iron-braced door turned on its hinge when his hands touched it.

Then his rage boiled over, he ripped open the mouth of the building, maddening for blood, pacing the length of the patterned floor with his loathsome tread, while a baleful light, flame more than light, flared from his eyes.

He saw many men in the mansion, sleeping, a ranked company of kinsmen and warriors quartered together. And his glee was demonic, picturing the mayhem: before morning he would rip life from limb and devour them, feed on their flesh; but his fate that night was due to change, his days of ravening had come to an end.

Mighty and canny, Hygelac's kinsman was keenly watching for the first move the monster would make.

Nor did the creature keep him waiting but struck suddenly and started in; he grabbed and mauled a man on his bench,

bit into his bone-lappings, bolted down his blood and gorged on him in lumps, leaving the body utterly lifeless, eaten up hand and foot. Venturing closer, his talon was raised to attack Beowulf where he lay on the bed, he was bearing in with open claw when the alert hero's comeback and armlock forestalled him utterly.

The captain of evil discovered himself in a handgrip harder than anything he had ever encountered in any man on the face of the earth. Every bone in his body quailed and recoiled, but he could not escape.

He was desperate to flee to his den and hide with the devil's litter, for in all his days he had never been clamped or cornered like this.

Then Hygelac's trusty retainer recalled his bedtime speech, sprang to his feet and got a firm hold. Fingers were bursting, the monster back-tracking, the man overpowering.

The dread of the land was desperate to escape, to take a roundabout road and flee to

his lair in the fens. The latching power in his fingers weakened; it was the worst trip the terror-monger had taken to Heorot.

And now the timbers trembled and sang, a hall-session that harrowed every Dane inside the stockade: stumbling in fury, the two contenders crashed through the building.

The hall clattered and hammered, but somehow survived the onslaught and kept standing: it was handsomely structured, a sturdy frame braced with the best of blacksmith's work inside and out. The story goes that as the pair struggled, mead-benches were smashed and sprung off the floor, gold fittings and all.

Before then, no Shielding elder would believe there was any power or person upon earth capable of wrecking their horn-rigged hall unless the burning embrace of a fire engulf it in flame.

Then an extraordinary wail arose, and bewildering fear came over the Danes. Everyone felt it who heard that cry as it echoed off the wall, a God-cursed scream and strain of catastrophe, the howl of the loser, the lament of the hell-serf keening his wound. He was overwhelmed, manacled tight by the man who of all men was foremost and strongest in the days of this life.

But the earl-troop's leader was not inclined to allow his caller to depart alive: he did not consider that life of much account to anyone anywhere. Time and again, Beowulf's warriors worked to defend their lord's life, laying about them as best they could, with their ancestral blades.

Stalwart in action, they kept striking out on every side, seeking to cut straight to the soul. When they joined the struggle soo there was something they could not have known at the time, that no blade on earth, no blacksmith's art could ever damage their demon opponent.

He had conjured the harm from the cutting edge of every weapon. But his going away out of this world and the days of his life would be agony to him, and his alien spirit would travel far into fiends' keeping.

Then he who had harrowed the hearts of men with pain and affliction in former times and had given offense also to God found that his bodily powers failed him.

Hygelac's kinsman kept him helplessly locked in a handgrip. As long as either lived, he was hateful to the other. The monster's whole body was in pain; a tremendous

wound appeared on his shoulder. Sinews split and the bone-lappings burst. Beowulf was granted the glory of winning; Grendel was driven under the fen-banks, fatally hurt,to his desolate lair. His days were numbered, the end of his life was coming over him, he knew it for certain; and one bloody clash had fulfilled the dearest wishes of the Danes.

The man who had lately landed among them, proud and sure, had purged the hall, kept it from harm; he was happy with his nightwork and the courage he had shown. The Geat captain had boldly fulfilled his boast to the Danes: he had healed and relieved a huge distress, unremitting humiliations, the hard fate they'd been forced to undergo, no small affliction.

Clear proof of this could be seen in the hand the hero displayed high up near the roof: the whole of Grendel's shoulder and arm, his awesome grasp.

2.1.6. Synopsis of Beowulf's fight with Grendel

Hrothgar and Wealhtheow withdraw from the hall Heorot. It is said that Beowulf has been sent by God to guard Heorot. Beowulf, who has confidence in his own strength and in God's favour, removes his helmet, his byrnie (iron corslet), and his sword, and goes to bed. He says he will fight Grendel without weapons , because Grendel does not know the use of weapons, and that God will decide who will win. Beowulf's followers think they will be killed, but God, who rules over human beings, gives them help so that one man will overcome Grendel. All but Beowulf sleep and Grendel comes in the dark toward the palace.

Grendel enters Heorot by breaking with one thrust the iron bars which kept the doors locked. This furious demon with fire in his eyes intends to kill and eat everyone in the hall. He sees the sleeping warriors, seizes one, tears him apart and gulps him down in a few bites. Beowulf watches Grendel to see what he does. When Grendel comes over to seize him, Beowulf sits up on one elbow and catches Grendel in his grip. Grendel is terrified by the grip of Beowulf, the strongest man alive, and he tries unsuccessfully to escape. Beowulf stands up and tightens his grip. Grendel howls in pain and the two wrestlers make a huge racket as they wrestle about the hall. The Danes are terrified. They don't at this time suspect that Heorot will be set on fire later on.

Beowulf's followers come to his aid with their swords. They do not know that weapons are useless against Grendel because of his magic. But, Grendel is unable to overpower

Beowulf. Beowulf, with his great strength, wrenches Grendel's arm from the bone socket of his shoulder. The sinews and muscles snap and a great and painful wound appears in Grendel's shoulder. Beowulf is seen holding Grendel's arm and shoulder while the mortally wounded monster flees to the swamps only to die. With cool-headed determination, the happy Beowulf puts Grendel's arm and shoulder on the gable of the palace as a sign that he has fulfilled his promise and ended the affliction of the Danes. The poet creates a sense of terror and suspense. It is a cloudy night and the hall is embalmed in darkness. Little of Grendel is described except his fiery eyes, his claw-like hand, his strength, and his bellowing. He probably has a shape something like man, but is huge and perhaps ugly. The drinking of human blood and the eating of human flesh are meant to disgust. The poet suggests terror by emphasizing the noise of two strong contestants struggling in the dark. Grendel's surprise on finding Beowulf's strength and his panic and fervent attempt to escape are emphasized.

2.1.7. Critical Comments on 2.1.5.

The fight between Beowulf and Grendel shows how in Old Scandinavian sagas myth and folk history were often blended together. *Beowulf*, as we have already told you, was modelled on a remotely historical Germanic figure. The poet transferred to him the mythical deeds of Beowa, the Old Norse god of sun and summer . Notice how, the monsters, Grendel and his mother, are associated with darkness, the icy sea, the deadly fog, i.e. the winter powers of nature . So Beowulf's vanquishing of the monsters also implies the defeat of darkness by light, of winter by the sun.

Another thing to notice is how the battle highlights not only the physical prowess of Beowulf but also his noble character. Beowulf will not fight Grendel with weapons because Grendel does not know their use. So before going to bed, he takes off his helmet, chain mail, and sword. His great physical strength, a quality admired by the Germanic people , had been already praised by the Danish coast-guard when the Geats disembarked at Hrothgar's kingdom. Beowulf boasts of his strength but boasting was considered a virtue if the warrior could prove his boast through his acts. Beowulf shows great sense of responsibility too. When Grendel seizes the first warrior and devours him, Beowulf does not rush to attack him. His job is to safeguard Heorot and destroy the monster, not the protection of a single companion. The *Beowulf* poet shows a wonderful capacity for description . The great hall of Heorot is devastated as Beowulf and Grendel fight . The mead-benches are torn out of their settings . Blood runs all around. The graphic description of Grendel drinking blood and eating human flesh are put in to evoke disgust for the ogre.

2.1.8. A Extract from Beowulf's Funeral

You must remember that this section narrates incidents that come long after the Beowulf-Grendel fight. Beowulf has long been a just ruler of the Geats in the meanwhile, and in his old age, he takes up arms against a dragon for the sake of his people, and even kills it. But he gets injured in the process.

BEOWULF'S FUNERAL

It was hard then on the young hero, having to watch the one he held so dear there on the ground, going through his death agony. The dragon from underearth, his nightmarish destroyer, lay destroyed as well, utterly without life. No longer would his snakefolds ply themselves to safeguard hidden gold.

Hard-edged blades, hammered out and keenly filed, had finished him so that the sky-roamer lay there rigid, brought low beside the treasure-lodge.

Never again would he glitter and glide and show himself off in midnight air, exulting in his riches: he fell to earth through the battle-strength in Beowulf's arm.

There were few, indeed, as far as I have heard, big and brave as they may have been, few who would have held out if they had had to face the outpourings of that poison-breather or gone foraging on the ring-hall floor and found the deep barrow-dweller on guard and awake.

The treasure had been won, bought and paid for by Beowulf's death.

Both had reached the end of the road through the life they had been lent.

Before long the battle-dodgers abandoned the wood, the ones who had let down their lord earlier, the tail-turners, ten of them together.

When he needed them most, they had made off.

Now they were ashamed and came behind shields, in their battle-outfits, to where the old man lay.

They watched Wiglaf, sitting worn out, a comrade shoulder to shoulder with his lord, trying in vain to bring him round with water.

Much as he wanted to, there was no way he could preserve his lord's life on earth or alter in the least the Almighty's will.

What God judged right would rule what happened to every man, as it does to this day.

Then a stern rebuke was bound to come from the young warrior to the ones who had been cowards. Wiglaf, son of Weohstan, spoke disdainfully and in disappointment:

"Anyone ready to admit the truth will surely realize that the lord of men

who showered you with gifts and gave you the armor you are standing in-when he would distribute helmets and mail-shirts to men on the mead-benches, a prince treating his thanes in hall to the best he could find, far or near- was throwing weapons uselessly away.

It would be a sad waste when the war broke out.

Beowulf had little cause to brag about his armed guard; yet God who ordains who wins or loses allowed him to strike with his own blade when bravery was needed.

There was little I could do to protect his life in the heat of the fray, but I found new strength welling up when I went to help him.

Then my sword connected and the deadly assaults of our foe grew weaker, the fire coursed less strongly from his head. But when the worst happened too few rallied around the prince.

"So it is good-bye now to all you know and love on your home ground, the open-handedness, the giving of war-swords. Every one of you with freeholds of land, our whole nation, will be dispossessed, once princes from beyond get tidings of how you turned and fled and disgraced yourselves. A warrior will sooner die than live a life of shame."

Then he ordered the outcome of the fight to be reported to those camped on the ridge, that crowd of retainers who had sat all morning, sad at heart, shield-bearers wondering about the man they loved: would this day be his last or would he return? He told the truth and did not balk, the rider who bore news to the cliff-top. He addressed them all: "Now the people's pride and love,

the lord of the Geats, is laid on his deathbed, brought down by the dragon's attack.

Beside him lies the bane of his life, dead from knife-wounds. There was no way Beowulf could manage to get the better of the monster with his sword. Wiglaf sits at

Beowulf's side, the son of Weohstan, the living warrior watching by the dead, keeping weary vigil, holding a wake for the loved and the loathed.

Now war is looming over our nation, soon it will be known to Franks and Frisians, far and wide, that the king is gone. Hostility has been great among the Franks since Hygelac sailed forth at the head of a war-fleet into Friesland: there the Hetware harried and attacked and overwhelmed him with great odds.

The leader in his war-gear was laid low, fell among followers: that lord did not favor his company with spoils. The Merovingian king has been an enemy to us ever since.

"Nor do 1 expect peace or pact-keeping of any sort from the Swedes. Remember: at Ravenswood, Ongentheow slaughtered Haethcyn, Hrethel's son, when the Geat people in their arrogance first attacked the fierce Shylfings."

The return blow was quickly struck by Ohthere's father. Old and terrible, he felled the sea-king and saved his own aged wife, the mother of Onela and of Ohthere, bereft of her gold rings.

Then he kept hard on the heels of the foe and drove them, Ieaderless, lucky to get away in a desperate rout into Ravenswood.

His army surrounded the weary remnant where they nursed their wounds; all through the night he howled threats at those huddled survivors, promised to axe their bodies open when dawn broke, dangle them from gallows to feed the birds. But at first light when their spirits were lowest, relief arrived.

They heard the sound of Hygelac's horn, his trumpet calling as he came to find them, the hero in pursuit, at hand with troops.

"The bloody swathe that Swedes and Geats cut through each other was everywhere.

No one could miss their murderous feuding.

Then the old man made his move, pulled back, barred his people in:

Ongentheow withdrew to higher ground.

Hygelac's pride and prowess as a fighter were known to the earl; he had no confidence that he could hold out against that horde of seamen, defend his wife and the ones he loved from the shock of the attack. He retreated for shelter behind the earthwall.

Then Hygelac swooped on the Swedes at bay, his banners swarmed into their refuge, his Geat forces drove forward to destroy the camp.

There in his gray hairs, Ongentheow was cornered, ringed around with swords.

And it came to pass that the king's fate was in Eofor s hands, and in his alone.

Wulf, son of Wonred, went for him in anger, split him open so that blood came spurting from under his hair. The old hero still did not flinch, but parried fast, hit back with a harder stroke: the king turned and took him on.

Then Wonred's son, the brave Wulf, could land no blow against the aged lord.

Ongentheow divided his helmet so that he buckled and bowed his bloodied head and dropped to the ground. But his doom held off.

Though he was cut deep, he recovered again.

With his brother down, the undaunted Eofor,

Hygelac's thane, hefted his sword and smashed murderously at the massive helmet past the lifted shield. And the king collapsed, the shepherd of people was sheared of life.

Many then hurried to help Wulf, bandaged and lifted him, now that they were left masters of the blood-soaked battle-ground.

One warrior stripped the other, looted Ongentheow's iron mail-coat, his hard sword-hilt, his helmet too, and carried the graith to King Hygelac, he accepted the prize, promised fairly that reward would come, and kept his word for their bravery in action, when they arrived home.

Eofor and Wulf were overloaded by Hrethel's son, Hygelac the Geat, with gifts of land and linked rings that were worth a fortune. They had won glory, so there was no gainsaying his generosity.

And he gave Eofor his only daughter to bide at home with him, an honor and a bond.

"So this bad blood between us and the Swedes, this vicious feud, I am convinced, is bound to revive; they will cross our borders and attack in force when they find out that Beowulf is dead. In days gone by when our warriors fell and we were undefended, he kept our coffers and our kingdom safe.

He worked for the people, but as well as that he behaved like a hero.

We must hurry now to take a last look at the king and launch him, lord and lavisher of rings, on the funeral road. His royal pyre will melt no small amount of gold: heaped there in a hoard, it was bought at heavy cost, and that pile of rings he paid for at the end with his own life will go up with the flame, be furled in fire: treasure no follower will wear in his memory, nor lovely woman link and attach as a torque around her neck- but often, repeatedly, in the path of exile they shall walk bereft, bowed under woe, now that their leader's laugh is silenced, high spirits quenched. Many a spear dawn-cold to the touch will be taken down and waved on high; the swept harp won't waken warriors, but the raven winging darkly over the doomed will have news, tidings for the eagle of how he hoked and ate, how the wolf and he made short work of the dead."

Such was the drift of the dire report that gallant man delivered. He got little wrong in what he told and predicted.

The whole troop rose in tears, then took their way to the uncanny scene under Earnaness. There, on the sand, where his soul had left him, they found him at rest, their ring-giver from days gone by. The great man had breathed his last. Beowulf the king had indeed met with a marvelous death.

But what they saw first was far stranger: the serpent on the ground, gruesome and vile, lying facing him. The fire-dragon was scaresomely burned, scorched all colors.

From head to tail, his entire length was fifty feet. He had shimmered forth on the night air once, then winged back down to his den; but death owned him now, he would never enter his earth-gallery again.

Beside him stood pitchers and piled-up dishes, silent flagons, precious swords eaten through with rust, ranged as they had been while they waited their thousand winters under ground.

That huge cache, gold inherited from an ancient race, was under a spell- which meant no one was ever permitted to enter the ring-hall unless God Himself, mankind's Keeper, True King of Triumphs, allowed some person pleasing to Him- and in His eyes worthy-to open the hoard.

What came about brought to nothing the hopes of the one who had wrongly hidden

riches under the rock-face. First the dragon slew

that man among men, who in turn made fierce amends and settled the feud. Famous for his deeds a warrior may be, but it remains a mystery where his life will end, when he may no longer dwell in the mead-hall among his own.

So it was with Beowulf, when he faced the cruelty and cunning of the mound-guard. He himself was ignorant of how his departure from the world would happen.

The highborn chiefs who had buried the treasure declared it until doomsday so accursed

that whoever robbed it would be guilty of wrong and grimly punished for their transgression, hasped in hell-bonds in heathen shrines.

Yet Beowulf's gaze at the gold treasure when he first saw it had not been selfish.

Wiglaf, son of Weohstan, spoke:

"Often when one man follows his own will many are hurt. This happened to us.

Nothing we advised could ever convince the prince we loved, our land's guardian, not to vex the custodian of the gold, let him lie where he was long accustomed, lurk there under earth until the end of the world.

He held to his high destiny. The hoard is laid bare, but at a grave cost; it was too cruel a fate that forced the king to that encounter.

I have been inside and seen everything amassed in the vault. I managed to enter although no great welcome awaited me under the earthwall. I quickly gathered up a huge pile of the priceless treasures handpicked from the hoard and carried them here where the king could see them. He was still himself, alive, aware, and in spite of his weakness he had many requests. He wanted me to greet you and order the building of a barrow that would crown the site of his pyre, serve as his memorial, in a commanding position, since of all men to have lived and thrived and lorded it on earth. This worth and due as a warrior were the greatest.

Now let us again go quickly and feast our eyes on that amazing fortune heaped under the wall. I will show the way and take you close to those coffers packed with rings and bars of gold. Let a bier be made and got ready quickly when we come out and then let us bring the body of our lord, the man we loved, to where he will lodge for a long time in the care of the Almighty."

Then Weohstan's son, stalwart to the end, had orders given to owners of dwellings, many people of importance in the land, to fetch wood from far and wide for the good man's pyre:

"Now shall flame consume our leader in battle, the blaze darken round him who stood his ground in the steel-hail, when the arrow-storm shot from bowstrings pelted the shield-wall. The shaft hit home. Feather-fledged, it finned the barb in flight."

Next the wise son of Weohstan called from among the king's thanes a group of seven: he selected the best and entered with them, the eighth of their number, under the God-cursed roof; one raised a lighted torch and led the way.

No lots were cast for who should loot the hoard for it was obvious to them that every bit of it lay unprotected within the vault, there for the taking. It was no trouble to hurry to work and haul out the priceless store. They pitched the dragon over the cliff-top, let tide's flow and backwash take the treasure-minder.

Then coiled gold was loaded on a cart in great abundance, and the gray-haired leader, the prince on his bier, borne to Hronesness.

The Geat people built a pyre for Beowulf, stacked and decked it until it stood foursquare, hung with helmets, heavy war-shields and shining armor, just as he had ordered.

Then his warriors laid him in the middle of it, mourning a lord far-famed and beloved.

On a height they kindled the hugest of all funeral fires; fumes of woodsmoke billowed darkly up, the blaze roared and drowned out their weeping, wind died down and flames wrought havoc in the hot bone-house, burning it to the core. They were disconsolate and wailed aloud for their lord's decease.

A Geat woman too sang out in grief; with hair bound up, she unburdened herself of her worst fears, a wild litany of nightmare and lament: her nation invaded, enemies on the rampage, bodies in piles, slavery and abasement. Heaven swallowed the smoke.

Then the Geat people began to construct a mound on a headland, high and imposing, a marker that sailors could see from far away, and in ten days they had done the work.

It was their hero's memorial; what remained from the fire they housed inside it,

behind a wall as worthy of him as their workmanship could make it. And they buried torques in the barrow, and jewels and a trove of such things as trespassing men had once dared to drag from the hoard.

They let the ground keep that ancestral treasure, gold under gravel, gone to earth, as useless to men now as it ever was.

Then twelve warriors rode around the tomb, chieftains' sons, champions in battle, all of them distraught, chanting in dirges, mourning his loss as a man and a king.

They extolled his heroic nature and exploits and gave thanks for his greatness; which was the proper thing, for a man should praise a prince whom he holds dear and cherish his memory when that moment comes when he has to be convoyed from his bodily home.

So the Geat people, his hearth-companions, sorrowed for the lord who had been laid low.

They said that of all the kings upon earth he was the man most gracious and fair-minded, kindest to his people and keenest to win fame.

2.1.8.B. Synopsis of Beowulf's Funeral

After the fire-spitting dragon is slain Beowulf discovers that the poison from the dragon's bite has reached his breast and entrails. He sits on a rock so that he can look at the barrow, a work built by giants. Wiglaf unfastens Beowulf's helmet and washes him with water. Beowulf tells him that if he had a son he would, at this moment, give him his armour. He fondly recapitulates that no one dared to attack the Geats while he was the ruler. He always avoided scheming and he never uttered false oaths. Knowing that he is dying, he says that God cannot accuse him of ever murdering a kinsman. He asks Wiglaf to bring out the treasure from the barrow so that he may see it and die in peace.

Wiglaf immediately obeys the command of Beowulf. The barrow was filled with many ancient treasures. Such treasure can overpower a man. Wiglaf carries out an armful of treasure, cups, dishes, a gold banner, and he rushes back to Beowulf. He is afraid that he might not be alive. Beowulf revives and thanks God for the treasure. He asks Wiglaf that after his body has been burned,his people must raise a barrow (a high grave mound on Hronesnes. That way his people will remember him and seamen can look on the barrow and call it "Beowulf's Grave." He then gives his golden collar, helmet, corselet, and ring to Wiglaf. He tells him that he is the last survivor of his race. His soul leaves his body and goes to the realm of the Good God.

Beowulf now lies dead near the lifeless dragon. No one besides Beowulf, according to legend, ever defied the dragon while it was awake. Wiglaf vainly attempts to revive Beowulf with water. The ten cowards who fled to the wood now return. Wiglaf speaks to them with anger. Beowulf had given them coats of mail and helmets. These gifts were wasted for Beowulf had to fight alone. Only Wiglaf helped him. The ten traitors and their families will now be without land and they will be in want. No king will give these warriors swords and treasures. They and their families will be miserable, for the chiefs of all nations will hear how they abandoned their lord and disgraced themselves.

Wiglaf sends a messenger to announce the result of the fight with the dragon to the chiefs and retainers. They have been waiting sadly in a fort on a hill by the sea. The messenger also praises Wiglaf's part in the fight. He warns the Geats that the Franks (Merovingians) and the Frisians will attack them when they hear of Beowulf's death. Most of all he warns them that a Swedish attack can be expected. Here the messenger recapitulates past history of feud between Geats and Swedes. Ongentheow, King of the Swedes, killed Haethcyn, who was the Geatish king at the time and regained his old queen who had been captured. The leaderless Geats barely escaped with their lives. Ongentheow besieged the few tired and wounded survivors and swore that he would kill them all in the morning. But Hygelac came and overwhelmed him that night and established himself as the new ruler.

When the princes long ago placed this treasure in the barrow, they put a curse on the treasure which would last until Judgement Day. It would be a sin for anyone to rob the treasure. The robber would be sent to Hell. Beowulf did not know this. He did not know that it was his fate to die as a result of this treasure. No one was able to persuade Beowulf not to disturb this treasure and now many must die as a result. Wiglaf tells the Geats that Beowulf asked that they build him a magnificent tomb. Wiglaf orders the Geats to get timber for the pyre. He has Beowulf's body carried to the pyre. Wiglaf leads seven of Beowulf's best men to the barrow to get the treasure. It is carried to the funeral site on a wagon. The dragon is then thrown into the sea.

Beowulf's body, together with helmet, shields, and corselets, is placed on top of a huge pile of logs. The Geats lament their chief. A Geatish woman laments and speaks of her fear of impending disaster. Within ten days the Geats build a vault over the ashes and put the treasures taken from the dragon's hoard in the vault. Twelve warriors on horseback circle his tomb, lamenting the death of Beowulf and praising him for his heroic deeds. Beowulf of all men was the kindest, most gentle, most humane, and most eager for fame.

2.1.9. Critical Comments on 2.1.8.A

The poem has a magnificent ending with description of the pagan funeral rites of Beowulf. You remember that at the beginning, in the prologue, you got another description of a pagan funeral, that of Scyld Scefing, another feudal king. Both funerals, accompanied by the grieving laments of the vassals or subjects show the great political importance of the hero-king in the feudal structure. On his strength and wisdom depended the safety and security of his people. The woman who sings a dirge at Beowulf's funeral talks of evil days coming, many slayings, warriors taken into captivity. The poet glorifies Beowulf's last battle by paying a tribute to the slain dragon---its beauty and strength, so that it was a worthy adversary for Beowulf. The most remarkable feature of the last part is probably the final tribute to Beowulf . The last lines, which may serve as his epitaph, Beowulf is not praised for his physical strength or courage. He is commended as 'the mildest of men, most kindly, most gentle to his people and most eager for praise. Praise here means that Beowulf was careful to protect his reputation. The qualities of kindness and gentleness show the impact of Christianity on the pagan poem but it also shows that the Anglo-Saxons were aware that a good ruler needed these civilised virtues as much as physical power.

2.1.10. The verse form of Beowulf

The metre of Old English poetry is different from the metre you are familiar with---the pattern of a regular number of stressed and unstressed syllables alternating. The main principles of A.S. metre are simple. Each line is made up of two half-lines which are separated by a caesura and joined by alliteration. Each half-line has normally two feet and each foot is made up of an accented syllable and a varying number of unaccented syllables. The alliteration which links the two half-lines falls on the accented syllables. Words beginning with the same consonant alliterate in Old English, and a word beginning with a vowel alliterates with any other word beginning with a vowel. For example:

Him se yldesta | ondswarode,

(Him the eldest | answered)

Werodes wisa | word-hord onleac

(Of the troop the leader | word-hoard unlocked)

Like other Old English poems, Beowulf employs a special kind of poetic diction. It employs synonyms, descriptive epithets, and conventional formulae. It uses many digressions and allusions and numerous kennings,i.e. condensed similes like 'whale's

road' for sea, 'day-candle' for sun, 'sea-wulf' for Grendel's mother etc. Keeping in mind the tradition the poet uses alliterative verse. The poem is made structurally coherent by points of view of the poet and the characters like Hrothgar giving an account of his reign to Beowulf, Beowulf to Wiglaf, Wiglaf to the Geats. And, above all it is a heroic poem that celebrates victory, triumph, fierceness of battle and vicissitudes of life.

2.1.11 Bibliography

1. The text of *Beowulf* is taken from The Norton Anthology of English Literature, 8th Edn. Vol.1 edited by E. Talbat Donaloson et all. General Editor-Stephen Greenblatt. Founding Editor - M.H Abrams. The *Beowulf* text follows Seamus Heaney's translation.

2.1.12 Comprehension Exercises

A. Long-answer type (20 marks each):

1. Discuss the importance of the Prologue.
2. Describe Beowulf's fight with Grendel.
3. Discuss Beowulf's funeral ceremony.
4. What ideas do we get about the life of the Anglo-Saxons from Beowulf?
5. What impressions do you get about Beowulf's character from reading Beowulf?

B. Mid-length questions (10 marks each):

1. How does the prologue address the issue of heroism?
2. Describe Grendel and his attack upon Heorot.
3. Describe Wiglaf's mental state after Beowulf's death.

C. Short-answer type (5 marks each):

1. How does Beowulf fight with Grendel?
2. How is Grendel described?
3. Comment on Beowulf's death.
4. How does Wiglaf rebuke the cowards?
5. Comment on the verse of Beowulf.

Module 2

Unit 2 ❑ Geoffrey Chaucer: Prologue to The Canterbury Tales - Portrait of The Wife of Bath

2.2.0. Introduction

The contribution of Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400) to modern English literature, especially poetry is immense. The introduction of socially relevant issues in the realm of literary creation, shifting the focus from the religious to the secular, began with Chaucer. The term 'modern' here is used more in an inclusive sense to denote the era beginning from the Renaissance age, than any particular time frame. Trends in English writing in the hands of Chaucer showed marked dissimilarities from the previous ages i.e. the Old English and early Middle English periods. His models were the classical, the Italian and French writers whom he read profusely. The ease in style and familiarity of tone made his works entertaining as well as instructive in a very subtle way. Among his works, *The Canterbury Tales* is universally acknowledged as the best of his literary creation. Within the framework of a pilgrimage, he introduces the reader to a cross-section of medieval society. The Prologue to the tales includes a set of characters, each replete with his or her own idiosyncrasies, offering a rare insight into human nature. The Wife of Bath is one such character. In a society where women were still not recognized as individuals, the Wife of Bath stands head and shoulders above her male

compatriots, a vividly drawn portrait of a fiercely independent woman. This Unit will acquaint you with the subtly nuanced character portrayal skills of the 'Father of English Poetry'.

2.2.1. Chaucer's Life and his Works

In Mod 1 Unit 3 you have had a brief introduction to the poetry of Geoffrey Chaucer, which might have given you some idea as to why he is given the epithet of the 'Father of English Poetry'. Here we shall dwell a bit upon the personal details of his life, to give you an idea of the interesting makings of the man and the vivacious poet.

You will be surprised to know that the poet we are now studying was the son of a wine merchant! He was born in London around the year 1340. He not only enjoyed the benefits of town life, but also the proximity of court life. The brilliant court of King Edward III and life there offered him tremendous opportunities for self enhancement. In 1357, he was made a member of the household of Elizabeth, wife of Lionel, son of Edward III. As a page boy, he had to constantly attend to his masters- being busy in the hall, serving dishes, wine and at the end of the meal, kneeling with the water bowl. The pages attended their masters even in their chambers, brushing and polishing their clothes. While waiting for orders, Chaucer spent his leisure hours observing and learning about his masters. He acquired proficiency in music, dancing, chess and above all perfected himself in the formalities of address and the art of conversation in English and French. Chaucer's art and imagination were shaped by his experiences in court.

Chaucer's works depict contemporary England, where people readily accepted the authority of the church and its teachings. The village parson, parish clerk, travelling monk or prioress were as much to be seen in real life as in the pages of Chaucer. The focus of religious life was the church building. The Wife of Bath refers to her constant attendance at church for marriages or other services of the Church.. The pages of Chaucer, Gower, Langland, together with many satirical poems of the fourteenth century are full of passages that reflect the many abuses of the time. Chaucer is recognised as the creator of the English versification. The octosyllabic line was in vogue when Chaucer began writing. From France, he also imported the decasyllabic line and under Italian influence, made it pliable. This was to be the heroic line.

Chaucer's first narrative poem, *The Book of the Duchess* (1369) is in the dream allegory convention. The elegiac poem is occasioned by the death of the Duchess Blanche, first wife of John the Gaunt. Chaucer's constant interactions with well-bred women gave him the intimate knowledge of good society of which he made full use in his innumerable feminine portraits.

In *The House of Fame* (1380), he returns to the dream vision. It is an unfinished poem, the subject matter based on the Aeneid . In his dream, the poet finds himself in a glass temple adorned with images of the famous and their deeds. With the help of the very interesting character of the philosophic eagle, the poet goes through the House of Fame. He meditates on the nature of Fame and the role of the poet in reporting the lives of the famous. Chaucer's imaginative faculties are revealed in his splendid description of the magnificent castle.

The poem is regarded as the first of Chaucer's Italian-influenced period and there are echoes of the works of Boccaccio, Ovid, Virgil's Aeneid and particularly Dante's *Divine Comedy.* The work shows a significant advancement in Chaucer's art from the earlier Book of the Duchess.

The poem *The Parliament of Fowls* (1382) is inspired by the poet's reading of Somnium Scipionis in Book VI of Cicero's *De Republica*. The poem begins with the narrator reading Cicero's Somnium Scipionis in the hope of learning some "certeyn thing." The narrator then passes through Venus's dark temple with its friezes of doomed lovers and out into the bright sunlight where Nature is convening a parliament at which the birds all choose their mates. The description of the garden in the poem is very like the setting of Roman de la Rose. He soon comes upon the goddess Nature presiding over the birds, who have come to choose their mates on St. Valentine's Day. Three tercel eagles make their case for the hand of a formel eagle until the birds of the lower estates begin to protest and launch into a comic parliamentary debate, which Nature herself finally ends. None of the tercels wins the formel, for at her request Nature allows her to put off her decision for another year. Nature, as the ruling figure, in allowing the formel the right to choose not to choose is acknowledging the importance of free will, which is ultimately the foundation of a key theme in the poem. Nature allows the other birds, however, to pair off. The dream ends with a song welcoming the new summer. The dreamer awakes, still unsatisfied, and returns to his books, hoping still to learn the thing for which he seeks.

Within the garden, we are meant to contrast Venus and Nature. Venus personifies passionate, carnal love. Nature personifies the creative, reproductive force and also represents order and harmony manifest in God's scheme of creation. The poem thus presents the major problem of the dualism of the world and the subsidiary comment on the two kinds of love.

Troilus and Criseyde (1385) is a profound and moving treatment of love. A tragedy, set against the backdrop of the Trojan War, it tells of the love of a faithful man for a woman

who ultimately proves faithless. The source of the poem is Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato.* Chaucer's command over the high style is evident here. Troilus and Cressida are deeply in love with one another, but after a period of intense happiness, the lovers are separated when Cressida is involved in an exchange of prisoners with the Greeks. She deserts Troilus for Diomede, a Greek warrior. Chaucer is interested in the study of character and an interesting character is Pandarus, the uncle of Criseyde. Chaucer tries to capture the flavor of antiquity as the plot is set in pagan times.

The Canterbury Tales represents by common consent his final poetic achievement. Chaucer may have been describing a real pilgrimage. There had been several previous collections of tales like Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Gower's *Confessio Amantis*. A closer parallel is afforded by the *Novelle* of Giovanni Sercambi, which actually employs the setting of a pilgrimage. It was written around 1374 And Chaucer was probably acquainted with the collection and its author. Pilgrimages were a common feature of medieval life and the shrine of St. Thomas Becket of Canterbury was the greatest of English pilgrimages. Chaucer was provided an opportunity to bring together a representative group of various classes of society, united by a common religious purpose, yet ready to give themselves over to enjoyment. With *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer has moved away from early dream poetry to the romance of *Troilus and Criseyde* and thence to the present time in England. The set of twenty nine pilgrims set out on their pilgrimage to the shrine in Canterbury. They assemble at Tabard's Inn at Southwark and decide that each pilgrim should narrate two tales on the onward journey and two on the return journey. But the company never reaches Canterbury and only twenty three pilgrims get their turn. Some tales are left unfinished. Chaucer's method of handling his tales is very sophisticated, belonging more to the French school. He is objective, detached and says things without self- commitment. The twenty nine pilgrims are chosen from the whole strata of medieval society. Besides their social existence, they have a universal existence.

The framework of the tales is provided by the General Prologue, probably composed around1387, along with individual prologues. The intention was to convey verisimilitude, if not realism. The Prologue offers the reader a proper perspective from which to view the individual tales. The pilgrims described in the Prologue narrate tales that correspond to their persona and enrich our understanding of the larger picture.

2.2.2. The General Prologue

The General Prologue in Chaucer has no past model. None of Chaucer's predecessors presented a gallery of portraits like that in the Prologue. A Prologue is often included in

collections of stories with the purpose of announcing the nature of the tales to follow or the circumstances under which the tales are told. The General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* does not reveal such a purpose until the end. The major part of it is designed, not simply as an introduction but on the model of an independent genre, that of the estates satire .

These were widespread through medieval Western Europe. The various estates or classes and professions in society are the subject matter Estates satire aim to give an analysis of society in terms of hierarchy, social function and morality; the object being to show how far each falls short of the ideal to which it should conform.

The simplest division of society was into three estates, those who fight, those who pray and those who labour typified by the knight, the priest and the ploughman. The satire starts from the top and works down through different examples to peasants. Women were treated as an estate to themselves. The Wife of Bath is capable of counterbalancing some twenty seven men. The basic tripartite division of society is reflected in Chaucer's making his Knight, Parson and Ploughman the three ideal characters on the pilgrimage. Chaucer gives us a chance collection of individuals from real society from professions one might actually find on a pilgrimage in fourteenth century England.

The Prologue leads straight on to the Knight's tale. The originality of the connecting narrative material has been widely recognized. Once the first choice has been made and the Knight begins his story, what happens after this is as natural and haphazard as life itself. The host, Harry Bailly comes to life as the pilgrims ride on. He has the same name as Henricus Bailly or Bailiff, known to have been an innkeeper in Southwark and a Member of Parliament from that borough. He rebukes his flock with little respect to status if he thinks their stories are boring. Chaucer for all his intelligence and piety has no spiritual vision. He rarely condemns and is no zealous reformer. He has a subtle mind too convinced of the badness of the world. He maintains a courtly, well-bred, imperturbable front. In the Prologue he is a descriptive poet with convictions but also an appreciation of types. The attitude of comic satire predominates. The higher aristocracy is excluded as also the life of the great mass of the really poor. This is because the characters of the highest and the lowest were not suitable for comic treatment. In the Prologue we see a middling people and we see them through Chaucer's eyes from a slightly superior moral and social station. Tolerance, moderation and pity are the abiding qualities which help to keep Chaucer's poetry close to life.

The pilgrims are individuals as also representative. Many of them exhibit types of character or of professional conduct. The clergy, regular and secular, are included and

there are also represented the learned professions of law and medicine, the merchants and the craftsmen of the guild, officials of the manor, the sailor and the common peasant farmer.

Chaucer does not consciously try to maintain any social hierarchy while introducing the characters in the Prologue. The Knight, who is the first pilgrim described is a replica of the ideal knight of the middle ages. He is said to have just returned from the Crusades, where he has rendered invaluable service. He has not even changed his clothes, he is described as wearing the muddied and blood stained tunic. It is his religious fervor that has brought him to join the merry party. Heroic prospects are tempered by religious prospects in the knight. Chaucer endows him with the qualities of chivalry, love of freedom, honour and courtesy. The Squire, who is the Knight's son, comes next. He is a character from the new generation and so does not care for the spiritual values of the old world. His character is defined by his love for rich and fashionable clothes and ardor for his beloved. The Yeoman serves as the connecting link between the courtly group and the religious group. Of the women characters, the Prioress is a typical medieval nun, who comes from an aristocratic family. For many dowerless women of the age, this was a ready option. It is a beautiful merging of the aristocratic, romantic heroine and nun. The phrase 'simple and coy' is a formula of approval for courtly heroines. She has the courtly name 'Eglentyne' with its association of white and red roses to which poetic heroines are compared. She is an imperfect Prioress and not quite right as a courtly lady either. Her French is the provincial convent school variety. Chaucer's method is to treat as positive virtues all the things that the satirists regarded as topics for condemnation. She displays the difference between the woman and her office. And all this is done in an apparently simple narrative pattern, where the reader is to make out the differences between the ideal and the actual!

The Monk is also in a thoroughly inappropriate profession. The Knight's portrait serves as a foil to the Monk's portrait. The Knight rides out for love of chivalry, whereas the Monk loves to ride out to go hunting. Chaucer includes the materials for anti-romantic satire.

The Friar's betrayal of his calling is radical. Chaucer's method is not invective customary in anti-mendicant satire. The Friar comes with a set of epithets and attributes that in other circumstances might be complimentary; he is 'worthy'. The three pilgrims in religious orders show a steady decline in standard. His technique in these portraits is to appear to praise the ecclesiastical pilgrims for qualities which are either trivial or irrelevant to their holy profession, as in the case of the Prioress, or totally opposed to it.

Readers are not left with a negative impression of these pilgrims. Their vices are natural human weaknesses.

The Merchant represents the class he belongs to, it is the new capitalist society. This class in Chaucer's time held the nation's purse strings. His clothes and demeanour are indicative of his success in business. Chaucer does not show much interest in him.

The Clerk's defining characteristics are his devotion to logic and his horse's leanness. He is the archetypal impoverished student. Logic was the pursuit of wisdom. The Clerk though no theologian, is no less pious for having chosen the more secular branch of learning. He prays for those who have provided him with the means to study.

The Sergeant of Law and Franklin enjoy the pleasures of worldly life taking full advantage of their professions. The Franklin's love of good food betrays his materialism and the fact that his table is always ready for guests is not meant to signify that his generosity is a moral attribute.

The inclusion of a Haberdasher, a Dyer, a Carpenter, a Weaver, and a Carpet-maker reaffirm Chaucer's commitment towards social reality. The Doctor too is a worthy man as his knowledge of medicine is sound and he takes ever opportunity of showing off his merits but we are told that he has amassed all the gold he has during pestilences in the country.

One of the most interesting characters in the Prologue is that of the **Wife of Bath**. No single motif dominates this portrait. She is deaf; she has a loud voice and would rather listen to herself than to others. Her vices might include pride, wrath, envy, immodesty, lust and so on. Chaucer steers clear from leveling moral accusations against her and chooses to stress on her professional pre-eminence, her clothes, marital status, conduct in church and her sociability. She appears larger than life. She is so widely travelled that only the Knight and the Shipman have travelled farther than she has. She has been to Jerusalem three times and it is obvious that her motive is not simply religious, but because of her love for company; pilgrimage for her is a cover for other activities. She is a great feminist and personification of sovereignty and mastery over the other sex.

Chaucer's criticism is more explicit with another set of characters. Yet he retains the sense of humour, so that the reader is not alienated from the characters. The Summoner and the Pardoner are two pilgrims from whom he withdraws his sympathy. They are the worst of the religious group. The Summoner is the instrument through whom divine justice operates in the world. His appearance is loathsome and his actions morally corrupt. He profits from the sexual offences of the court. The unscrupulous Pardoner misuses

his authority to collect money and instead of handing it over to the bishop, he helped himself to it. He also earned money selling relics to the people.

Activity for the Learner

Classify Chaucer's characters in The Prologue according to their occupations, gender and manners. You will find interesting patterns of the cross section of contemporary English society. You might as well tally these with your readings from the Social History of the period.

2.2.3. The Wife of Bath (General Prologue)

Having given a general introduction to all the characters described by Chaucer in The Prologue, we now come to the narrative of the Wife of Bath. Notice for yourselves the subtleties of narration in the portrait:

A worthy woman from beside Bath city
Was with us, somewhat deaf, which was a pity.
In making cloth she showed so great a bent
She bettered those of Ypres and of Ghent.
In all the parish not a dame dared stir
Towards the altar steps in front of her,
And if indeed they did, so wrath was she
As to be quite put out of charity.
Her kerchiefs were of finely woven ground;
I dared have sworn they weighed a good ten pound,
The ones she wore on Sunday, on her head.
Her hose were of the finest scarlet red
And gartered tight; her shoes were soft and new.
Bold was her face, handsome, and red in hue.
A worthy woman all her life, what's more
She'd had five husbands, all at the church door,
Apart from other company in youth;
No need just now to speak of that, forsooth.
And she had thrice been to Jerusalem,
Seen many strange rivers and passed over them;
She'd been to Rome and also to Boulogne,
St. James of Compostella and Cologne,
And she was skilled in wandering by the way.

She had gap-teeth, set widely, truth to say.
Easily on an ambling horse she sat
Well wimpled up, and on her head a hat
As broad as is a buckler or a shield;
She had a flowing mantle that concealed
Large hips, her heels spurred sharply under that.
In company she liked to laugh and chat
And knew the remedies for love's mischances,
An art in which she knew the oldest dances.

Text sourced from Penguin Edition of The Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* edited by Nevil Coghill.

Annotations

1. L455- She is a middle aged woman and as she mentions in her Prologue, much married, five times in all and ready for her next husband.
2. L456- In her Prologue, she narrates the details of her marital life. Her fifth husband had struck her hard on her ear which caused her deafness.
3. L463- The kerchief was in style from the middle of the century.
4. L466-67- The red hose and soft shoes were highly inappropriate for the occasion. On a pilgrimage, it was customary to dress in sober colours and wear sturdy and simple footwear.
5. L468- The red hue of her face is indicative of her lifestyle. She loved good food and led a lustful life.
6. L470- In her Prologue, she talks at length of her five husbands. The custom of celebrating marriage at the church door was usual from the tenth till the sixteenth century. The service was in two parts- the marriage proper and the nuptial mass, afterward, celebrated at the altar.
7. L471- In her Prologue, she proudly boasts of her male admirers and how she enjoyed the company of men.
8. L473- Though her actions do not suggest that she was a pious woman, she loves to project herself as one. Chaucer ironically mentions her trips to Jerusalem, where she may have gone for reasons other than religious ones.

9. L475- A fragmentary image of the Blessed Virgin is venerated here. At Cologne was the shrine of the Three Kings. Since all these places were frequented by pilgrims, it was not unusual for the Wife of Bath to have ventured out. As she states in her Prologue, her motives were not strictly religious. In fact, the pilgrimage in Chaucer's day was a favourite form of traveling for pleasure.
10. L478- The Wife of Bath attributes her amorous nature to 'gap- teeth' or teeth set widely apart.
11. L479- For a widely travelled woman riding at ease on an ambling horse was quite natural.
12. L480, 81- Her hat suggests her fondness for dressing, regardless of the occasion.
13. L482- the flowing mantle is the outer skirt. Her large hips are suggestive of the weight she has gained with age.
14. L484-6- She is quite at home among strangers and laughs and chats with gay abandon. She is quite adept in the art of love. She knows the cures of love and all the rules of the game. With her wide experience she is acknowledged as an authority on the subject.

2.2.4. Paraphrase

There was with us an admirable lady from Bath, who was quite an imposing figure. It was a pity that the lady was deaf. But she had many accomplishments. She was such a good weaver that the fame of her prowess spread far and wide. She was reputed for weaving cloth of such quality that she surpassed the famed weavers of Ypres and Gaunt. These were famous centres of the Flemish wool trade. During the time of church offerings, she aggressively tried to stay ahead of others and if anyone dared to usurp what she felt was her position, the offender had to face her wrath. Whereas the other pilgrims seemed unconcerned about their dress and appearance, this lady was careful. She covered head in expensive handkerchiefs which must have weighed at least ten pounds. Her hose was red in colour and tightly gartered round her thick calves. The shoes she wore were very soft and new. She had a bold look on her remarkable face, which shone bright and red.

She was actually a praiseworthy woman of many talents. She had five husbands who were all dead and gone. She had honourably been married to all of them and her exploits had extended beyond her husbands to other young men, when she herself was a young woman.

A deeply religious woman, she had been to Jerusalem thrice and passed over many regions and rivers. She had been to Rome, Boulogne and Cologne as she loved travelling. She was a habitual traveler, who loved to explore the world around her.

Her appearance was somewhat unpleasant as she had gap-teeth but it hardly mattered to her. She rode well sitting quite comfortably on an ambling horse. She had a wimple to cover her head as well as a broad hat. To appear young and attractive she tried to hide her ample girth under a flowing cloak. But she knew what she was about and so sharply used her boots to spur on the horse she was riding. She enjoyed the company of her fellow creatures and laughed and chatted merrily with them. One art in which she had no competitor was that of the tactics of love. She knew the remedies and solutions to all problems concerning love and the rules governing the workings of love.

2.2.5. Critical Understanding of the Text

Chaucer's account of the pilgrims described in the Prologue offers an insight into multiple issues that enrich our understanding of the middle ages and the sensibilities of the people of the age. We do not read The Canterbury Tales merely for the stories and so also do not read the General Prologue only to know more about the tales. The Prologue is a unique creation of Chaucer in which he combines wit, irony, humour and a deep understanding of human nature to create a world of the pilgrims, who belong to the age and are for all times. His criticism of the shortcomings of the flock is not harsh or unforgiving but tempered with a sense of toleration. This is where he differs from Langland, whose attack on the religious orders is relentless.

Chaucer brings to life his characters with his subtle hints, insinuations and suggestive comments rather than direct attacks except with characters like the Summoner and the Pardoner.

The portrait of the Wife of Bath is supplemented by her own account in the Prologue to her tale. Chaucer drew on the satirical anti-feminist literature of the age for the Wife's version of her life. In the Prologue to her tale, which may be read as her confession, she reveals all the tricks of her successful domination of her husbands. She condemns celibacy, describing her life with her five husbands and also confesses her womanly vices. Her assertion is a superb satire on women and her Prologue a comedy of wifely oppression. Her story seeks an answer to the question, "what do women most desire?" and the correct answer is "sovereignty". This is what she seeks to affirm through her speech and actions.

We know more about the Wife of Bath personally and perhaps more intimately than any other pilgrim. This is because of the detailed account of herself that she gives the reader in her Prologue. The vividness of the description makes her what we understand as a 'real character'. Her personal appearance does not take up more than a line. We are told she has large hips. Chaucer begins the description with the mention of her deafness, suggesting that she spoke more than she listened. But this detail turns out to be significant when we get to know the reason of her deafness from her Prologue; it was caused by the blow that she got from her fifth husband. She is skilled in weaving and this detail is very important because it explains why she is the only woman in the group who travels unaccompanied. She is one of the few women of her time who earned her own living. She was a regular church-goer but more concerned about her social standing and thus got angry if anyone went up to the altar before her. Her fine stockings and footwear are signs of her prosperity. She is an experienced lady with five husbands and other company in her youth. Her extensive pilgrimages suggest leisure and prosperity and perhaps devotion. Her widely spaced teeth were a sign of her flirtatious nature, and the medieval insistence on physiognomy as upholding vital character traits would also associate this with her lustful nature. Her bold mannish nature is suggested by her use of the sharp spurs. Chaucer creates in her not only an individual, but also a type.

2.2.6. The Wife and the Prioress in Perspective

In the case of the other important woman pilgrim in the group, the Prioress, we further observe how the irony works, by pointing out the ideals to which an individual is expected to aspire. The characters of the pilgrims are determined by the contrast between their estates, or occupation and the persons they actually are. Chaucer was concerned with types as well as with persons.

Now that you have had a primary acquaintance of the characters in the Prologue, and seen for yourselves the vivacious Wife of Bath, it would be relevant to institute a comparative study between the two women that Chaucer shows - the Prioress and the Wife. It is interesting to note that the characterization of the Prioress is extremely subtle and the satire sympathetic. As usual, Chaucer dwells at length on the physical details of her dress and manners. As noted previously, she shares traits of the romantic heroine in contemporary literature. Her name, Madame Eglentyne, has the association of elegance and beauty, not quite in keeping with the sedate nature of her calling. Chaucer's intention was not to disparage her as a nun but to point out some laxities in her conduct.

The mention of her nasal intonation need not be taken too seriously as it was traditional

with the recitative portions of the church service. So also her French spoken in the Stratford atte Bowe style was to be expected, as her knowledge of French was such as was derived from an English nunnery. Her immaculate table manners are individualizing traits that make her a remarkable figure. We ought not to read too much in the motto inscribed on her brooch, Amor vincit omnia, as it referred both to religious and romantic love. On the other hand, the poet does not seem to be too forgiving about her over indulgence of her pet dogs. It was quite against the rules. We are also to believe that going on a pilgrimage was not expected of a Prioress. The ambiguity of the poet's attitude adds layers to our perception of the woman's position in the middle ages.

The Wife of Bath is admirable for being a mistress of herself in spite of her immoderation, as she does not bear any social responsibility to be a paragon of virtue, whereas the Prioress must display exemplary conduct. The religious orders are viewed from the perspective of idealistic behavior and any departure from convention is unpardonable. It is therefore difficult to group the two women characters in the same category. They belong to a society where different standards apply to the various classes of individuals.

2.2.7. Summing up

1. Geoffrey Chaucer represented his age as well as influenced later writers. He was the foremost writer of the Middle ages whose works looked forward to the future with respect to style, technique and subject matter.
2. His art was influenced by the French style of writing. He did away with the heavy and antiquated style of the middle ages and made his lines easy and flexible.
3. He brought the French decasyllabic line to England, instead of the weak octosyllabic line. He used it in much of his later poetry.
4. Though Chaucer did not belong to the royalty, his employment as a page boy in the court and royal household shaped his art. His close acquaintance with the nobility is evident in many of his of the poems he wrote like The Book of the Duchess.
5. Chaucer's works depict contemporary London with all classes of people engaged in myriad activities. Corruption at various levels is pointed out.
6. Dream vision poetry was a common form in the middle ages. Chaucer's The Book of the Duchess, House of Fame and Parliament of Fowls are dream vision poems.
7. His most famous work is The Canterbury Tales, written around 1374. It has the

framework of a pilgrimage. A group of twenty nine pilgrims set out on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint Thomas Becket in Canterbury. To pass the time, they plan to entertain themselves by telling tales as they halt in the inn at Southwark.

8. The company includes people from all walks of life, and all have their idiosyncrasies, which makes them a merry band of pilgrims, out to have some fun as they travel.
9. One of the most interesting and complex character is that of the Wife of Bath. She is alone a match for the many male pilgrims who accompany her.
10. The Wife of Bath has had five husbands in the past and is ready for the sixty. She is a skilled weaver and a much traveled woman. Her dress, appearance and ways suggest her affluence.
11. Many of the details about this lady offer us a glimpse into the intricacies of Chaucer's insight into the social realities of the age as well as his understanding of human nature.
12. Chaucer is a writer whose keen observation of the people and life around him and vivid imagination bring to life the pilgrims, whose journey to Canterbury symbolizes the journey of life itself.

2.2.8. Suggested Reading List

1. David Aers ---Chaucer
2. S.S.Hussey--- Chaucer -an introduction
3. D.S. Brewer ---Chaucer
4. Helen Cooper--- Oxford Guides to Chaucer
5. Piero Boitani and Jill Mann(Eds)--Cambridge Companion to Chaucer

2.2.9. Comprehension Exercises

A. Long-answer type (20 marks each):

1. Which features of the Wife of Bath's persona make her a memorable character?
2. Assess the contribution of Chaucer as a poet who brought in a new style and outlook to English poetry.

3. What have you learnt of the structure of The Canterbury Tales and the character sketches in the General Prologue?
4. In what ways does the General Prologue reflect Chaucer's contemporary life?

B. Mid-length questions (10 marks each):

1. Compare and contrast the Wife of Bath with the other woman character in the Prologue, the Prioress.
2. Give a sketch of the character of the Wife of Bath.
3. Comment on the use of irony and humor in the portrayal of the Wife of Bath.

C. Short-answer type (5 marks each):

1. What, according to you, are the advantages of Chaucer's choice of the motif of pilgrimage to describe his characters?
2. How important was religion in the lives of the people of the middle ages?
3. Why do you think the manners of the Prioress inappropriate to her social position?
4. Describe in short the physical appearance of the Wife of Bath.
5. Comment on the physical characteristics of the Wife of Bath as described by Chaucer.

Module 2

Unit 3 ❑ The Second Shepherds' Play (Wakefield Cycle)

2.3.0 Introduction:

You have already read about the beginnings of English vernacular drama in Module 1 Unit 3 of this Paper. We would like you to read the section on Medieval Drama (1.3.6) carefully again. For your convenience we shall briefly sum up how medieval drama began and provide some additional detail about the Wakefield morality cycle to which your text belongs. The purpose of this Unit is to acquaint you with a specimen of a drama text from this period. At the end of the Unit, you should be in a position to categorically distinguish the differences with later secular drama.

2.3.1 A Brief Recap of Medieval Drama:

Vernacular drama evolved in the middle ages from church liturgy, and early liturgical drama was in Latin. It was enacted within the church. Possibly due to a growing audience and also the increasing length and elaborateness of the dramatic sequences the he performances were forced to step outside the church. The plays continued to be open air productions as they grew into cycles presenting practically the entire Bible story. The plays are called either morality plays or mystery plays. Some of the cycles that have survived are from York, Coventry, Chester, N-town and Wakefield. The Wakefield

plays as you already know, are also called Towneley plays because they are preserved in a manuscript belonging to the Towneley family. Different types of staging were used and it is not always possible to determine how a play was staged. Sometimes Circular or rectangular open spaces in a town were used. Sometimes fairly big pageants -wagons were used as stages. They moved in a procession and stopped at specific stations for a performance. The medium the playwrights used was verse. But they commonly used the current speech of their local audience. No such thing as 'standard English had as yet evolved and in the absence of a culturally prestigious form of English all current forms were equally suitable as the medium of drama. Since these plays were both the most important form of popular entertainment and served as a popular Bible, the local speech form, like the local topographical and contemporary social allusions, was a major link between the plays and their audiences. At one point in your text, you will find how the playwright exploits the different dialect of a 'furriner' (foreigner) for comic purpose when Mak, the sheep-stealer affectedly uses a southern dialect.

Middle English plays, like most lyrics, ballads and medieval art and architecture, is anonymous. But from a careful study and analysis of style, scholars have identified similar manner of writing behind several plays of the same cycle. For example, in some of the York plays a remarkable use of realistic details has led to the scholars calling the playwright who presumably wrote them 'The York Realist'. Some of the Wakefield plays, especially The First Shepherds' Play, The Second Shepherds' Play, Noah etc. are characterised by a high level of sophistication, seen in an a-mythological presentation in the first part of the plays and are pervaded by fine humour. The hand of a single writer may be traced in them and this playwright has been called "The Wakefield Master'

2.3.2 The Second Shepherds' Play: Historical Context

Historically, the date when The Second Shepherds' Play was written is not certain, but according to critical estimates, the probable date is between 1400 and 1450. The time span is huge. It includes the reign of four kings : Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VI, and there are suggestions of it being written at an even earlier date, that is during the reign of Richard II.

> The time span to which the play's date is being tentatively ascribed was a tumultuous time in the history of England as well as Europe. Mid -14th Century saw Black Deaths (Plague) ravaging Europe, putting almost a third of the population to death. Since a sizable number of those who died happened to be peasants, it suddenly stirred a labour crisis.

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There was an ironical flip side to this. The labourers, that is those left alive, demanded a huge rise in wages forcing the Parliament to pass the "Ordinance of Labourers" in 1349, and then in 1351 the ordinance was reinforced again through the "Statute of Labourers". Specifically, the ordinances fixed wages putting it at pre-plague rates and imposed price controls; it required all those able and under the ages of 60 to work; prohibited the enticing away of another's servants etc. The laws were ineffective and fuelled backlashes in and through episodes like Wat Tyler's Peasant Revolt (this is alternatively called the Great Rising of 1381).The Lollard priest (Lollards were the followers of John Wyclif, a radical reformer of the Church) John Ball, through his sermons, aroused the peasants to fight back against harsh government measures . One such group of disaffected peasants was led by Wat Tyler, a contingent of Kentish rebels that advanced on London .They were met at Blackheath by representatives of the royal government, who failed to make them return home. King Richard II, then aged only 14, retreated to the safety of the Tower of London, because most of the forces at the time were abroad or in northern England. On 13 June, the rebels entered the city of London. They found sympathisers among the townsfolk and finally went on to attack the gaols. They destroyed the Savoy Palace, set fire to law books and killed anyone associated with the royal government. The violent nature of the revolt forced Richard to meet the rebels almost immediately at Mile End and he succumbed to most of their demands, including the abolition of serfdom. In the Tower of London, the rebels had not spared the Lord Chancellor and the Lord High Treasurer. There was also Jack Cade's Kentish rebellion in 1450. It had also taken place at a time when people were unfairly burdened with high taxes to finance the conflict with France during the Hundred Years war. A sizable number from the rural society, including local artisans and village officials joined the protest, burning court records and opening the local gaols. The rebels pressed for reduction in taxes, called for an end of the system of unfree labour known as serfdom and removing the King's senior officials and law courts.

The play we are going to read begins with bitter complaints from the shepherds about poverty, starvation, high taxes . We can understand that the complaints of the shepherds are similar to the complaints of the peasants who had revolted both in 1381 and 1450. The laws of England placed strong restrictions even on their daily lives, and social

protections were virtually non-existent. A little land or money gave enormous power over those who had no money or land!

Food for Thought!!!

You can thus see for yourselves how even such early drama of an almost rudimentary nature concerned itself with addressing realistic and real life problems! It is not without reason that drama is held to be the most vibrant of literary forms, because it establishes direct contact with issues of life. Simultaneously, by virtue of being an art form, such drama also tends to holds out light and hope for life.

As drama moved on from an overtly religious to a secular orientation in the Elizabethan period and thereafter came to increasingly address more complex aspects of life, this strain has always been very pronounced.

2.3.3 Introduction to the Play

The Second Shepherds' Play was written at a time when hunger and suffering were the common lot of poor peasants. Amid their daily toils the promises of Christianity sustained them. The shepherds complaining of high price of food grains, of cold, of dead sheep, could hold on to a belief that a life in a land of plenty governed by the heavenly king will eventually happen. Peace, stability, and prosperity were meaningful promises for men who lived at the subsistence level in medieval Yorkshire. In the trying times, faith gave the shepherds a glimmer of hope for a better future. The passage below from the Norton Edition of the play tells us:

The Second Shepherds' Play, which was probably played at Wakefield in Yorkshire, is a member of one of the four great cycles of English mysteries that have been preserved in their entirety. Scholars refer to the author as the Wakefield Master, who appreciated the rough humor and rough piety of the traditional (mystery) plays, but he also knew how to refine both qualities without appearing to do so, and, more important, he knew how to combine the humorous and the religious so that the former serves the latter rather than detracting from it. In the Second Shepherd's Play, by linking the comic subplot of Mak and Gill with the solemn story of Christ's nativity, the Wakefield Master has produced a dramatic parable of what the Nativity means in Christian history and in Christian hearts. No one will fail to observe the parallelism between the stolen sheep, ludicrously disguised as Mak's latest heir, lying in a cradle, and the real Lamb of God, born in a stable among beasts. A complex of relationships based upon this relationship suggests itself. But perhaps the most important point is that the charity twice shown by the shepherds-in the first instance to the supposed son of Mak and in the second instance

to Mak and Gill when they decide to let them off with only the mildest of punishments-is rewarded when they are invited to visit the Christ Child, the embodiment of charity. The bleak beginning of the play, with its series of individual complaints, is ultimately balanced by the optimistic ending, which sees the shepherds once again singing together in harmony.

What exactly was the purpose of the Miracle and the Morality plays?

It is true that miracle and morality plays have the primary function of conveying biblical messages but there are considerable differences. Miracle plays were typically written in "cycles" (a series) that would begin with the Creation, chronicle the major events of the Old Testament through the New Testament till the Last Judgment. The miracle plays "endeavored to make the Christian religion more real to the unlearned by dramatizing significant events in biblical history and by showing what these events meant in terms of human experience". They are thought to have evolved from the liturgies and plays that were in Latin. Miracle plays produced in the vernacular in the streets of towns were a way of reaching a wide audience that included educated lay people and clerics as well as the unlearned people. The authors of these plays usually broadened their appeal by giving the characters of the plays the appearance and characters of contemporary men and women.

The Wakefield Master who is generally considered to be the author of *The Second Shepherds' Play* (Secunda Pastarum) was probably an educated cleric. That the play is located in an historical context can be best understood through this quote:"As the play opens, the shepherds complain about the cold, the taxes, and the high-handed treatment they get from the gentry-evils closer to shepherds on the Yorkshire moors than to those keeping their flocks near Bethlehem". This would help the common people identify with the characters in the play and align with the religious message in it: Christian charity doesn't go unrewarded. The play should not be taken as a parody of Nativity but it does contain significant socio-political commentary of the time. The playwright makes use of details from the second chapter of the Gospel of St. Luke. He has borrowed the story of Mak the sheep-stealer from folklore. The Towneley plays contain two Shepherd's Plays, whereas all the other cycles have a Nativity Play and a Shepherd's Play. It is not known which of the trade guilds acted the Shepherd's plays at Wakefield. The two Shepherd's Plays share a similar beginning-shepherds lamenting their hard lot, the winter, dead sheep, shortage of food. The first play then quickly passes on to the Christmas miracle, for a boy comes and tells the first shepherd Gyb that his sheep are not dead but feeding on knee-deep grass. This miracle of abundant grass in midwinter is followed by

the shepherds' empty bag yielding lots of food, for the Christmas day feast. Possibly, the writer went on to improve on his first play with a second play which was more elaborate and sophisticated.

2.3.4 Text of *The Second Shepherds' Play*

CHARACTERS

COLL	*the First Shepherd*
GIB	*the Second Shepherd*
Daw	*the Third Shepherd*
MAK	*the Sheep-stealer*
GILL	*Mak's Wife*
ANGEL	
MARY	*with the Christ-child*

THE SECOND SHEPHERDS' PLAY

[SCENE I. *The open fields*]

I *Shepherd.* Lord, what these weathers are cold !
And I am ill happed.
I am near-hand dold, so long have I napped; *nearly numb*
My legs they fold, my fingers are chapped. *give way*
It is not as I would, for I am all lapped *wrapped*

In sorrow.
In storms and tempest,
Now in the east, now in the west,
Woe is him has never rest
Mid -day nor morrow!

But we sely husbands that walk on the moor,
In faith, we are near -hands out of the door. .

No1 wonder, as it stands, if we be poor,
For the tilth of our lands lies fallow as the floor,
As ye ken.

We are so hammed, *crippled*
Fortaxed and rammed, *overtaxed; crushed*
We are made hand-tamed
With these gentlery-men

Thus they reave us our rest, our Lady them wary !
These men that are lord-fast, they cause the plough tarry.
That, men say, is for the best; we find it contrary.
Thus are husbands oppressed, in point to miscarry
On live.

Thus hold they us under,
Thus they bring us in blunder; *trouble*
It were great wonder And ever should we thrive. *if*

For may he get a paint sleeve or a brooch, nowadays,
Woe is him that him grieve, or once again-says! *gainsays*

Dare no man him repreve, what mastery he mays;
And yet may no man lieve one word that he says— *believe*
No letter.
He can make purveyance
With boast and bragance, *bragging*

And all is through maintenance *support*
Of men that are greater.
There shall come a swain as proud as a po; *peacock*
He must borrow my wain, my plough also;

Then I am full fain to grant ere he go,

Thus live we in pain, anger, and woe
By night and day.
He must have, if he langed
If I should forgang it;
I were better be hanged

Than once say him nay.

It does me good, as I walk thus by mine own, *myself*
Of this world for to talk in manner of moan. *grumble*
To my sheep will I stalk and harken anon,
There abide on a balk, or sit on a stone
Full soon;
For I trow, pardie, *by God*
True men if they be,
We get more company
Ere it be noon.

[Enter Second Shepherd]

2 Shep. Benste and Dominus, what may this bemean? *mean*
Why fares this world thus ? Oft have we not seen.
Lord, these weathers are spitous, and the winds *cruel*
full keen,
And the frosts so hideous they water mine een— *eyes*
No lie.

Now in dry, now in wet.
Now in snow, now in sJeet,
When my shoon freeze to my feet
It is not all easy.
But as far as I ken, or yet as I go,

We sely wedmen dree mickle woe:
We have sorrow then and then; it falls oft so.
Silly Copple, our hen, both to and fro
She cackles;
But begin she to croak,

To groan or to cluck.
Woe is him our cock.
For he is in the shackles.
These men that are wed have not all their will;
When they are full hard sted, they sigh full still.

God wot they are led full hard and full ill;
In bower nor in bed they say nought theretiil.
This tide
My part have I fun,
I know my lesson:

Woe is him that is bun, *bound (in marriage)*
For he must abide. *remain so*

But now late in our lives—a marvel to me,
That I think my heart rives such wonders to see- *breaks*
What that destiny drives it should so be—

Some men will have two wives, and some men three
In store;
Some are woe that have any. *miserable*
But so far can I: *know*
Woe is him that has many,

For he feels sore. *pain*
But, young men, of wooing, for God that you bought,
Be well ware of wedding, and think in your *very wary*
thought:

'Had I wist' is a thing that serveth of nought.
Mickle still mourning has wedding home brought, *constant*

And griefs,
With many a sharp shower; *pang*
For thou mayst catch in an hour
That shall sow thee full sour
As long as thou lives.

For, as ever read I epistle, I have one to my fere
As sharp as thistle, as rough as a briar.
She is browed like a bristle, with a sour-loten cheer;
Had she once wet her whistle, she could sing full clear
Her paternoster,

She is as great as a whale,
She has a gallon of gall;
By him that died for us all,
I would I had run to I had lost her! *till*

I Shep. God look over the raw! Full deafly ye stand.
2 Shep. Yea, the devil in thy maw, so tariand!
Saw'st thou awre of Daw ?
1 Shep. Yea, on a lea-land
Heard I him blow. He comes here at hand,
Not far. Stand still.
2 Shep. Why?
I Shep. For he comes, hope I. *think*
2 Shep. He will make us both a lie, *tell*
But if we beware. *unless*

[*Enter Third Shepherd*]

3 Shep. Christ's cross me speed, and Saint Nicholas!
Thereof had I need; it is worse than it was.

Whoso could take heed and let the world pass,
It is ever in dread and brickle as glass,
And slithes.
This world fared never so,
With marvels mo and mo— *more*

Now in weal, now in woe,
And all thing writhes. *changes*
Was never since Noah's flood such floods seen,
Winds and rains so rude, and storms so keen:
Some stammered, some stood in doubt, as I ween. *fear*

Now God turn all to good! I say as I mean,
For ponder: *consider*
These floods so they drown.

Both in fields and in town,
And bear all down;

And that is a wonder.
We that walk on the nights our cattle to keep,
we see sudden sights when other men sleep.
Yet methink my heart lights; I see *grows light*
shrews peep. *rogues*
Ye are two all-wights-I will give my sheep *monsters*
A turn
But full ill have I meant;
As I walk on this bent,
I may lightly repent,
My toes if I spurn.

Ah, sir, God you save and master mine!
A drink fain would I have, and somewhat to dine.
I Shep. Christ's curse, my knave, thou art a

lither hine ! *lazy hind*
2 Shep. What the boy list rave! Abide unto syne;
We have made it.
Ill thrift on thy pate! *luck*
Though the shrew came late
Yet is he in state *ready*
To dine-if he had it.

3 Shep. Such servants as I, that sweat and swinks, *toil*
Eat our bread full dry, and that me forthinks. *displeases*
We are oft wet and weary when master-men winks; *sleep*
Yet come full lately both dinners and drinks. *tardily*
But nately *thoroughly*
Both our dame and our sire,
When we have run in the mire,
They can nip at our hire,
And pay us full lately.

They can stint our wages.
But hear my truth, master: for the fare that ye make,
I shall do thereafter — work as I take.
I shall do a little, sir, and among ever lake,
For yet lay my supper never on my stomach
In fields.
Whereto should I threap ? *haggle*
With my staff can I leap;
And men say 'Light cheap
Litherly foryields.'

1 Shep. Thou wert an ill lad to ride on wooing
With a man that had but little of spending.
2 Shep. Peace, boy, I bade. No more jangling,
Or I shall make thee full rad, by the heaven's king!
With thy gauds—
Where are our sheep, boy ?—we scorn.

3 Shep. Sir, this same day at morn
I them left in the corn,
When they rang Lauds.

They have pasture good, they cannot go wrong,
I Shep. That is right. By the rood, these nights *cross*
are long!
Yet I would, ere we yode, one gave us a song. *went*
2 Shep. So I thought as I stood, to mirth us among,
3 Shep. I grant.
1 Shep. Let me sing the tenory. *tenor*
2 Shep. And I the treble so high.
3 Shep. Then the mean falls to me.
Let see how ye chant. *[They sing.*

Then Mak enters with a cloak covering his tunic
Mak. Now, Lord, for thy names seven, that made
both moon and starns
Well more than I can neven, thy will, Lord, of me
tharns.
I am all uneven; that moves oft my hams.
Now would God I were in heaven, for there weep no bairns
So still. *incessantly*
I Shep. Who is that pipes so poor?
Mak. Would God ye wist how I foor! *knew; fared*
Lo, a man that walks on the moor.
And has not all his will.
2 Shep. Mak, where hast thou gone ? Tell us
tiding.
3 Shep. Is he come? Then ilkone take heed *everyone*
to his thing.
He takes Mak's cloak from him.
Mak. What! I be a yeoman, I tell you, of the king,
The self and the same, sond from a great *messenger*
lording,

And sich. *suchlike*
Fie on you! Go hence
Out of my presence!
I must have reverence.
Why, who be ich?
1 Shep. Why make ye it so quaint ? Mak, ye do wrong.
2 Shep. But, Mak, list ye saint? I trow that ye long.
3 Shep. I trow the shrew can paint, the devil might him hang! *deceive*

Mak. I shall make complaint, and make you all to thwang
At a word,
And tell even how ye doth. *do*
1 Shep. But, Mak, is that sooth?
Now take out that Southern tooth,
And set in a turd! *Put*
2 Shep. Mak, the devil in your eye! A stroke would I lene you. *give*
3 Shep. Mak, know ye not me? By God, I could teen you. *hurt*
Mak. God look you all three! Methought I had seen you. *save*
Ye are a fair company.
1 Shep. Can ye now mean you ?
2 Shep. Shrew, peep! *pry about*
Thus late as thou goes,
What will men suppose? *suspect*
And thou hast an ill noise *reputation*
Of stealing of sheep. *for*
Mak. And I am true as steel, all men wot;
But a sickness I feel that holds me full hot: *severely*

My belly fares not well, it is out of estate. *condition*
3 Shep. Seldom lies the devil dead by the gate.
Mak. Therefore
Full sore am I and ill;
If I stand stone-still,
I eat not a needle *morsel*
This month and more.
I Shep. How fares thy wife? By my hood, how
fares she?
Mak. Lies waltering—by the rood—by the *sprawling*
fire, lo!

And a house full of brood. She drinks well, too; *children*
Ill speed other good that she will do!
But she
Eats as fast as she can.
And ilk year that comes to man *every*
She brings forth a lakan— *baby*
And, some years, two.

But were I now more gracious, and richer *prosperous*
by far,
I were eaten out of house and of harbour. *home*
Yet is she a foul dowse, if ye come near; *wench*
There is none that trows nor knows a war
Than ken I,
Now will ye see what I proffer?
To give all in my coffer
To-morn at next to offer
Her head-masspenny.

2 Shep. I wot so forwaked is none in this shire;
I would sleep if I taked less to my hire.
3 Shep. I am cold and naked, and would have a fire.
1 Shep. I am weary, forraked, and run in the mire—

Wake thou!
2 Shep. Nay, I will lie down by. *near by*
For I must sleep, truly.
3 Shep. As good a man's son was I
As any of you.
But, Mak, come hither! Between shalt thou *between us*
lie down.
Mak, Then might I let you bedene of that ye
would rown,
No dread.

From my top to my toe, [*He recites a night-spell.*
Manns mas commendo,
Pontio Pilato.
Christ's cross me speed!

Now were time for a man that lacks what he would
To stalk privily then unto a fold,
And nimbly to work then, and be not too bold,
For he might abuy the bargain, if it were told
At the ending.
Now were time for to reel; *move quickly*
But he needs good counsel
That fain would fare well,
And has but little spending. *money*

But about you a circle, as round as a moon, (*magic*) *circle*
To I have done what I will, till that it be noon, *till*
That ye lie stone-still to that I have done;
And I shall say theretill of good words a fone:
'On height, *high*
Over your heads, my hand I lift.
Out go your eyes! Fordo your sight!'
But yet I must make better shift,
And it be right.

Lord, what they sleep hard!—that may ye all hear.
Was I never a shepherd, but now will I lere. *learn*
If the flock be scared, yet shall I nip near.
How! draw hitherward! Now mends our cheer
From sorrow
A fat sheep, I dare say,
A good fleece, dare I lay.
Eft-quit when I may, *repay*
But this will I borrow.

[He goes home with the sheep.

[SCENE II. *Mak's cottage*]

Mak. How, Gill, art thou in ? Get us some light.
Wife. Who makes such din this time of the night?
I am set for to spin; I hope not I might
Rise a penny to win, I shrew them on height!
So fares
A housewife that has been.
To be raised thus between.
Here may no note be seen
For such small chares.

Mak. Good wife, open the heck! See'st *inner door*
thou not what I bring ?
Wife. I may thole thee draw the sneck.
come in, my sweeting!
Mak. Yea, thou thar not reck of my long standing.
Wife. By the naked neck art thou like for to hang.
Mak. Do way! *enough!*
I am worthy my meat, *food*
For in a strait can I get *fix*
More than they that swink and sweat *toil*
All the long day.

Thus it fell to my lot, Gill; I had such grace.
Wife. It were a foul blot to be hanged for the case — *deed*
Mak. I have scaped, Jelott, oft as hard a glase.
Wife. 'But so long goes the pot to the water, men says,
'At last
Comes it home broken'
Mak. Well know I the token, — *portent*
But let it never be spoken!
But come and help fast.

I would he were flain; I list well eat.
This twelvemonth was I not so fain of one sheep-meat.
Wife. Come they ere he be slain, and hear the sheep bleat—
Mak. Then might I be ta'en: that were a cold sweat!
Go spar — *fasten*
The gate-door — *outer door*
Wife. Yes, Mak,
For and they come at thy back— — *if*
Mak. Then might I buy, for all the pack.
The devil of the war.
Wife. A good bourd have I spied, since thou — *jest*
canst none: — *knowest*
Here shall we him hide, till they be gone,
In my cradle. Abide! Let me alone,
And I shall lie beside in childbed and groan.
Mak. Thou red, — *get ready*
And I shall say thou wast light — *delivered*
Of a knave-child this night. — *boy*
Wife. Now well is me day bright
That ever was I bred!

This is a good guise and a far cast;
Yet a women's advice helps at the last.

I wot never who spies; again go thou fast.
Mak. But I come ere they rise, else blows a cold blast! *unless*
I will go sleep.
Yet sleep all this meny; *company*
And I shall go stalk privily,
As it had never been I
That carried their sheep.

[SCENE III. *The open fields*]

I Shep. *Resurrex a mortruits!* have hold my hand!
Judas carnas dominus! I may not well stand:
My foot sleeps, by Jesus, and I walter fastand.
I thought that we laid us full near England.
2 Shep. Ah, yea ? *oh, really*
Lord, what I have slept well!
As fresh as an eel,
As light I me feel
As leaf on a tree.

3 Shep. Benste be herein! So me quakes, *blessing*
My heart is out of skin, what-so it makes.
Who makes all this din? So my brow blakes., *darkens*
To the door will I win. Hark, fellows, wakes! *go* *wake up*
We were four:
See ye awre of Mak now?
I Shep. We were up ere thou.
2 Shep. Man, I give God avow
Yet yede he nawre.

3 Shep. Methought he was lapped in a wolf-skin.
1 Shep. So are many happed now—namely within.
3 Shep. When we had long napped, methought with a gin *snare*

A fat sheep he trapped; but he made no din.
2 Shep. Be still!
Thy dream makes thee wood; *mad*
It is but phantom, by the rood.
I Shep. Now God turn all to good,
If it be his will.

2 Shep. Rise, Mak, for shame! Thou liest right Long
Mak. Now Christ's holy name be us among!
What is this ? For Saint Jame, I may not well
gang! *walk*
I trow I be the same. Ah, my neck has lain wrong
Enough. [*They help him to get up.*
Mickle thank! Since yester-even,
Now by Saint Stephen,
I was flayed with a sweven—
My heart out of slough.

I thought Gill began to croak and travail full sad, *hard*
Well-nigh at the first cock, of a young lad
For to mend our flock. Then be I never glad; *increase*
I have tow on my rock more than ever I had.
Ah, my head!
A house full of young tharms, *bellies*
The devil knock out their harns! *brains*
Woe is him has many bairns. And thereto little bread.
I must go home, by your leave, to Gill, as I
thought. *intended*
I pray you look my sleeve, that I steal nought;
I am loath you to grieve or from you take aught.
3 Shep. Go forth, ill might thou chieve! Now *prosper*
would I we sought,
This morn,
That we had all our store.
1 Shep. But I will go before.

Let us meet.
2 Shep. Where ?
3 Shep. At the crooked thorn.

[SCENE IV. *Mak's cottage*]

Mak. Undo this door! Who is here? How long shall I stand?
Wife. Who makes such a here ? Now walk in the wenyand ! *din*
Mak. Ah, Gill, what cheer? It is I, Mak your husband.
Wife, Then may we see here the devil in a band, *noose*
Sir Guile!
Lo, he comes with a lote, *noise*
As he were holden in the throat. *held by*
I may not sit at my note *work*
A hand-long while. *brief*

Mak. Will ye hear what fare she makes to get her a glose?
And does naught but lakes, and claws her toes. *play*
Wife. Why, who wanders, who wakes ? Who comes who goes ?
Who brews, who bakes ? What makes me thus hoarse ?
And then
It is ruth to behold — *a pity*
Now in hot, now in cold,
Full woeful is the household
That wants a woman. *lacks*

But what end hast thou made with the herds, *shepherds*
Mak. The last word that they said when I turned my back,

They would look that they had their sheep, all the pack.
I hope they will not be well paid when they *think; pleased*
their sheep lack,
Pardie!

But how-so the game goes *however*
To me they will suppose
And make a foul noise
And cry out upon me.

But thou must do as thou hight. *promised*
Wife. I accord me theretill;
I shall swaddle him right in my cradle.
If it were a greater sleight, yet could I help till. *trick*
I will lie down straight. Come hap me. *straightway; cover*
Mak. I will.
Wife. Behind!
Come Coll and his marrow, *mate*
They will nip us full narrow. *hard*
Mak. But I may cry ' Out, harrow!'
The sheep if they find.

Wife. Harken ay when they call; they will come anon.
Come and make ready all, and sing by thine own;
Sing lullay thou shall, for I must groan, *lullaby*
And cry out by the wall on Mary and John,
For sore. *pain*
Sing lullay on fast, *quickly*
When thou hearest at the last;
And but I play a false cast,
Trust me no more.

[SCENE V. *The crooked thorn*]

3 Shep. Ah, Coll, good morn! Why sleepest thou not?
I Shep. Alas, that ever was I born! We have a foul blot—
A fat wether have we lorn. *lost*
3 Shep. Marry, God's forbot! *God forbid*
2 Shep. Who should do us that scorn ? That were *insult*
a foul spot. *disgrace*
I Shep. Some shrew,

I have sought with my dogs
All Horbury shrogs, *thickets*
And, of fifteen hogs,
Found I but one ewe,

3 Shep. Now trow me, if ye will—by Saint Thomas
of Kent,
Either Mak or Gill was at that assent.
I Shep. Peace, man, be still! I saw when he went.
Thou slander'st him ill; thou ought to repent
Good speed. *quickly*
2 Shep. Now as ever might I thee,
If I should even here die,
I would say it were he
That did that same deed.
3 Shep. Go we thither, I rede, and run on our feet. *advise*
Shall I never eat bread, the sooth to I wit,
I Shep. Nor drink in my head, with him till I meet.
2 Shep. I will rest in no stead till that I him greet, *place*
My brother.
One I will hight:
Till I see him in sight,
Shall I never sleep one night
There I do another. . *where*

[SCENE VI. *Mak's cottage*]

3 Shep. Will ye hear how they hack? Our sire list croon.
1 Shep. Heard I never none crack so clear out of *bawl*
tone. *tune*
Call on him.
2 Shep. Mak, undo your door soon! *immediately*

Mak. Who is it that spake, as it were noon,
On loft ?
Who is that, I say ?
3 Shep. Good fellows, were it day. *if only it were*
Mak. As far as ye may,
Good, speak soft, *good sirs*

Over a sick woman's head, that is at malease;
I had liefer be dead ere she had any disease.
Wife. Go to another stead! I may not well quease; *breathe*
Each foot that ye tread goes thorough my nose
So high.
I Shep. Tell us, Mak, if ye may,
How fare ye, I say ?
Mak. But are ye in this town to-day?
Now how fare ye ?

Ye have run in the mire, and are wet yet;
I shall make you a fire, if ye will sit.
A nurse would I hire. Think ye on yet?
Well quit is my hire—my dream, this is it—
A season.
I have bairns, if ye knew,
Well more than enew; *enough*
But we must drink as we brew,
And that is but reason.

I would ye dined ere ye yode. Methink that ye *went*
sweat.
2 Shep. Nay, neither mends our mood drink nor meat.
Mak. Why, sir, ails you aught but good?
3 Shep. Yea, our sheep that we gete *tend*
Are stolen as they yode. Our loss is great.
Mak. Sirs, drink!

Had I been there.
Some should have bought it full sore. *paid for*
I Shep. Marry, some men trow that ye were
And that us forthinks. *displeases*
2 Shep Mak, some men trows that it should be ye. *believe*
3 Shep. Either ye or your spouse, so say we.
Mak. Now if ye have suspouse to Gill or to me, *suspicion*
Come and rip our houses and then may ye see *ransack*
Who had her.
If I any sheep fot, *fetched*
Either cow or stot— *heifer*
And Gill, my wife, rose not
Here since she laid her—

As I am true and leal, to God here I pray *honest*
That this be the first meal that I shall eat this day.
I Shep. Mak, as have I sele, advise thee, I say:
He learned timely to steal that could not say nay.
Wife. I swelt! *feel faint*
Out, thieves, from my wones! *house*
Ye come to rob us for the nonce.
Mak. Hear ye not how she groans ?
Your hearts should melt.
Wife. Out, thieves, from my bairn! Nigh him
not there.
Mak. Wist ye how she had farn, your hearts would
be sore.

Ye do wrong, I you warn, that thus come before
To a woman that has farn; but I say no more.
Wife. Ah, my middle!
I pray to God so mild,
If ever I you beguiled,
That I eat this child *may eat*
That lies in this cradle.

Mak. Peace, woman, for God's pain, and cry not so!
Thou spillest thy brain, and makest me full woe. *injurest*
2 Shep. I trow our sheep be slain. What find ye two?
3 Shep. All work we in vain; as well may we go.
But hatters! *confound it*
I can find no flesh,
Hard nor nesh, *soft*
Salt nor fresh,
But two tome platters. *only; empty*
Quick cattle but this, tame nor wild,
None, as have I bliss, as loud as he smelled.
Wife. No, so God me bless, and give me joy of my child!
I Shep. We have marked amiss; I hold us beguiled.
2 Shep. Sir, don. *completely*
Sir—our Lady him save!—
Is your child a knave? *boy*
Mak. Any lord might him have,
This child, to his son.

When he wakens he kips, that joy is to see. *snatches*
3 Shep. In good time to his hips, and in sely.
But who were his gossips so soon ready? *godparents*
Mak. So fair fall their lips!
I Shep. [Aside] Hark now, a lie!
Mak. So God them thank,
Parkin, and Gibbon Waller, I say,
And gentle John Home, in good fay— *faith*

He made all the garray— *commotion*
With the great shank. *long legs*

2 Shep. Mafc, friends will we be, for we are all one, *agreed*
Mak. We? Now I hold for me, for mends get I none.
Farewell all three!—all glad were ye gone.
3 Shep. Fair words may there be, but love is there none
This year. *[They leave the cottage.*
1 Shep. Gave ye the child anything ?
2 Shep, I trow not one farthing.
3 Shep. Fast again will I fling;
Abide ye me there. *[He returns to the cottage.*
Mak, take it to no grief, if I come to thy bairn.
Mak. Nay, thou dost me great reprief, and foul hast thou farn.
3 Shep. The child will it not grieve, that little day-starn. *star*
Mak, with your leave, let me give your bairn
But sixpence.
Mak. Nay, do way! He sleeps.
3 Shep. Methink he peeps.
Mak. When he wakens he weeps.
I pray you go hence.

3 Shep. Give me leave him to kiss, and lift up the
clout. *[He glimpses the sheep.* *cloth*
What the devil is this? He has a long snout!
1 Shep. He is marked amiss. We wait ill about.
2 Shep. Ill-spun weft, iwis, ay comes foul out.
Aye, so! *[He recognizes the sheep.*
He is like to our sheep!

3 Shep. How, Gib, may I peep ?
I Shep. I trow kind will creep
Where it may not go.

2 Shep. This was a quaint gaud and a far cast;

It was a high fraud.
3 Shep. Yea, sirs, was't.
Let burn this bawd and bind her fast.
A false scold hangs at the last;
So shalt thou.
Will ye see how they swaddle
His four feet in the middle ?
Saw I never in a cradle A horned lad ere now.

Mak. Peace, bid I. What, let be your fare! *uproar*
I am he that him begat, and yond woman him bare.
1 Shep. What devil shall he hat, Mak ? Lo, *be called*
God, Mak's heir!
2 Shep. Let be all that. Now God give him care, *sorrow*
I sagh.
Wife. A pretty child is he
As sits on a woman's knee;
A dillydown, pardie, *darling*
To gar a man laugh. *make*

3 Shep. I know him by the ear-mark; that is a good
token.
Mak, I tell you, sirs, hark! his nose was broken.
Since told me a clerk that he was forspoken. *bewitched*
I Shep. This is a false work; I would fain be *avenged*
wroken.
Get weapon!
Wife. He was taken with an elf, *by*
I saw it myself;
When the clock struck twelve,
Was he forshapen, *transformed*

2 Shep. Ye two are well feft sam in a stead
I Shep. Since they maintain their theft, let do them *death*
to dead.

Mak. If I trespass eft, gird off my head *again; strike*
With you will I be left.
3 Shep. Sirs, do my rede:
For this trespass
We will neither ban ne flite, *curse; quarrel*
Fight nor chide,
But have done as tite, *at once*
And cast him in canvas.

[They toss Mak in a blanket.

[SCENE VII. *The open fields*]

I Shep. Lord, what I am sore, in point for to burst!
In faith, I may no more; therefore will I rest.
3 Shep. As a sheep of seven score he weighed in my fist.
For to sleep aywhere methink that I list.
3 Shep. Now I pray you
Lie down on this green.
I Shep. On these thieves yet I mean. *think*
3 Shep. Whereto should ye teen ? *vex yourself*
Do as I say you.

An Angel sings ' Gloria in excelsis' , and then says:
Angel. Rise, herdmen hend, for now is he born *gentle*
That shall take from the fiend that Adam had lorn;
That warlock to shend, this night is he born. *destroy*
God is made your friend now at this morn,
He behests. *promises*
At Bedlem go see *Bethlehem*
There lies that free *where; noble one*
In a crib full poorly, Betwixt two beasts.

1 Shep. This was a quaint steven that *elegant voice*
ever yet I heard.
It is a marvel to neven, thus to be scared. *tell of*
2 Shep. Of God's son of heaven he spoke upward, *on high*

All the wood on a leven methought that he gard
Appear.
3 Shep. He spake of a bairn
In Bedlem, I you warn.
I Shep. That betokens yond starn;
Let us seek him there.

2 Shep. Say, what was his song? Heard ye not how
he cracked it, *sang*
Three breves to a long ?
3 Shep. Yea, marry, he hacked it: *trilled*
Was no crochet wrong, nor no thing that lacked it.
1 Shep. For to sing us among, right as he
knacked it, *sang*
1 can.
2 Shep. Let see how ye croon.
Can ye bark at the moon ?
3 Shep. Hold your tongues! Have done!
I Shep. Hark after, then. *[Sings.*

2 Shep. To Bedlem he bade that we should gang; *go*
I am full adrad that we tarry too long. *afraid*
3 Shep. Be merry and not sad—of mirth is our song!
Everlasting glad to meed may we fang
Without noise.
I Shep. Hie we thither forthy, *therefore*
If we be wet and weary, *even if*
To that child and that lady;
We have it not to lose.

2 Shep. We find by the prophecy—let be your din!—
Of David and Isay, and more than I *Isaiah*
min— *remember*
They prophesied by clergy—that in a virgin *learning*

Should he light and lie, to sloken our sin, *alight; quench*
And slake it, *relieve*
Our kind, from woe; *race*
For Isay said so:
Ecce virgo
Concipiet a child that is naked.

3 Shep. Full glad may we be, and abide that day
That lovely to see, that all mights may.
Lord, well were me for once and for ay,
Might I kneel on my knee, some word for to say
To that child.
But the angel said
In a crib was he laid;
He was poorly arrayed,
Both meek and mild.

1 Shep. Patriarchs that have been, and prophets
beforn, *in the past*
They desired to have seen this child that is born.
They are gone full clean; that have they lorn,
We shall see him, I ween, ere it be morn.
To token. *as a sign*
When I see him and feel,
Then wot I full well
It is true as steel
That prophets have spoken:

To so poor as we are that he would appear,
First find, and declare by his messenger.
2 Shep. Go we now, let us fare; the place is us near.

3 Shep. I am ready and yare; go we in fere *eager; together*
To that bright. *bright one*
Lord, if thy will be—

We are lewd all three— *simple*
Thou grant us some kins glee
To comfort thy wight.

[SCENE VIII. *The stable in Bethlehem*]

I Shep. Hail, comely and clean; hail, young child! *pure*
Hail, maker, as I mean, of a maiden so mild! *born of*
Thou hast waried, I ween, the warlock so wild: *cursed*
The false guiler of teen, now goes he beguiled. Lo, he merries, *is merry*
Lo, he laughs, my sweeting!
A well fare meeting! *very fine*
I have holden my heting:
Have a bob of cherries. *bunch*
2 Shep. Hail, sovereign saviour, for thou hast us sought!
Hail, freely food and flower, that all thing hast wrought! *noble child*
Hail, full of favour, that made all of nought!
Hail! I kneel and I cower. A bird have I brought
To my bairn.
Hail, little tiny mop! *moppet*
Of our creed thou art crop;
I would drink on thy cop,
Little day-starn.

3 Shep. Hail, darling dear, full of Godhead!
I pray thee be near when that I have need.
Hail, sweet is thy cheer! My heart would bleed
To see thee sit here in so poor weed, *clothing*
With no pennies.

Hail! Put forth thy dall! *hand*
I bring thee but a ball:
Have and play thee withal,

And go to the tennis.

Mary. The Father of heaven, God omnipotent,
That set all on seven, his Son has he sent.
My name could he neven, and light ere he went.
I conceived him full even through might, as he meant;
And now is he born.
He keep you from woe!—
I shall pray him so.
Tell forth as ye go,
And min on this morn. *remember*
1 Shep. Farewell, lady, so fair to behold,
With thy child on thy knee.
2 Shep, But he lies full cold.
Lord, well is me! Now we go, thou behold.
3 Shep. Forsooth, already it seems to be told
Full oft.
1 Shep. What grace we have fun!
2 Shep. Come forth; now are we won! *redeemed*
3 Shep. To sing are we bun: *bound*
Let take on loft.

1 How cold this weather is! And I am poorly clad.
10 But we poor husbandmen.
11 We are nearly homeless.
13 *tilth*, arable part.
17-18 We are reduced to submission by these gentry.
19 They rob us of our rest, our Lady curse them!
20 *lord-fast*, bound to a lord.
22-3 In danger of coming to mortal harm.
28 If he is able to get an embroidered sleeve, i.e. a lord's livery.
30 No man dare reprove him, no matter what force he uses.
33 He can requisition [our belongings].
42-3 He must have what he wants, even if I have to go without it.

49 *balk*, a strip of rough grassland dividing two ploughed portions of a common field.

55 *Benste*, benedicite (bless us).

56 We have not often seen the like.

64-6 But as far as I know or as my experience goes, we poor married men suffer much woe: we have sorrow time and again.

71 Unhappy is our cock.

74 When they are hard put to it they sigh unceasingly.

76-8 They never answer back. Now I've found out what I have to do.

84 Whatever destiny compels must come to pass.

91 But, young men, as for wooing, by God who redeemed you.

93 'If only I had known' is something that doesn't help you,

98 What shall grieve you most bitterly,

100 I have one for my mate.

102 She has bristly brows and a sour-looking face.

109 God save the audience! You stand there as deaf as apost. (The First Shepherd has evidently been trying to attract the other's attention.)

110-12 The devil in your belly for tarrying so long! Have you seen Daw anywhere? ..... Yea, in a fallow field I heard him blow [his horn].

119 *it*, i.e. the world.

120-3 Anyone who could look on and let the world go by [would see that] it is always fearful and as brittle as glas, and slides away (i.e. is transitory). But the world never behaved in this way before.

139-44 I will turn my sheep away. But I have been ill disposed [to the shepherds]; as I walk on this field, I may stub my toes in easy penance.

148-9 What, the boy is pleased to rave! Wait till later; we have finished it (i.e. our meal).

161 They can stint our wages.

163—5 But hear my promise, master: in return for the food you provide, hali do accordingly—work as I 'm paid. I shall do but little, sir, ! between whiles play all the time.

170-3 'A cheap bargain repays badly." . . . You 'd be the wrong lad for anyone that 's hard up to take a-wooing with him (cf. Othello in. iii. 71).

174-7 Stop your wrangling, or I '11 quickly make you, by the king of heaven! We scorn your pranks-where are our sheep, boy?

180 *Lauds*, the first of the seven canonical offices, usually sung at daybreak.

184 To gladden us meanwhile.

190-3 Now, Lord, by thy seven names, who made both moon and stars far more than I can name, thy will concerning me, Lord, is lacking. I am all at sixes and sevens; that often unsettles my brain.

195 Who is it that cries so piteously ?

208 Why are you so uppish?

209 But, Mark, do you want to play the saint? I believe you do.

211 And have you all flogged.

215 Southern speech. (Mak has been trying to talk Southern English.)

220 Can you remember now?

229 Seldom lies the devil dead by the roadside, i.e. appearances may be deceptive.

232-3 May I be turned to stone if I have eaten a morsel.

209 But, Mak, do you want to play the saint? I believe you do.

238 i.e. there is no hope of her doing much else.

247 There is none who believes [he knows] or [really] knows a worse one.

251-2 To-morrow at the latest to give all in my coffer as an offering for her soul.

253 *forwaked*, wearied with waking.

254 Even if I should get less wages.

256 *forraked*, worn out with walking.

263-4 Then I might keep you from whispering what you want, no doubt.

272-3 For he might pay dearly for it, if it came to a final reckoning.

281 And I shall also say a few good words.

284-7 'Lose your power of sight.' But yet I must make better efforts, if things are co come right. Lord, how soundly they sleep!

289 Yet I shall grab [a sheep] tightly.

290-2 Now a fat sheep shall comfort us.

298-304 I don't think I can earn a penny by getting up [from my spinning], curse them! Any woman who has been a housewife knows what it means to be got up from her work continually. I have no work to show because of such small chores.

306 I will let you draw the latch.

307 You needn't mind about my standing [outside] so long.

323-4 I wish he were skinned; I am eager to eat. At no time this year have I been so glad of a meal of mutton.

330-1 Thee I may get the devil of a bad time from the whole pack of them.

339-41 I 'm happy when I think of the bright day I was born! This is a good method and a cunning trick.

343 Return again quickly [to the others]

352 I 'm tottering with hunger.

355 How well I have slept!

359-60 I tremble so much, my heart is in my mouth, whatever the reason for it.

364 Have you seen Mak anywhere ?

366-7 I vow to God he's gone nowhere yet.

369 Many are covered like that nowadays—especially underneath.

343 Return again quickly [to the others].

379 By Saint James.

380-1 My neck has been lying very crookedly.

384-5 I was terrified by a dream—I nearly jumped out of my skin.

389 I have more tow on my distaff (i.e. more trouble in store) than ever I had.

398-400 Now I want us this morning to see that we have all our stock.

405 Walk in the waning moon, i.e. at an unlucky time.

413 Will you listen to the fuss she makes in the hope of excusing herself?

419 i.e. at all times.

428 They will suspect me.

431 I agree to that.

433 I could still help with it.

438 A cry for help.

447 And if I don't play a false trick.

455 Horbury, near Wakefield.

458 St Thomas of Canterbury.

456-7 Among fifteen hogs (or young sheep) I found only a ewe, i.e. the wether was missing.

459 Either Mak or Gill was a party to it.

463 As I hope to prosper.

468 Till I know the truth.

471 *My brother*, a friendly form of address.

472 One thing I will promise.

476 Do you hear them trilling? Our gentleman is pleased to croon.

479-80 Who is it that spoke aloud, as though it were noon?

485-6 Because of a sick woman who is in distress; I had rather die than she should suffer any discomfort.

488-9 Every step you tread goes through my nose so stiongly, i.e. goes right through my head.

496-8 I would like to hire a nurse. Do you still remember [my dream about a new addition to the family] ? I 've been paid my wages in full for a while—this is my dream come true.

505 Why, sir, is any thing wrong with you?

523-4 Mak, as I hope for happiness, take thought I say: he learned early to steal who could not say no [to another's property].

527 You come on purpose to rob us. :

530 Do not go near him there.

531 If you knew what she had been through.

533 To a woman who has been in labour.

548-9 Live stock but this (i.e. the 'baby' in the Cradle), tame or wild, none [have I found], as I hope to be happy, that smelled as loud as he (i.e. the missing sheep).

551 Aimed wrongly, i.e. made a mistake.

558 A good and happy future to him.

560 Good luck to them.

563 John Horne is the shepherd in the *First Shepherds' Play* quarrels with Gyb about the pasturing of an imaginary flock of sheep.

567 For my own part, I'm holding back, for I get no amends.

568 [I should be] very glad if you were gone. (Probably an aside.)

573 I will dash back.

575 Don't take offence.

576 Nay, you do me great shame, and you have behaved badly.

586-7 He is misshapen. We do wrong to pry about. . . . Ill-spun weft, indeed, always comes out badly, i.e. what is bred io the bone will come out in the flesh.

591-3 Nature will creep where it cannot walk, i.e, assert itself in one way or another. . . . This was a clever dodge and a cunning trick.

606 I saw [the sheep myself].

620 You two are well endowed together in one place, i.e. are as clever a pair of rascals as ever lived under one roof.

623. I throw myself on your mercy.... Take my advice.

632 I think I would be glad to sleep anywhere.

640 *warlock*, the devil.

650-1 I thought he made the whole wood appear as if lit up by lightning.

658 No crochet was wrong, and there was nothing it lacked.

668-9 We can get everlasting joy as our reward without any fuss.

673 We must not forget it.

681-2 Behold, a virgin shall conceive.

684-5 To see that lovely one who is almighty. Lord, I would be happy for once and all.

694 That chance have they lost,

702	Find [jusj first of all, and make known [his birth] through his messenger.
708-9	Grant us some joyful way of comforting thy child.
713	The false and malicious deceiver, i.e. the devil.
717	I have kept my promise.
725-6	You are the head of our faith; I would drink in your cup (i.e. the cup of the cucharist).
738	That made all the world in seven days.
739-40	He named my name and alighted in me before He went. I conceived him indeed through God's might, as His purpose was.
754	Let us begin loudly.

The text is taken from Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays, Edited with an Introduction by A. C Cawley, Pub. J M Dent & Sons Ltd., London and E.P. Dutton & Co. Inc, New York.

2.3.5 The Play: Analysis

As learners, you are expected to read the entire text of the play as prescribed in your syllabus. This analysis is meant to help you understand the major issues that the play deals with.

As the The Second Shepherds' Play begins, Coll is introduced as the shepherd and tenant farmer through a long poetic soliloquy and is found expressing his disgust with his socio-economic conditions. This lament is a feature of the Estate satire [Estate satires are a genre of writing from the 14th. century. They showed how each or any of the three estates-the church, the Royalty or the labourers failed to carry out their divinely ascribed duties in the present times] that not only allows the shepherd to be established as a singular character but also as a representative of the entire disgruntled lower class of citizens. Coll initially complains about the weather and physical hardships and then says how poverty is inflicted upon his class through taxation and forced obedience to their superiors and then concludes with the reversion to the normal routine (source :Greenblatt and Abrams).In the play, Coll describes himself as a husbandman who cultivated someone else's land but now the landowners have decided it was more profitable to grow furrow and create an enclosure for sheep pasture. This has meant that people like Coll had to become shepherds from plowmen and this had made sustaining more difficult. Coll complains of the injustice inflicted upon them by the upper class and of the obvious injustice for not letting the peasants till the land:

But we sely husbands

That walks on the moor,

For the tilth of our lands

Coll shows discontent when he says "In faith we are near hands / Out of the door" meaning that in reality these labourers, including himself, are practically homeless. He describes his superiors as "these men who are lord-fast" or men who work hand in hand with feudal oppressors, who "cause the plow tarry" or inhibit efficient farming. By saying that these men "reave us our rest" (rob us of our rest) Coll is depicting them as heartless oppressors who make their peasantry work very hard for self-gain "In point to miscarry" or to the point of absolute ruin on the part of the impoverished. With this strong emotionally driven expression of frustration, the rivalry between the upper and lower classes are apparent (Greenblatt & Abrams 409).Furthermore, Coll gives the audience a glimpse of these' lord-fast' men's self-righteousness when he says in the play:

For may he get a paint-sleeve

Or a brooch nowadays,

Woe is him that him grieve

Or once again-says.(if he gets an embroidered sleeve, that is, a lord's livery, no man dare reprove him, no matter what force he uses)

To draw our attention to the emotional entanglement of Coll's situation, the Wakefield Master uses rhyme and meter to his advantage in order to achieve a desired effect on his audience. His use of rhyme is essential for epitomising Coll's tone from stanza to stanza. The alliterative effect he attains when he says "We are so hammed, / Fortaxed and rammed" with the use of the words "hammed" and "rammed" expresses his absolute exasperation as a result of the oppressive measures their superiors undertake. The audience can hear that the stress is placed on all three of those expressive words (Greenblatt & Abrams 409). Besides, alliteration is used through the words "napped", "chapped", and "lapped", to express fatigue, feeling of being worn out, and being overwhelmed respectively. All of these rhyming words by definition emphasise weariness and melancholy and are continuously stressed throughout the stanza, giving the audience a constant reminder of Coll's emotional state and sorrowful tone. In the same way, the words "wary "and "tarry" when Coll exclaims, "Our Lady them wary! / These men that are lord-fast, / They cause the plow tarry", both have similar effects on the audience

since by definition, wary is a curse and tarry is an unwelcome interference. Because they rhyme, the audience understands the frustration that Coll is experiencing with these gentry-men's ill governance (Greenblatt & Abrams 409).

When we examine the themes that run consistently through the soliloquy of Coll we see that the Wakefield Master takes up two major themes in Coll's speech, namely, hardship and class antagonism. Hardship is conveyed throughout Coll's speech by way of his continuous complaints concerning melancholy, resentment, and anguish that are usually stressed at climactic moments in each stanza. For example, in the very beginning he explains his dread of winter when he describes how the "weathers are cold", he's "near -hand dold" or nearly "numb", his "fingers are chapped" or roughened, and he's all "lapped in sorrow" ("wrapped" in grief). He sympathises with those that "never rest / Midday nor morrow", which expresses his feeling of exhaustion. As he continues, he supplements his complaints with words such as "rammed" which can be translated as "beaten down" and statements such as "Thus live we in pain, anger, and woe/ By night and day", emphasising the constant burden of his dissatisfaction that causes him great torment (Greenblatt & Abrams 408-409).

The Wakefield Master uses key literary techniques to demonstrate the social and political aspects of society in this period, as expressed through a character that experiences these truths first hand as is evident through the length of Coll's lament in the play. The recurring themes of hardship and class antagonism throughout the soliloquy help convey the discontent of the peasant class of the time. The melancholy and torment the shepherds suffer is well highlighted through the Wakefield Master's expert use of rhyme and alliteration to reveal the suffering the peasant class had to endure as a result of the tyranny of the upper classes. The Wakefield Master's skillful use of these elements does make him a great influence on the professional English theater thereafter.

The second shepherd, Gib enters and introduces a second common theme, on a more comical tone. This is the theme of oppression in marriage, typified in his gross caricature of his own wife. According to Gib, his marital problems are an additional burden to the winter woes:

"Lord, these weathers are spitous, and the winds full keen

And the frosts so hideous they water mine een"

But the married men are more miserable because ,

"These men that are wed have not all their will

When they are full hard sted, they sigh full still" (married men have no freedom. When they are hard put to it, they sigh increasingly.)

His wife is described and denounced in bitterly comic terms :

"She is as great as a whale,

She has a gallon of gall;

By Him that died for us all,

I would I had run to I had lost her. "

The effect of this switch from serious social to comic marital complaint quickly disorients the audience. It is not yet clear how the action will develop or what kind of drama this will be. The third shepherd, Daw enters and from the ensuing conversation it appears that he is the servant of the other two. If they are poor, it appears that he is poorer. In a fine sophisticated touch, it now seems that the inhumanity of their social superiors of which Coll and Gib have been complaining is practised by themselves. Daw too is hungry and cold in winter. Coll and Gib scold him for being late and call him lazy. When he asks for food and drink, they say he is raving and rudely tell him to wait till they finish their meal. They ask Daw where their sheep are and he answers that they are in the corn. Since the sheep appear to be well provided for, the three shepherds decide to sing a song to gladden themselves. Thus, gradually, from the strong note of disgruntlement and unhappiness with which the play begins, there is a shift towards a merrier mood. The later miracles of the angel and the birth of Christ are anticipated in the sheep being "in the corn" in the middle of winter. Mak enters to the accompaniment of the shepherds' singing and the central Mak farce of mock-Nativity commences.

Mak enters with a complaint of being ill-used by God. But like the quick-change he will prove to be, he begins to speak in an affected southern dialect, pretending to be the messenger from a great lord. When the sceptical shepherds mock his speech and threaten to beat him he quickly changes his tone. Called a thief, he protests his honesty . The comic theme of marital discontent is repeated through Mak. His wife is lazy, lying around the house instead of working. She eats and drinks well and gives birth to a child every year. She has a foul temper too. After Mak's recital of his domestic woes ends, the tired shepherds decide to lie down to rest and sleep.

Mak seems to be something of a magician, for he utters a night spell which puts the shepherds in a deep sleep. He then steals a fat sheep and goes to his cottage. His wife Gyll's complaints are a counterpart to the earlier marital complaints of the men. Mak

and Gyll anticipate the trickster figure of later theatre. He proclaims his intention to avoid the curse of Adam ; 'In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread'.

'I am worthy my meat

For in a strait can I get

More than they that swank and sweat

All the long day"

Gyll reminds him that he also risks being hanged for his theft. Mak and Gyll then devise the ruse of swaddling the stolen sheep and putting it in the cradle. Mak goes back to the field and slips back among the sleeping shepherds. The shepherds awaken one by one. Their first concern is the whereabouts of Mak. It is clear that they do not trust him. The third shepherd had dreamt of Mak covered in wolf's clothing, snaring a sheep, foreshadowing his role as a threat to their flock. Mak too pretends to wake up, complains of being stiff all over and says he dreamt that his wife had given birth to another child. He says more children mean more trouble and curses his children. He tells them to make a search of his dress to confirm that he had not stolen anything. Mak gets back home . He and Gyll discuss how to deceive the shepherds when they come in search of the stolen sheep. Meanwhile Coll finds out that a fat sheep is missing. All the shepherds are sure that it is Mak's handiwork. They come to Mak's cottage and hear Mak singing a lullaby. In the ensuing interchange between Mak, Gyll and the shepherds action and dialogue, the playwright explores some fine humour. Gyll groans in agony and swears if she was found to be using any deception, she would eat the child in the cradle. (As you read on, keep an eye on how these words become equivocatory!!!) The shepherds search Mak's cottage but find nothing except two empty platters. They depart and the suspense of the audience seems to relax. But they return-a well-managed dramatic surprise, to gift something to the new-born baby. The sheep is discovered in the cradle:

"3rd. shepherd : What the devil is this? he has a long snout!"

"2nd. Shepherd : He is like to our sheep"

Gyll persists in maintaining that the sheep is her child magically transformed by an elf.

"He was taken with an elf

I saw it myself

When the clock struck twelve,

Was he forshapened"(transformed)

The farce reaches its climax with the shepherds tossing mak in the air-a symbolic death in terms of buffoonery. Their good-natured tolerance of Mak's crime sets the tone for the Nativity proper. The change or transformation comes with the angel singing 'Gloria in excelsis'(Angels we have heard on high). The shepherds wonderingly talk of the birth of a baby; "He spake of a bairn/In bedlam I you warn" They marvel at what the angel said-that the new-born savior of mankind was'poorly arrayed' , lying between two beasts and had come 'to so poore as we ar' . He is the savior of all mankind-of the poor above all. Thus the note of distresses of the poor with which the play opens finds its response towards the close. The play concludes, as does the First Shepherds' Play, with the Adoration of the shepherds.

As the shepherds arrive at the stable in Bethlehem, the inspired and formal praise of the Christ-child recognizes the meaning and purpose of the Incarnation (in Christian theology the embodiment of God the Son as human being in Jesus Christ) dissolves into a human response to a laughing infant.

1st. shepherd:

Lo, he laughs , my sweeting!

A well fare meeting

2nd. Shepherd:

Hail, sovereign savior, for thou hast us sought!

Hail, freely food and flower, that all things hast wrought!

We notice how the shepherds respond to the baby Christ with the same human sympathy that took them back to see Mak's pseudo-child. They appreciated Mak's deception and now appreciate God's deception of the arch-deceiver, the Devil . The wildly comic absurdities of the disguised sheep emphasize the incredible yet true event of the Son of God born in human flesh . Each of the three shepherds offers a gift-a'bob of cherys'(bunch of cherries), a bird and a ball. The Divine child is treated with tender human affection, as the third shepherd laments the poor clothing of the child and, offering a ball , jokes, "have and play thee withal/And go to the tenys".

2.3.6. Religious elements in the play

This is a Nativity play and thus it is natural that it will have Christian elements. The first Christian charity of the shepherds is seen in their offering a sixpence to Mak's newborn son; later they show mercy towards Mak even when they find out his "son" was in reality a stolen sheep in disguise. This farcical parody of Christ in the manger is then offset by the moral of the story as their charity is then rewarded with a visit from an angel, singing Gloria in Excelsis, who tells them of the birth of the saviour.

The onset of secularisation and thereafter separation from the Catholic Church did not make miracle plays lose their religious impulse or fervour. It is perhaps not very difficult to realize that hope was a great medication for survival in a world infested with rebellion, hunger and pain. The speech of Mary at the close emphasises the religious message :

Mary: The Father of heaven, god omnipotent,

That set all on liven, his Son has he sent.

My name could he neven, and light ere he went.

I conceived him full even through might, as he meant:

And now is he born.

He keep you from woe!-

I shall pray him so.

Tell forth as ye go, (Omnipotent God, the father of heaven who gave light to all has sent us his son. I conceived him forthright, through his Holy Spirit. And now he is born, he keep you from woe I shall pray to him to do so. Tell his praise as you go and remember this morning.)

2.3.7. Characters

The characters in the play are:

Coll - The leader and oldest of the three shepherds;

Gib - The second shepherd;

Daw - The youngest of the shepherds;,

Mak - A thief;

Gill - Mak's wife;

Angel,

Mary

Child.

The anonymous author of The Second Shepherds' Play of course knew of the three wise men who visited child Jesus at the manger, very intelligently uses three humble shepherds in this delightful and what can be said to be a boisterous inversion of the traditional Nativity story. The setting of the play is a very recognisable English Countryside, the play addresses "real life"- a day to day presentation of medieval existence. Expectedly, Coll, the leader of the group of shepherds is found complaining about the conflict of interests between the landowning gentry and the rural workers while the unhappily married Gib complains of a more mundane problem like family troubles and groans about his wife. Daw, though the youngest of the group is yet the cleverest of the three, and muses on the "wonder" of the coming storm. There is a fine distinction drawn among the three. The first seems the more affluent and consequently the more aggressive. He wants to punish Mak's deception with violent means: "get weapon". The second shepherd is a grumbler but has a less violent temper and is less prone to radical social protest, being preoccupied with domestic troubles. Daw, the third shepherd is the servant and obviously poorer. But he is a free spirit and does not hesitate to tell his masters if they do not feed or pay him well he will work accordingly-do a little work and play all the time. He goes back to Mak's child to offer a sixpence to the newborn. Later, he pacifies the other two, telling them to toss Mak in a canvas-a symbolic death, instead of killing him outright.

Mak's Character:

When Mak comes into the field to join the shepherds he is not very welcome, for he has a reputation as a thief, and the shepherds are somewhat suspicious that given Mak's nature, he would steal something from them. Yet Mak has his way as he begs them to let him stay and narrates a sad story of being hungry and unwelcome at home, even though he works hard to give his wife what she wants. Before that however he tries another trick by pretending to be a noble lord's messenger and speaking in a southern dialect. Only when that fails to impress them does he change his tune and act humble and miserable. The three shepherds give in and bid him lie down and spend the night with them as they identify with the poverty and misery of Mak.

After the three shepherds fall asleep, Mak arises and prepares to steal a sheep, first casting a spell over the shepherds to keep them from awaking. He then goes to the fold,

selects a fat ewe, and makes off with it to his house. He and his wife hide it, not daring to kill the sheep, lest the noise make the theft known.

There is no denying the fact that Mak is a thief and he is preying upon the community of his own people. Yet it must be remembered that he does not steal out of greed but to feed his hungry children. His first speech echoes the misery of life and ends with the whimper: "Now would God were I in heaven/ forthere weep no bairns" (280-281). He walks and identifies himself to others as: "a man that walks on the moor / and has not all his will" (285-86). In fact this is the kind of complain that the other shepherds too have made; they too walk on the moor in the bitter cold bearing all. Though Mak is the antagonist of the good shepherds, he too has a lot in common with them.

Mak's character is a fine comic creation. . He reacts hyperbolically when confronted by the shepherds and the double entendres of his speeches are matchless. This is exemplified when Mak is accused of theft by the shepherds. He points to the cradle and says if he is found guilty then he would eat the contents of the cradle. Here the farce of blasphemy is full of symbolic allegory. It is obvious that Mak intends to eat the lamb and on another level this relates to the idea of eating the flesh of Christ or the communion sacrament for the path of salvation. The significance of the play is heightened when one realizes that it could be probably the first comedic farce of religious content in English literature.

The other shepherds swear vengeance on the wily thief but when Mak is discovered they renounce their punishment and loosely toss the thief in a blanket. Although blanket tossing can result in serious injuries, the act shows man's ability to forgive and exemplifies the love that is needed for acceptance of the miracle of Christ as God's son.

But the highlight of the comedy comes with Mak and Gill disguising the stolen sheep as their baby in a cradle -- a burlesque in advance of what's coming: the scene of baby Jesus in the manger.

Mak is the trickster of folk tradition. He would avoid Adam's curse, that is hard work and live on his wits. However, he has his share of the miseries the other shepherds complain of - winter cold and lack of food. Like some tricksters in folk tradition dating back to pre-Christian times, he seems to know some magic spells, since he puts the shepherds in deep sleep. But for all his cleverness, it is his wife Gyll who thinks of the ruse to dupe the shepherds. The second shepherd says they are a pair of rascals fit for one another. He swears to go straight henceforward and so escapes being put to death. With regard to the theological content of the play, he stands for unregenerate man, such as Christ was born to redeem.

A nagging wife:

Often in literature with a comic content , women are of two kinds: one nagging and the other shrewd. Mak's wife is largely the nagging and complaining kind. When he returns with the stolen ship under his cloak, Gill is complaining as she opens the door:

Who makes such a din

This time of the night?

I am set for to spin

I hope not I might

Rise a penny to win! (427-431) ("I don't think I can earn a penny by getting up from my spinning." She goes on to say that she has to get up continually from her work and because of such small chores she cannot finish her spinning)

Later, when after his stealthy visit home Mak ostensibly returns in the morning, and tells her she does nothing but play and 'claw her toes', Gyll furnishes a long list of the housewife's chores :

"Why, who wanders, who wakes? Who comes, who goes?

Who brews, who bakes? What makes me thus hoarse?

And then

It is ruth to behold-

Now in hot, now in cold,

Full woeful is the household

That wants a woman".

She is clever as well as sturdy, holding her own against the shepherds when they find the stolen sheep, stoutly maintaining that elves transformed the baby.

2.3.8. Pre- Christian elements

Although this is a Nativity play, part of a cycle of religious plays performed at a Christian festival, possibly on Corpus Christie day, we find here, as also elsewhere in medieval literature, surviving elements of a pre-Christian tradition. Magic spells and belief in magical creatures like fairies and elves continued to be a part of medieval folk belief. Mak recites a night spell and draws a magic circle round the sleeping shepherds to

make them sleep till noon. Gyll swears her child was taken by an elf at the magical hour of midnight and transformed. This low grade pagan magic is supplanted by the church-approved miracle of the angel's appearance and a Virgin birth of the Son of God.

Activity for the Learner

You have come across one kind of mingling of Christian and pre-Christian elements in the literature of the OE period. Such interface also pervades ME literature to a large extent. As a comprehension of your understanding of the periods, try to find points of comparison and contrast between such cross mixings in the two periods. Your counselor will help you with the salient points.

2.3.9. The Style

A number of plays in the Towneley cycle are together called the Wakefield group, because they display certain shared characteristics, and are generally supposed to have been written by the outstanding medieval playwright whom scholars have named 'The Wakefield Master'. They are distinguished by their local allusions, and by the use of a stanza with internal rhymes in the first four lines, to which no exact parallels have been found elsewhere. written is a series of lines known as the Wakefield Stanza Form, a pattern of nine-lane stanzas with an aaaabcccb rhyme scheme and thirteen-line stanzas with an abababababcdddc rhyme scheme. Here we have the nine-line stanza They are, e. g.

1st. Shepherd :

Lord,what these weders ar cold/and I am yall happyd

I am nere handed old/so longhave I nappyd

My leggys they fold/my fingers ar chappyd

It is not as I wold?for I am al lappyd

In sorrow (Lord, what cold weather. I have bad luck. I have slept long and am nearly numb. My legs give way my fingers are chapped. I am wrapped in sorrow)

The plays of this group are also marked by lively exploitation of colloquial idiom and bold handling of secular material for comic purposes. There is plenty of variation in the number of feet to a line and in number of syllables to a feet. The Wakefield Master makes very little use of alliteration but when a serious and solemn effect is desired, there seems to have been a deliberate use of alliteration. For example towards the end of the play when the shepherds' Adoration of the Christ child is presented :

1st. Shepherd :
hayll, comly and clene! / hayll, yong child!
hayll, maker, as I meyne, / of a madyn so mylde!
Thou has waryd, I weyne / the warlo so wylde;
The fals gyler of teyn / now goys he begylde.

2nd. Shepherd :
hayll, sufferan sauyoure! / ffor thou has vs soght:
719
hayll, frely foyde and floure / that all thyng has wroght!
720
hayll, full of fauoure / that made all of noght!
721
hayll! I kneyll and I cowre. / A byrd haue I broght
To my barne.

What's special about The Second Shepherds' Play???

This 15th-century miracle play -- probably serving as a supplement to the earlier "First Shepherds' Play" -- was created by the so-called Wakefield Master, praised for his skill in comedy. The shepherds Coll, Gib, and Daw, along with the sheep-stealer Mak and his wife Gill provide the comic parody. The pre-Christ days; an apparently chaotic tendency towards time-and-space-collapsing anachronism making the locale and the personae sound and feel like 15th-century northern England; familiar complaints about taxation, the abuses of the rich, and other social ills; the 'misery' called marriage - in a nutshell, this medieval play has it all. It is an important milestone in marking the gradual movement towards dramatic maturity.

2.3.10. Summing Up

The Second Shepherd's Play is somewhat unique in its combination of satirical and religious content; it features a comical storyline (modern shepherds deceived by a trickster figure) with a traditional Christian subplot. The secular part is when the story of the shepherd's search for a lost sheep is told. There are simultaneously parodies and parallels to the religious plot in which Christ is born to save the "lost" herd of humanity, significant at a time of history when humanity was in a sea of turbulence oft created by man himself. Therefore, while the lead story is somewhat reminiscent of the low farce of The Canterbury Tales, the potentially vulgar aspects of the story are tempered by a retelling of Christ's birth as present in the second part of the play.

The Second Shepherd's Play is also notable in the way it mirrors the tropes and themes that were popular in other medieval texts. For one, the presence of emblematic characters-such as the stereotypically good and evil characters in the secular, comical plot-was a structural device that would reach its apex in the popular play Everyman, which features as its hero a man who represents all humanity. The Second Shepherd's Play works also with a tactic that is found in the mystical works of writers like Julian of Norwich that is the humanisation of divine characters. For example, the play represents Christ in the most vulnerable, relatable way in and as a human baby. In Norwich's Revelations of Divine Love, Christ is similarly humanised as a relatable figure with whom the writer can connect in new, more profound ways. These patterns suggest not only the circulation of the literature of the Middle Ages (much in the same way that oral stories spread in the Old English period), but an overarching social attempt to understand Christianity in new ways. The playwright draws the character of Mak and the other shepherds with a distinct flavour. Coll complains about the plight of the common man and his suppression by the landed gentry. The second shepherd is a henpecked rogue who talks of the woes of marriage. The third shepherd constantly complains and berates his lazy master. The three shepherds are given distinct characters too in the nativity scene as they gift the child: ball, cherries and a bird. Instead of frankincense and such, the shepherds offer rustic gifts. First is a bob (or cluster) of cherries, which are picked in midwinter and therefore represent birth amid death. Second is a bird, perhaps representing the Holy Spirit. And third is a tennis ball, the orb being a symbol of royalty.

The second shorter part of the play parallels the first but the comedy abates and the true Nativity is treated in a serious manner. The shepherds are awakened by an angel and they are transported to Bethlehem where they see the child Christ. The reason behind the two- level plot is clear: spirituality and forgiveness will always be rewarded. In this form, it has been noted that the play appeals to both the common people and the educated, thus demonstrating the allegoric principles mandated by the miracle plays. The juxtaposition of common secular problems with religious farce makes for interesting reading for the modern readers.

2.3.11. Suggested Reading:

Primary Texts :

1. Greenblatt, Stephen, and M. H. Abrams. "MysteryPlays." The Norton Anthology of English Literature. New York: W.W. Norton, 2006.
2. The text is taken from Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays, Edited with an

Introduction by A. C Cawley, Pub. J. M Dent & Sons Ltd. London and E.P Dutton & Co. Inc, New York.

Secondary Sources:

2. Malone, Kemp; Albert C. Baugh (1969). Albert C. Baugh, ed. Literary History of England: Vol 1, The Middle Ages (2nd Ed.). London: Routledge.

2.3.12. Comprehension Exercises:

1. Essay-type questions (20 marks)

a) How does the Wakefield Second Shepherds' Play balance religious and secular elements?

b) Analyse and comment on the representation of medieval life in the Second Shepherds' Play.

c) Analyse the structure of the Second Shepherds' Play.

d) Would you say that the playwright who wrote the Second Shepherds'Play really deserves the title of 'The Wakefield Master'?

2. Mid -length questions (10 marks)

a) Are the characters in the Second Shepherds' Play clearly distinguished from one another?

b) How does the Wakefield Master treat the theme of marriage?

c) Show how Mak receives the shepherds comments on the consequences of his trick.

d) With references to the Second Shepherds' Play show how the miracle plays humanized Christian liturgy.

3. Short questions (5 marks)

a) Write a note on the element of magic and miracle in the Second Shepherds' Play.

b) Comment on the Wakefield Master's style and manner of writing.

c) Analyse the actual Nativity play that follows the mock-nativity.

Module - 3
Philology

3.0 A General Introduction

Let us begin with a story. The story is told in the Book of Genesis of the Bible. Once upon a time there was a king in Babylon called Nimrod. He wanted to create a tower with a spiral staircase that would reach up to the heaven. The Tower of Babel thus rose, and it rose so high that the people could actually throw arrows and spears at God. Jehovah was aghast. So he decided to teach them a lesson. He put different languages in the mouth of different peoples and confused them. As the people could no longer communicate with one another, their plan to attack heaven was foiled, and hence the Tower of Babel could not be completed.

What does the story tell us? Once, all the people spoke in the same tongue and it was God, who created different languages. So, all the languages come from a single origin. The linguists today do not believe all the languages come from the same origin. They tell you that all languages evolve from some 'language family' or other. There are eighteen such language families which may be called the mothers of all the languages of the world. For instance, we have the Negrido, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Native American, Semitic language families. Indo-European, a language which is responsible for the birth of many languages that you know of, is one member of this original group.

The membership in a language family is not genetic in the biological sense but languages do descend from their mothers and are related to the other members of the group just as you are related to your family, and bear close resemblance with your mother, sister, aunt, niece, and others. You may look like them, think like them, and behave like them. Similarly, the languages have words that are common or similar to one another, for they are either derived or borrowed from the same source, or they may have similar grammatical practices.

Now, how in the real world can one language give birth to so many other languages? Historians will tell you that it all happened when many years ago, much before the birth of Christ, the people living in one place and sharing a common language started to migrate to other parts of the world. The reason of this migration could have been several: climate change, food scarcity, adventurous nature of man, or in later times, political dissension, religious conversions or social crises. Thus they went to new places, and

remember, no place was ever empty, so there would have been natives in those places, and the newcomers would sometimes engage in war, or just mingle with them. As their lives overlapped, so did their language. Thus language is transmitted not by means of genes but through culture and social practises. Sometimes, when two languages mix, one is enriched and the other decays, or sometimes both the languages change and a new third kind evolves. It is not the arbitrary choice of fate that decides which language is going to stay and which one is going to disappear. Such decisions are taken by the historical and economic forces operating at that moment in that particular place. So, if you are wondering as to why the study of language is important in the study of literature, remember, the history of the growth and development of a language will actually show you the growth and development of that particular culture, and the growth and development of a particular culture would lead to the growth and development of their literature.

Now, let us come to the curious history of the English language. Look at the chart in **Plate 1 on Page No. 241** It is a simplified family-tree of all the Indo-European languages. Notice that English comes at the end of the West Germanic or Teutonic Languages, which come from the Western set of Indo-European languages. The Indo-European family probably originated around 3000-2000 BCE, in the general region of the Caspian Sea. Over the centuries the speakers of the proto-Indo-European language spread as far east as India, as far west as the Americas, as far north as Northern Russia and as far south as the southern tip of Africa. During their travel their languages changed continuously and independently, but regularly enough so that by means of reconstruction techniques the linguists can show the relatedness of these languages.

Germanic or proto-Germanic is a member of the north-western Indo-European group of languages. From their early homeland in the southern parts of Scandinavia, the speakers of the Proto-Germanic migrated in various directions. **See Plate 2 on Page No. 242**

The linguists have divided this speech community into three parts depending on the routes of their migration that led to the rise of the different languages. The people of the East Germanic group are believed to have moved eastwards and southwards during the first three or four centuries B.C. The most well-known people of this group were the Goths. Peoples from the North Germanic groups moved to the areas now known as Denmark, Sweden and Norway and later to Iceland. These people later came to England as Scandinavians and left an indelible mark on the formation of the English language. They also left a considerable number of early texts dating from the second century

onwards, carved in 'runes' on metal, wooden, bones and other objects. The runic 'alphabet' is generally called the 'futhark'. Take a look at the following letters, you may find them interesting:

futhark

(The first six letters of the early futhark found on a bracteates from Vadstena in Sweden. SourCE: The Oxford History of English by Lynda Mugglestone)

Before the Germanic peoples began their migrations, the West Germanic group seem to have been located in what is now Denmark and in the northern and North Sea coastal territories of modern Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium. These people were divided into three major tribal groups of which the Invaeones group's dialects, spoken along the North Sea gave rise to the English language.

In the Unit that follows (Module 3 Unit 1), you will learn:

- **The history of the Anglo-Saxons and the creation of the English nation**
- **Who the Scandinavians were**
- **The extent and nature of the influence their language had on the English language**
- **The historical and political reasons behind the French influence on English language**
- **The nature and extent of French loanwords**
- **The influence of French grammar and phonetics**

Module 3

Unit 1 ❑ Scandinavian and French Influences

Scandinavian Influence of the English Language

3.1.1 Historical Background

The Anglo-Saxons

Before going into the details of the nature and extent of Scandinavian influence on English language, let us first look into the beginnings of English history and find out who the English are and how they came to settle in England.

The island of what is known as Great Britain today was a part of the Europe land mass as it was fifty thousand years ago. There was no English Channel and the North Sea was not much more than an enlarged river basin. The earliest inhabitants were the Paleolithic Men, who lived in the open, or under rock shelters and later in caves. Around 5000 B.C., Neolithic Man came from the southern lands bordering on the Mediterranean. He was a bit more advanced than the Paleolithic Man for he knew how to domesticate animals, develop elementary agricultural techniques, and so on. Traces of these people are still found in the population of British Isles, but their language has not survived. Around 500 B.C., the Neolithic men were driven out of the British Isles by the Celtic invaders. This was also the time of introduction of bronze in the island and Celtic was the first Indo-European tongue to be spoken in this area. We have documents about this language. Julius Caesar invaded Britain in around 55B.C.The invasion was not a great success. Around 43 B.C. Emperor Claudius succeeded in colonising the British Isles

and Latin was introduced in the island. Though the relation between the Romans and the Celts was not particularly a cordial one, yet Latin was spoken, particularly among the educated people for the first four centuries A.D.. Celtic was first spoken only by the rural people, but later after the Romans soldiers left the island around 410 A.D. to protect their homeland against the Goths, the position of Latin also declined. The withdrawal of the Roman army also had other political consequences in England. The Picts and Scots from the Northern part of the island, who were so long kept out by constant Roman vigilance now began to raid England. According to legends, since the Romans refused to help, help was sought from the Jutes, and in 449 A.D. a variety of Germanic tribes responded to the invitation of King Vortigern and settled in England. The tribes who settled in were the Angles, the Saxons and the Jutes-who dwelt on the North Sea coast from Denmark to Holland.

Celtic was the first Indo-European tongue spoken in the area known as Great Britain today. Celtic was once widely diffused over Europe, it can be divided into three groups: Gaulish, Britannic and Gaelic. Gaulish was spoken in France and northern Italy in the time of Roman Republic, and was spread abroad by Celtic military expeditions to central Europe as far as Asia Minor. It died out during early centuries of Christian era. Britannic was the branch of Celtic spoken in most of Britain before the Anglo-Saxon invasions. It survived into modern times in three languages: Cornish, which is known in texts from the fifteenth century and died out in the eighteenth century; Welsh, which has literary texts going back to the eleventh century; and Breton, which has literary texts from the fourteenth century. Breton was taken across to Brittany by refugees from Britain during the time of the Anglo-Saxon invasions.

Modern historians have raised question regarding the veracity of this historical account. The Anglo-Saxon monk Bede, in his 8th century Latin history of the English church titled, Ecclesiastical History of the English People also wrote about this migration. Nicholas Rowe, in his book Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England (1989) identified it as a 'myth' which had become canonical in Anglo-Saxon history writing. Whatever the reason of this migration ,be it political condition in England or Germany, or climatic change, or the adventurous nature of the Germanic tribes, our objective is definitely not to find out why the Anglo-Saxons came but to register the facts that :

(1) this migration was the beginning of the recorded history of England;

(2) the Anglo-Saxon settlement of Britain was not an invasion of an unified army but rather the arrival and penetration of various uncoordinated bands of

adventurers in different parts of the country, beginning in the middle of the fifth century and continuing all through the sixth century;

(3) this had a deep impact on the making of the English language, for the Celtic language almost disappeared and the language of the Anglo-Saxons formed the basis of Old English.

The political struggle between the Roman-Celtic and Anglo-Saxon population was a long one and the latter's supremacy was established at the end of the sixth century. By 700 A.D., the Anglo-Saxons had occupied most of England (except Cornwall and areas in the North-West) and also a considerable part of southern Scotland. Wales remained a Celtic stronghold.

There is no reason to think that the Celts were all killed or driven out by the Anglo-Saxons. But they were the defeated ones. So their language lost its prestige-you will come across a similar incident while reading about the French invasion of England. However, a few Celtic words still remain, particularly in place names like, London, Leeds and names of rivers, for instance, Avon, Ouse (meaning water or stream), Thames (dark river), etc; county names like Devon and Kent. You may compare the Celtic place names with the Scandinavian place names that you shall read in the following section.

The Arrival of the Scandinavians

Now let us take a look at the maps in **Plates 3 and 4**. Can you see the three nations of the Danes, the Norwegians and Swedes in the map? See they were staying in close proximity with the Angles and Saxons. Also take a look at the chart of the family of Indo-European

The Arrival of the Scandinavians

Now let us take a look at the maps in **Plate 3 (Page No. 243) and 4 (Page No. 244).** Can you see the three nations of the Danes, the Norwegians and Swedes in the map? See they were staying in close proximity with the Angles and Saxons. Also take a look at the chart of the family of Indo-European family of languages given earlier in Plate 1. The Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish languages come in the North Teutonic or Germanic or Norse group of languages. Thus linguistically as well they were quite close to the West Germanic languages from which Old English emerged at around 700 A.D. You may also remember how the legend of a Danish king Beowulf has been preserved in

English literature more faithfully than in the Danish literature. With all these we may safely infer the facts:

1) the two races of Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians were linguistically and culturally quite close to one another;

2) therefore, even if they became foes because of the strange consequences of history, they had every possibility to merge with one another and emerge as a single race for their differences were few.

This was exactly what happened with the Scandinavian influence.

In the Old English period the Anglo-Saxons and Danes were two peaceful nations. The English were quite taken by surprise when in 790 A.D. the Danes suddenly started to come in small troops (much in the same fashion the Anglo-Saxons themselves had come 400 years ago to the island). They looted what they could lay their hands on and left. But by the ninth century the intermittent attacks changed into systematic campaigns of armies who aimed to settle in the land they had conquered. Battles were fought with various success but on the whole the Scandinavians seemed to be a stronger race; and by the treaty of Wedmore, in 878, King Alfred was forced to leave more than half of what we now call England-all Northumbria, all East Anglia, and one half of central England, to make out the district called the Danelaw to Guthrun, the Danish chief. **(See Plate 5 on Page No. 245)** Thus the political change initiated a social change which paved the way to a wider linguistic change that restructured the English language.

3.1.2. Nature of The Scandinavian loans

The Scandinavian loans are marked for their simplicity and democratic nature. Both the languages, i.e., Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian, descended from the same stock so their vocabulary was shared. The Scandinavians were by no means superior to the English, though not actually inferior, so the English actually felt no urge to borrow any particular set of words from them. As a result of which a huge number of words like man, wife, father, mother, wise, well, ill, egg, over, under, come, sit are identical in two languages.

Jespersen says, 'An Englishman cannot thrive or be ill or die without the Scandinavian words; they are to the language what bread and *eggs* are to daily fare.' It is this homely nature of the Scandinavian loans that makes them different from their French counterparts.

The Extent of the Scandinavian Influence on the English Language

For the sake of clarity we shall read the Scandinavian influence on the English language under two categories: its influence on English vocabulary and on English grammar and syntax.

3.1.3 Influence on English Vocabulary

The influence of a foreign language on the vocabulary is measured through the influx of the loan words from the foreign source into the native language. The Scandinavian loans can be briefly viewed in the following manner:

- Certain names of places ending in '-by', '-thorp', '-beck', '-dale', '-thwaite', '-toft', and so on, show greater Scandinavian settlement in those areas. All these suffixes mean village or hamlet. Such suffixes still survive in place names like Whitby, Goldthorp, Braithwaite, Lowestoft, and so on. More than 1400 of such names have been counted and they are found more in number in places like Norfolk, Suffolk, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, etc, where the Scandinavians settled down in greater number.
- Scandinavian proper names are also found in great number in these areas. Names ending in '-son', like Stevenson, Johnson, Gibson, Thomson are Scandinavian in origin for the traditional English patronymic (name derived from father or ancestor) was '-ing' as in Browning.
- As invaders and subsequent rulers the Scandinavians tried to impose rules of their own and therefore there was a huge influx of war terms and legal terms. The Scandinavian law-terms include words like: law (coming from Old Danish word logh), by-law (by originally meant 'town' or 'village' in Danish), thriding ('third part'), carlman ('man'), ni?ing (read ? as 'th' in 'then'; criminal), bunda (peasant), and so on. The war terms, mostly related to war and navy, include: orrest (war), fylcian (to collect, marshal), liþ (read 'þ' as 'th' in 'thought'; fleet), barda, cnear

  (different types of warships), ha (rowlock), etc. But subsequently all these war terms and law terms disappeared when the next rulers, the Normans came to England and set up their own system of administration and warfare. However, words like law remained in the language.
- Apart from these war and legal terms a few more interesting words were

borrowed, like window from vindauga ('wind-eye'), steak from Old Norse steik, knives from Scandinavian knif and others.

Loan words are supposed to play an important role in understanding the cultural standard of the foreign and the recipient culture. In this case, the loan word test seems to tell us that the cultural standards of both the races were almost the same; so the English felt no urgent need to borrow any particular type of words from the Scandinavians. The Scandinavian knives must have been really good, for the word was introduced into the French language as well, as *canif*. Otherwise, the two races, as we have already discussed, were quite similar to one another and had no new ideas to convey to one another, rather they borrowed everyday words and family terms, which we shall discuss in the following section.

The consequences of borrowing

- Where the words in two languages coincided more or less in form and meaning, both were retained in the modern form-burn, drag, gang, scrape, thick, etc.
- Where there were differences of form the English word often survived. For instance, English words as bench, goat, heathen, yarn, few, grey, loath, leap have corresponding Scandinavian words, which are often found in Middle English literature and in some cases still exist in dialects.
- In other cases, the Scandinavian word replaced the native word, often after the two had long remained in use concurrently. For instance, Scandinavian awe and its cognate aye (OE), English ey and Scandinavian egg, Scandinavian syster (modern spelling sister) and OE Sweoster both exist in medieval literature. You can see that only the Scandinavian words are retained in modern usage.
- Occasionally, both the English and Scandinavian words are retained as doublets: no-nay, from-fro, shriek-screak, whole-hale, shirt-skirt, and so on.
- Both the words may also be retained but with a slight change of meaning, thus dream in OE meant joy, but in ME the modern meaning of the word was taken from the Old Norse draumr; similar cases are bread (OE meaning was 'fragment'), bloom (in OE it meant 'mass of metal'), and so on.
- Some instances could be found where the Scandinavian word reintroduced a long forgotten native word back into the main course of the language, like till, dale, blend, run, rim, and so on.

3.1.4. The Influence on English Grammar and Syntax

If you compare the influence of the loan words with that of the Scandinavian grammar you would find that the latter plays a more decisive role in shaping the English language to its modern form.

- The main reason behind this is that the Scandinavian language simplified the inflexional endings of the Old English tongue and made it look more like the modern language. The English and the Scandinavian languages differed chiefly in their inflexional elements and these endings were the main obstacle to mutual understanding. In the mixed population of the Danelaw these endings might have caused serious confusion which led to their gradual disappearance. Jespersen speculates that the tempo of this simplification increased as the settlers wanted more to be understood than be correct in their knowledge of the language.
- Certain pronominal forms like they, them, their, and adverbial forms like thence, hence, whence, the present tense plural form are of the verb 'to be', and the prepositions like till and fro came into use in Old English due to the Scandinavian influence.
- A certain number of inflexional elements peculiar to the Northumbrian dialect of Old English have been attributed to Scandinavian influence, for example the '-s'ending of verbs in the present tense form of the third person singular. Again, participial ending like '-and', '-end', '-ind', were all replaced by the Scandinavian '-ing'.
- With regard to the syntax nothing much is known because the absence of early texts in Scandinavia or North England makes it impossible for us to state anything very definite. However, by looking at loans we can conclude that the intimate fusion of the two languages must certainly have influenced their syntactical relations. For instance, relative clauses without any pronouns are relatively rare in OE, but they become increasingly common in ME due to Scandinavian influence. Thus 'the man whom I know' becomes 'the man I know'.
- One of the most reliable changes in the language took place in sound, particularly in the development of the sound 'sk'. In OE this was early palatalized to 'sh', except possibly in the combination of 'scr', whereas in Scandinavian countries it retained the hard 'sk' sound. Consequently, while native words like ship, shall, fish, have 'sh' in Modern English, words borrowed from Scandinavians

are still pronounced with the 'sk' sound: sky, skull, skin, scrape, skill, bask, whisk, and so on. The OE scyrte has become shirt, while the corresponding Old Norse form skyrta gives us skirt. In the same way the retention of the hard 'k' or 'g' in such words like kid, get, gild, egg indicate their Scandinavian origin.

3.1.5 Summing up the Scandinavian Influence

- Scandinavians came from the same Germanic stock as the Anglo-Saxons.
- They shared cultural and linguistic similarity with one another.
- Thus, the Scandinavian loan words are democratic and simple in nature. Mostly common, simple and everyday words were borrowed.
- The influence on grammar and syntax is quite significant because the inflexional endings were discarded which brought the language closer to the form it has today.
- The Scandinavians also influenced phonetic changes in the English language.

The French Infuence on the English Language

Plate 6 (Page No. 246)

3.1.6 The Historical Background of the French Influence

The Anglo-Normans

Now take a close look at Plate 6 above. The Normans came from the place shown as Normandy which is the Northern part of France. Unlike the Anglo-Saxons who came intermittently in groups through centuries and gradually settled on English soil, the Normans came in as an army as a result of a political turmoil in England and completely defeated the latter in the Battle of Hastings in 1066. You may have already read the episode of Norman Conquest in your study of the history of English literature.

Originally, the Normans had come from Scandinavia. The term 'Norman' comes from the word 'Northman'. They had been granted a territory in France in the early 10th century. The early Normans spoke Old Norse, just like the Scandinavians who settled in England at about the same time. By the early 11th century, however, the Normans had given up Old Norse and had adopted the French spoken by their subjects and neighbours. It is an irony that these people gave up their language twice (once when

they settled in Normandy and then when they came to England) and imbibed the language of their subjects twice in their history. French is descended from Latin; it was a Romance language and not a Germanic one. The French as it came to be spoken in England is often termed Anglo-Norman.

The history of the French or Anglo-Norman language in England falls into a number of episodes. In the first decades after 1066, those who spoke French were the Norman invaders. They took charge of the administrative, military, legal and spiritual matters of the country and brought in a feudal system of economy and a different kind of lifestyle with which the natives were not fully acquainted. Interestingly, English, though spoken by the majority of the natives, was no longer the language of power, whereas, the French spoken by the aristocratic few was the language of power. Hardly any literature, which in those days was dependent on royal patronage, was written in English.

Slowly, however, things changed. From the middle of the twelfth century at least, most members of the aristocracy were bilingual because by then they had been settled in the country for such a long period of time. Within another hundred years, we find educational treatises written in French and the target audience is the educated middle class, which means that some parts of the English society also were becoming more conversant in French. French was no longer the language of the aristocracy but another language of culture. Think how good was Chaucer's knowledge of the French literature and he was the son of a winemaker or vintner. With the advent of literary figures like Chaucer and Langland, and changed political scenario that favoured the English nation (gradually the Norman monarchs, who were also Dukes of Normandy, and had extensive landholdings in France, were unable to hold on to the land as French kings were taking possession of their French territories) , the English language revived, but by this time it has already changed in its shape and style. Thus, we can safely say, that the influence of the French language was instrumental in moving it closer to the form in which we know it today.

3.1.7 The Extent of the French Influence on the English Vocabulary

- The immigrants formed the Upper Classes of the English society after the conquest, so the first strata of the words belong to administration. Apart from the king and queen, most of other words relating to government are taken from French: govern, reign, realm, crown, state, government, sovereign, council, chancellor, minister, people, nation, and so on.
- The French also brought the feudal system along with them. So words like:

fief, feudal, vassal, liege, and words related to rank like prince, peer, duke, duchess, marquis, viscount, baron, and so on were borrowed by the English tongue.

- Adjectives related to court life, like honour, glory, court, etc are also taken from them.
- Upper classes also took up the military matters into their hands. So the following loans from the various aspects of military life: war, peace, battle, arms, armour, buckler, banner, ensign; officer, chieftain, captain, colonel, lieutenant, troops, vessel; challenge, enemy, espy, aid, prison, and so on.
- The next area where the French consolidated their control was law. The legal terms include words like: justice, just, judge, jury, summon, sue, plaintiff, plea, plead, property, crime, guile, felony, demesne, and so on.
- The religious matters also came under the French control. We find a great many words related to the church, such as, religion, service, trinity, saviour, virgin, angel, clergy, parish, baptism, sacrifice, sermon, to say only a few. As the clergy were teachers of morality, thus we have a whole gamut of words related to moral ideas, from virtue to vice: duty, conscience, pity, disciple, grace, covet, desire, lechery, cruel, and many others.
- The Normans were the master class so words like sir, madam, master, mistress, servant, command, obey, and others, were also borrowed from the French language.
- The French were (and still are) renowned for their culinary skills. The animals, as they were reared by the servants, the natives, retained their English names in their lifetime (ox, cow, calf, sheep, swine, boar, deer) but the moment they came to the dinner table for the masters' consumption, they received French names: beef, veal, mutton, pork, bacon, brawn, venison. The superiority of the French cuisine is attested by words like sauce, boil, fry, toast, pasty, soup, sausage, jelly, dainty, and others. Though breakfast is English, the more

English people were always fond of borrowing words from different languages. It has been estimated that 70 per cent of English lexicon is made of loan words while in Old English it is a mere 5 per cent. This behaviour of the language speakers, which amounts to a kind of imitation of the others, gives rise to so many synonyms and also the idiosyncrasies of the language.

wholesome meals of the day, the lunch and the dinner, and the feasts in general are all French.

- On the whole, the masters knew how to enjoy life. The French influence also showcases an adaptation of a different kind of a lifestyle and appreciation of nature. The list includes words like: joy, pleasure, delight, ease, comfort, flowers, fruits, and others. We can also find words related to different games and pastime activities: chase, hunt, brace, couple, leash, falcon, scent, track, cards, dice, ace, deuce, tray, and others.

  We may also include the terms related to garments and dress in this category: apparel, dress, costume, garment, etc.

- The French were the teachers of the English in most matters related to art. Not only words as art, beauty, paint, colour, image, design, etc. there are also a great number of special words of technical importance, for instance the words related to architecture: arch, tower, pillar, vault, porch, palace, castle, manor, mansion, etc. The professionals who came into a closer contact with the upper class also received a French name: tailor, butcher, painter, carpenter, joiner, and so on.

- At this point of time you must refer to the introduction and realize that the emerging bilingualism of the English was instrumental in the survival of both the native words and their corresponding foreign loans. This habit of the speakers gave rise to the existence of synonyms. However, you must keep in mind that the two words would never have the same implication. With the French loan words the foreign loan is more formal, polite and refined and is more official, whereas, the native word is more informal, fundamental and closer to the nation's heart. For example, a cottage is finer than a hut, aid is more formal than the humble and heartfelt help, commence is more literary than begin, nourish is more scientific than feed, and so on. You can well understand the first ones in the above pairs are French while the latter ones are English.

- Finally we may take a quick look at the hybrids. A few example of the popular French affixes would include:

  Suffixes: shepherd-ess, mile-age, enlighten-ment, pay-ee, picture-esque, drunk-ard, etc.

  Prefixes: en-slave, demi-god, etc.

- After the beginning of the sixteenth century, French became the source of particular classes of erudite and technical words. These words are used mostly by the educated class and they retain their original pronunciation. Such words are:

  Words borrowed in the 16th century: pilot, rendezvous, moustache, vase, etc.

A hybrid is a composite word formed of elements from different languages. For instance, here you are reading about the French affixes (prefixes and suffixes) which are added to native or foreign words to make new words.

Words borrowed in the 17th century: parole, reprimand, ballet, burlesque, tableau, coquette, liaison, rapport, soup, etc.
Words borrowed in the 18th century: guillotine, manoeuvre, espionage, tricolour, fusillade, canteen, critique, etc.
Words borrowed in the 19th century: barrage, resume, Renaissance, profile, restaurant, menu, chef, chauffeur, attaché, prestige, etc.
Words borrowed in the 20th century: garage, hangar, limousine, camouflage, etc.

3.1.8 French Influence on Grammar and Phonetics

- Simplification of English grammar by way of reducing Old English inflexions had already began with the coming of the Scandinavians much before the Norman Conquest. With the French influence the process was accelerated. This was mainly due to the stress shift. The English had the predilection (or tendency) of stressing on the first syllable. So the pronunciation of the inflectional endings of Old English words became more and more indistinct whereby, at some point of time the endings became altogether redundant. The originally distinct inflectional vowel endings like a,o,u,e were reduced to an indeterminate vowel sound which came to be written e. For example, the adjective 'blinde'(blind)had a singular form 'blinda' and a plural form'blindan'. The inflectional distinction decayed and both singular and plural became'blinde'. The Final weak 'e' dropped out later on .

- As the grammatical systems of the two languages were very different, the loanwords are borrowed in different forms. Old English and Norman French were both inflectional languages, i.e. nouns and pronouns had different forms

The accusative case has survived in English only in pronouns. For example, *I* and *we* are in nominative case. The corresponding accusative case forms of these pronouns are *me* and *us*

for different cases. Nouns and Adjectives were usually taken in the accusative case. For example the proper name Stephen or Steven. The French name was Stevyns, which had the accusative form without the -s ending(Stevyn), which was adopted in English

- When verbs were borrowed English, it is the stem of the French present plural that served as basis of the borrowed form. For instance, the verb survivre is conjugated in the present plural from as nous survivez (we survive). Thus when the verb was borrowed, the basis was survivez not survivre (i.e., the infinitive); hence, in English the word became, to survive. Similarly, the verb punir, conjugated in the present plural form as nous punissons, gave rise to the verb to punish in English; again, finir, conjugated as nous finissions gave rise to the verb to finish in English; the French verb dejeuner, conjugated as nous dejeunons gave rise to dine, and so on.
- French verbs in their infinitive forms are sometimes borrowed in English as nouns because of their ending in the '-er': dinner, remainder, user, etc.; and from these nouns new verbs in English were formed: dine, remain, use, etc. however, some French infinitives were borrowed intact as verbs, such as render, surrender, etc.
- French words also caused some changes in the pronunciation. French words having long [i] sound got diphthongized into [ai], e.g., fine, price, lion; the long [u], written as 'ou' changed into [au], e.g., spouse, devour. This change is due to what we have discussed at the beginning of this section, i.e., the importance of the first syllable in English pronunciation. This habit was unconsciously extended to foreign words when they were first adopted. However, if you go back to the later French loans, you will find that these words have retained their original French pronunciation. It is because by this time the English language was mature enough to borrow the words as they were.

3.1.9 Summing up the French Influence

- The French were the masters. Thus, their influence was more holistic and absolute in nature. Moreover, they were much more advanced compared to the English and hence their words invaded the native language in every aspect, starting from the administration to the aesthetics.
- The French language also influenced English grammar particularly in the borrowing of nouns, verbs and adjectives, which were taken from specific grammatical forms.
- The French pronunciation pattern had an impact on English phonetics, particularly in the development of some diphthongs.

3.1.10 Comprehension Exercises

Essay-Type (20 marks)

1 Assess the range and extent of the Scandinavian influence on the English language.

2. Show how, from the nature and extent of the French borrowings, we can get an idea of the social relationship of the Normans and the Saxons.

3 The philologist Otto Jespersen has called English loan words 'some of the milestones of general history' Show how, Scandinavian and French loan words can help us reconstruct the early history of England.

4. How did the Scandinavian and French influences contribute to the development of modern English from Old English?

Mid-length questions (10 marks)

1. Discuss the nature of the Scandinavian loan words.

2. In what way did the Scandinavians contribute to the simplification of the Old English grammatical system?

3. What was the impact of the French influence on English phonetics and grammar?

4. Show how the English nation was formed from the intermingling of different kinds of people.

Short questions (5 marks)

1. What do we know about the earliest inhabitants of Britain?

2. What was the effect of the Roman occupation on Britain? What was the runic alphabet?

3. Does English retain traces of the Celts and the Romans ?

4. How did the Anglo-Saxons come to settle in Britain?

5. How did the Scandinavians mingle with the Anglo-Saxons ?

6. Who were the Normans/ Why did they come to Britain?

7. Write short philological notes on:dinner, beef, veal, aid, chauffeur, aid, royal, government, law, clergy, baptism, sermon, angel, sky, sister, ship, shirt, skirt, egg, bread, Rugby, Althorp.

Module- 3

Unit 2 ❑ The Latin Influence on English Language

3.2.0. Unit Introduction

By this time you have learnt about the nature of the Scandinavian and French influence on the English language. You must have noticed that both these languages exerted their influence during a particular period of time in the history of English language. After that particular period by which the foreign language had well entered into the native tongue, it died. For instance, the death of the Norse or the language that the Scandinavians spoke must have occurred in the 11th century, the death of French as the mother tongue of aristocracy took place in the 12th century. Since Latin never enjoyed the status of the mother tongue of any particular community settled in England, it never faced the threat of death.

Thus, the Latin influence is not limited to any one of the particular literary periods, i.e., Old English, Middle English or Modern English. The extent of borrowing increased or decreased depending on the other historical and political factors that influenced the nation's language habit, but it never actually died out. The Latin loans started to trickle in from the very beginning when the Anglo-Saxons had not yet left their continental homes and continued well into the period of Renaissance and even after that. This is the most salient feature of the Latin influence.

In this unit you will learn:

- **Latin loans of different periods**
- **Changing nature of the Latin loans**
- **The influence of Latin on English grammar and syntax**

At the beginning, Latin was the language of the Christian religion, later it became the language of the learned or erudite. For the sake of clarity we shall study the loans according to their period of incubation in the English language and try to see their changing pattern over the centuries. Following this principle we shall divide the loans into five groups: Latin loans of the zero period, Latin loans through Celtic transmission, Latin borrowings as a consequence of Christianization of Britain, Latin of the Middle English(ME) period and Latin loans of the Modern period.

3.2.1. Latin of the Zero Period or Continental Borrowing

The first Latin words to find their way into the language owe their adoption to the early contact between the Romans and the Germanic tribes on the continent. The Germanic tribes were located on the northern frontier of the Roman state along the Rhine and the Danube. Close to the border was Treves; in the third and fourth centuries it was the most flourishing city in Gaul, having churches, military roads, and the luxury and splendour of the Roman civilisation. The two races came into contact chiefly because of the military exploits and business relations, particularly the wine trade. The main feature of the words of this group of loans is their simplicity, which was due to the low status of civilization of the Teutons or Germans. For instance, look at the following list:

Words are all related to warfare: camp (battle), segn (banner), mil (mile), straet (street), etc. Words related to trade: ceap (cheap), mangian (to trade), mynet (coin), etc.

Words related to wine trade: win (wine), flasc e (flask), cylle (leather bottle), sester (jar), eced (vinegar), etc.

Architectural words: cealc (chalk), copor (copper), pic (pitch), tigele (tile), etc.

Household articles: cytel (kettle), mese (table), teped (carpet), pyle (pillow), cycene (kitchen), cuppe (cup), disc (dish) line (rope), etc.

Food: ciese (cheese), spelt (wheat), pipor (pepper), popig (poppy), butere (butter), etc.

Miscellaneous: plume (plum), pise (peas), pawa (peacock), sicor (safe), casere (emperor), etc.

None of the above borrowings speaks of any kind of special technical knowledge or show any penchant for learning. These are common everyday words, and they are mostly transmitted orally. Thus, many have changed in their pronunciation and spellings and there is no pattern visible in this change.

3.2.2. Latin of the First Period or Latin through Celtic Transmission

You have already learnt about the Celts and you must remember that they were the original inhabitants of the island now known as England and for a long time in history they were colonized by the Romans-from 43A.D., when Emperor Claudius sent his troops, to 449 A.D., when the Anglo-Saxon invasion began. It is probable that Latin as a spoken language may not have survived after the Romans left but the Celts had already learnt a few Latin words and those remained in their language. Thus when the Angles, Saxons and Jutes-the Germanic tribes-- came, they must have learnt these words from the Celts. A.C. Baugh speaks of 600 such entries. We may learn a few as examples: chester (it comes from the Celtic word ceaster, which in turn comes from the Latin word castra that means camp or Old English town or enclosed community; this word proved useful in making place names, some of which still survive like, Dorchester, Manchester, Gloucester, Winchester, Worcester, Lancaster, etc), and other words like, port (harbour, gate or town; L. portus), munt (mountain; L. Mons montem), torr (tower, L. turris), Celtic wic (village; L. vicus), etc.

3.2.3. Latin of the Second Period or the Christianization of Britain

The greatest influence of Latin on Old English was occasioned by the advent of Christianity into Britain in 597 A.D.. Latin was seen as the language of the Christian religion and later of a higher culture. Till the end of the Old English period, i.e., 1066, this phase of borrowing continued, leading not only to the introduction of new words but also the introduction of new concepts. Linguists have divided these borrowings into two groups depending on their chronology and also characteristics. The words that were borrowed before the Benedictine reform (the incident which is seen as the watershed mark in English religious history) are mostly related to the Church and its services, its physical fabric and its ministers. For example: abbot, alms, altar, anthem, ark, chalice, disciple, epistle, hymn, litany, martyr, manna, psalm, priest, shrine, relic, rule, temple, tunic, and so on. The church also had a great influence on the everyday domestic life of the people. This is seen in the adoption of words related to clothing, food items, such as, cap, sock, silk, beet, lentil, millet, pear. A number of words related to education shows another aspect of the church's influence, for example, school, master, verse, etc.

Old English borrowed Latin verbs too, such as aspendan (to spend;L.expendere),temprian(to temper;L.temperare).

The influence of Latin upon the English language rose and fell with the fortunes of the church and the state of learning so intimately connected with it. As a result of the Benedictine reform and renewed literary activity a new series of Latin words found its way in the language. These words were different from the early loans as they were less popular and had a more philosophical and learned nature. For instance, the list includes words like: apostle, cell, cloister, collect (noun) creed, dirge, font, idol, nocturn, prime, prophet, Sabbath, synagogue, etc. A great number of plant and tree names are also recorded in this period, such as: coriander, cucumber, ginger, cedar, cypress, fig, laurel, etc.

3.2.4. Latin of the Third period or Latin Borrowings in Middle English

- In the Middle English period, French was the dominating cultural and technical source for the new words. Hence, the extent of Latin borrowing is difficult to determine. Some of the Latin words came to English via French. But a number of words were directly borrowed from Latin into Middle English The Latin borrowings differed from their French counterparts in being less popular and in gaining admission chiefly through the written language. But since the churchmen used Latin as a spoken language some words may have directly passed into spoken English. The words were miscellaneous . We may, however, refer to some technical, legal, scientific and ecclesiastical terms: abject, adjacent, allegory, history, homicide, contempt, custody, distract, frustrate, incarnate, include, legal, lucrative, minor, magnify,

You must have already noticed that from the Middle English period or even, earlier Latin gradually ceased to be seen merely as a language associated with the Christian religious belief. It had actually become a language of learning or erudition and the words borrowed have become more and more secular in nature. Moreover, the Latin of the zero period and the first period was borrowed chiefly through the oral medium. From the third period onwards the borrowing has been mainly through the written language. The best example must be the Latin borrowings of the Modern English period. Both Francis Bacon and Isaac Newton wrote some of their famous books in Latin. It thus turned out that in the modern period, which witnessed the expansion of philosophy and science, scholars would always borrow new words from this foreign language.

nervous, notary, ornate, lucrative, polite, popular, prevent, private, project, quiet, rational, reject, script, secular, solar, solitary, summary, testify, innumerable, zenith, zephyr, and so on. Since several words had endings like -able, -ent, -al, -ive ,etc. these endings became familiar in English, and are still used to form English derivatives. A number of them have been anglicized by adding native endings. Latin suffixes such as '-ate' (from '-atus'), '-ic' (from '-icus') and ' -al' (from '-alis'), have become part of the English language as in educate, elastic, abysmal.

3.2.5. Latin of the Fourth Period or Latin Borrowings in Modern English

[From Early Modern to Contemporary English]

Linguists have considered the period from Henry the Eighth's reign onwards to be the Modern English period. At the beginning of this period due to the phenomenon generally referred to as the Renaissance, a revival of interest in the classics resulted in a large influx of Latin words. C.L. Barber says, 'Latin loans in Old and Middle English are a mere trickle, but in early Modern English the trickle becomes a river, and by 1600 it is a deluge. The custom of borrowing directly from Latin or going to Latin sources to form new words for new concepts continues in English. We shall take a look at these borrowings in this section:

- Some words are taken over bodily in their Latin form with their Latin spelling, like, genius, species, cerebellum, militia, apparatus, focus, torpor, squalor, tedium, lens, etc. In some cases, however, the original Latin meaning of the words is not retained. For instance, lens meant lentil, and it was applied to optical glass because a double convex lens looks like a lentil seed.
- Borrowing also took place in some specific fields. For example, there are some scientific words like equilibrium, momentum, vacuum; some mathematical terms like radius, calculus, area, series; some legal terms like affidavit, alias, caveat; nouns like relaxation, relegation; adjectives like offensive, relevant; verbs like investigate, imbue; and everyday words like album, circus, miser, etc.
- In some cases the loans were given a more anglicized form. For example, Latin desparatus becomes English desperate-here the ending has changed. The ending may be omitted like complexus becoming complex.
- The Latin words are in many ways influenced by the French words because

English had borrowed words both directly from Latin and also via French loans. Remember, many French words are derived from Latin. This peculiar incident of borrowing through another language had led to many interesting developments. For instance, Latin ending '-itas' becomes English '-ity' (as in immaturity), Latin '-entia' and '-antia', may become '-ance', or '-ancy' (as in transcendence, delinquency, relevancy), etc. In some cases English had retained the French pronunciation of the Latin words but corrected the spelling after coming across the original Latin word. For example, perfect was first borrowed as perfet, from the French word perfait which was borrowed from the original Latin perfectus. When the English came across the Latin form they introduced the 'c'. Similarly 'c' was introduced in Modern English verdict (ME verdit<French verdit<Latin uredictum), 'b' was added to debt (ME dette<French dette<Latin debitum), 'p' was added to receipt (ME from Anglo-Norman receite<Latin receptum), etc.

The simultaneous borrowing of words from both French and Latin sources has given rise to synonyms at three levels, where the first is native, second French and the third one is Latin. Their degree vary from being popular, literary and learned, for instance: ***rise—mount—ascend, ask—question—interrogate, goodness—virtue—probity, fast—firm —secure, fire—flame—conflagration, fear—terror—trepidation, holy—sacred —consecrated, time—age—epoch.***

- More than 10,000 Latin words were borrowed through the written language, many through the writings of Thomas More and William Shakespeare. For instance words like acceptance, denunciation, compatible, dissipate, comprehensible, combustible, implacable, found its way into the English language through the works of More just as antipathy, allurement, emphasis, emulate, hereditary owe their introduction to Shakespeare. Remember the list is by no means an exhaustive one.

- Jespersen has argued that this excessive borrowing from the Latin loans was due to the 'mental laziness' of the English people who found it more convenient to borrow the foreign word rather than look for their own native resources. So in spite of the presence of native adjectives, Latin adjectives were borrowed. However, every word develops its own shade of meaning as time passes by and now the overwhelming presence of similar adjectives has added to the

richness and variety of the English tongue. For example, look at the adjectives like watery and aquatic. Both are adjective forms of water, first formed from native sources by adding '-y', the second borrowed from Latin. Today they have very different usages. One may have 'watery eyes', but 'aquatic animals' are more common. Similar cases can be seen in the following list where the first word is native and the second Latin-fatherly: paternal, motherly: maternal, heavenly: celestial, daily: diurnal, bloody: sanguinary, kingly: royal, etc. Some native words have only corresponding foreign adjectives, for example-mouth: oral, ox: bovine, nose: nasal, eye: ocular, mind: mental, school: scholastic, book: literary, house: domestic, town: urban, letter: epistolary, etc.

- The extensive borrowing of Latin words has given rise to a manner of writing known as Johnsonese. The term owes its origin in the style adopted by Dr Samuel Johnson. He was such an avid follower of Latin expressions and syntax that his prose was verbose and full of expressions which common readers without a classical education may find it a bit too difficult to understand. A number of 18th century writers wrote in this style . We give below some examples you may find interesting:

  Instead of saying 'a great crowd came to see', you find 'a vast concourse was assembled to witness', instead of 'the great fire spread' 'the disastrous conflagration extended its devastating career' and the simple 'to be starved to death' became 'to sink from inanition to non-entity'.

3.2.6. Latin influence on English Grammar and Syntax

Latin influenced English not only in vocabulary but also in grammar and syntax. For a long time European students were compulsorily taught Latin grammar at school. On account of this Latinate construction of English sentences was considered the correct form. It was considered wrong to say in English 'It is me'even though it is a very common English usage. But in Latin the 'be' verb must always take the nominative after it instead of the accusative one. Therefore students were taught that the correct form was 'It is I'. The absolute participle, as in 'this being the case' came into English in imitation of Latin construction. Owing to this influence words like who and which became more popular as relative pronouns instead of that, which is their old native counterpart. Milton's grand style is in many ways a result of the borrowing of the Latin syntax. So pervasive was the imposition of Latin that John Dryden, in the late 17th century, wrote 'the age I live in" (normal English syntax) in the first edition of his Essay on Dramatic Poesy, But

in the next edition he changed it to 'the age in which I live"(according to rules of Latin syntax) Thus, C. L. Wren writes: 'English is a Germanic language, belonging therefore to a different group of the Indo-European family from Latin: yet the ghost of the Latinate tradition still haunts our classes.'

3.2.7 Let us sum up

- Latin influence is continuous, holistic and highly literary in nature. The words borrowed, chiefly in the early period, were mostly religious in nature because of association of the language with Christianity, whereas, those borrowed in the modern period are extremely erudite in character.
- A free and uncontrolled Latin borrowing has got both pros and cons. On the positive side, it gave rise to a number of synonyms by virtue of which the English language has been endowed with variety. You can repeat the same thought without rewriting the same words and express different and subtle shades of meaning. For example, the Latin derivative legible means 'hat can be read', the native readable means 'worth reading . Moreover, so much of borrowing made the English mentally lazy.

3.2.8 Comprehension Exercises

Essay -type questions (20 marks)

1. Discuss the phases of Latin borrowing before the Renaissance.
2. Assess the extent and nature of Latin borrowings in Modern English.
3. According to linguists like Otto Jespersen, the extensive borrowings from Latin have been both good and bad for the English language . Would you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer.
4. Briefly survey the different phases of Latin loans in English and show how the Latin influence spans everyday life as well as scholarly learning.

Mid-length questions (10 marks)

1. Discuss the effect of the Latin influence on English grammar and syntax.
2. Show how the Christianisation of Britain led to the spread of the Latin influence on the English language.

3. Discuss the nature of the Latin influence on English during and after the Renaissance.

Short questions (5 marks)

1. What is 'Johnsonese'? Discuss with examples.
2. Why does English have a large number of synonyms? Are they good or bad for the language?
3. Show how a number of English spellings were modified by the Latin influence.
4. Why do modern grammarians say that it is not necessary for English to follow the rules of Latin grammar?

Module 3

Unit 3 ❑ Shakespeare's Use of Language; Influence of the Bible

3.3.0 Introduction

In this unit we are going to look at the English language from a different perspective. You have read in units I and 2 about how three major foreign languages-Scandinavian or Old Norse, French, and Latin influenced the growth and development of the English language in different periods of history. The English language however did not stay static after the foreign invasions stopped or even after major cultural phenomena like the Renaissance introduced far - reaching changes into it. All living languages continue to change. While developments in the spheres of human experience necessitate changes in language, another, equally important, but more subtle agent of change is the creative activity of the writers of the language. As students of literature you should be aware that a major writer always recreates the language he writes in. In this Unit we shall try to see how two of the monuments of the English language - the works of Shakespeare and the King James Bible have affected the English language. While Shakespeare is the greatest creative writer in English, the Bible is, strictly speaking, not a literary text. But

we shall look at is as an achievement of 17th century English prose style for our discussion.

3.3.1 Shakespeare's use of the English Language

You must have already read some of Shakespeare's plays and know a good deal about his contribution to English literature. His plays present such a deep philosophical understanding of human life and nature that they are never considered to be irrelevant. Scholars are still reading new meanings into his plays, trying to find out their full implications and with the change of times Shakespeare criticism has also undergone a huge change. Every scholar has interpreted him differently, thus adding to the meaning in the process of finding the meaning of the plays. That is why, Shakespeare is still our contemporary.

In this unit, however, we shall look into another important aspect of Shakespeare, namely, his contribution to the English language. It is said that a writer is considered to be great not only for the literature he has authored but rather for the influence he has exerted on the growth and development of the language. You must remember Chaucer in this connection for he is the first major English poet who restored to English literature and language the prestige that had been lost during the political troubles in the late middle ages. Shakespeare improved upon the standards set by Chaucer for English poetry and added beauty, boldness and panache to it.

In this section you will learn:

- **Shakespeare's extraordinary vocabulary**
- **His experimentation with words**
- **The uniqueness of his phrases**
- **How he employed language to individualize his characters**
- **Difference between Shakespearean usage and Modern Usage**

3.3.2 Shakespeare's Extraordinary Vocabulary

Otto Jespersen tells us that according to a rough calculation in Mrs. Clark's 'Shakespeare Concordance' Shakespeare's vocabulary consisted of approximately 21000 words. According to others, the number is 24000, without counting the inflected forms as distinct words. The numbers may not mean that much to you. Let us take it in this way: Milton's vocabulary has 7000-8000 words, the Iliad and the Odyssey taken together have 9000 words, the New Testament has 4800 words. Some scholars have argued that Shakespeare may not have used more than 15000 or 21000 words. What is more

important than the volume of the vocabulary is its diversity and variety. Do not think that Milton was less learned than Shakespeare because he has used a fewer number of words. Shakespeare has written upon a variety of topics, he has included people from every walk of life in his plays, and his characters speak in a wide variety of voices, showing differences in class, profession beliefs etc. Shakespeare needed a large number of words because he touched upon a wide variety of subjects, facts and human relationships. Milton needed fewer words because his poetry covers a narrower field of interest.

3.3.3 Shakespeare's Experimentation with Words

The way of using so many words is through the means of experimentation. He has played with his characters and he has amused his audience and later his readers by the uniqueness of his words. In order to do this he has borrowed words from the provincial dialects, Latin, and everyday life of the common people with equal veracity. We shall look into these components individually:

- In his early life he tried to introduce 'local colour' in The Taming of the Shrew by making Christopher Sly use some provincialisms like, pheeze ('to drive away'). Touchstone in As You Like It and the Fool in King Lear also use similar words. In his later years he has used such words to achieve poetic effect. For instance, the word bolter (to dirty or begrime) used in the expression blood-bolter'd Banquo in Macbeth must have been taken from a Warwickshire dialect.
- A special mention must be made of the rustic dialect used by Edgar, dressed as a peasant, in King Lear. Shakespeare so modified his speech that it retained the rustic flavour but at the same time did not become too remote to be understood by his London audience. In short, it is a literary or stage dialect and not a real one. We shall once again come across such an achievement when we talk about Shylock the Jew in The Merchant of Venice.
- You have already been told in Unit 2 that English was flooded by Latin loan words during the Renaissance. Shakespeare shows a ready acceptance of new words every kind. There were some rhetoricians like Thomas Wilson who criticised the indiscriminate adoption of Latin words and advocated the use of plain English Shakespeare does make fun of the erudite Latin words called 'inkhorn'terms', for example in the speeches of the pedant Holofernes in Love's Labour's Lost. But we find in his plays words like allurement, antipathy, discountenance, emulate, hereditary, pathetical, prodigious and so on which

were all newly added in the latter half of the 16th. Century. He has also borrowed words from everyday usage like, bump, gloomy, dwindle, and so on. The word dwindle is derived from the Old English word dwinan which means 'to pine'. The word was used in the province of Shropshire.

Shakespeare has also made new words and compounds in several ways:

- At times he added the French prefix 'en-'/ 'em-' to make new words like, enact, embattle, enlink, enmesh, enkindle, endear ('increased in value'), engirt, and so on. With the prefix 'un-' he has framed words like unavoided ('inevitable'), unless, unbody, uncharged (acquit), unvalued ('precious beyond valuation') and others.
- He joined one adjective with another to make new effective poetic compounds like daring-hardy, happy-valiant.
- He used adjectives as verbs, eg., happy as 'to make happy' (sonnet 6 :'which happies those that pay the willing loan'), safe as 'to make safe'. He also used nouns as verbs like, spaniel'd ('to follow like a spaniel'), childed and fathered.

3.3.4 The Uniqueness of His Phrases

Shakespeare is the creator of many phrases which we use today without being aware of their literary origin, for instance, past praying for, patience on a monument, to be or not to be, caviar to the general (where general means 'the common multitude'),the primrose way ,vaulting ambition and so on. Because of rampant use for different purposes some phrases have acquired different meanings. Some interesting examples will be: a foregone conclusion (used in Othello, it originally meant 'an experience previously undergone') and more honoured in the breach than the observance (used in Hamlet it refers to the Danish habit of heavy drinking, on which Hamlet says that the custom would be more honourable if broken than observed).

3.3.5 Use of Language to Individualize Characters

Shakespeare used his language chiefly to individualize his characters. In this he is better than even modern novelists who often use a set of words and phrases to give to their characters a distinctly recognizable individuality. The speech of the gravediggers in Hamlet and the artisans in A Midsummer Night's Dream show his close knowledge of the life of the common people. Not only that. So subtle is his use of language that the rustic artisans in A Midsummer Night's Dream speak one kind of language when they talk and a different kind when they enact the Pyramus and Thisbe play. He has also used

euphuistic expressions or inkhorn terms, but mostly to characterize the dramatic personages (I have already referred to Holofernes who uses erudite Latin words like intimation, explication, replication)

The most interesting character from the point of view of language is perhaps Shylock in The Merchant of Venice. Compare him with Marlowe's Barabbas in The Jew of Malta and you would instantly notice Shakespeare's superiority as far as the use of language to distinguish a Jewish character is concerned. There were Jews in Elizabethan England but their number was not sufficient for people to be familiar with a specific Anglo-Jewish dialect that he could put into Shylock's mouth to make him stand out from the Christians in the play. Yet, he was able to make Shylock linguistically different from the Christians. Shylock knows the Old Testament very thoroughly and therefore freely uses references from it. He uses some specific Biblical words which are otherwise not found in Shakespeare like, synagogue, Nazarite, publican. Instead of interest he says advantage or thrift, instead of usury he says usance. He uses plurals like moneys, equal for 'exact', rheum to mean 'saliva', estimable for 'valuable' and other such words which make him sound different from the other characters in the play. to justify his taking of interest against loans. Shakespeare has even used different syntactic constructions for Shylock's speeches. For example, Shylock says "I have no mind for feasting forth to-night. Everywhere else Shakespeare writes mind 'to' instead of the 'for' that he uses here. Shylock says "so following" and "rend out" whereas everywhere else Shakespeare writes 'so forth' and 'rend'.

3.3.6 Difference between Shakespearean English and Modern Usage

Words acquire different meanings in different ages. Thus, as modern readers we may miss many of the implications which were instantly felt by Shakespeare's contemporaries. Let us see a few examples: A bonnet then meant a man's cap, thus Lear walks unbonneted, to charm always implied application of magical power, especially witchcraft, notorious could be used in a good sense as 'well known', succeed and success were colourless words, so Shakespeare could write 'good success' or 'succeeds unhappily'. Companion had a bad implication, like fellow now, and politician always meant someone intriguing or scheming. There are many such examples.

It would also strike many of the modern readers that Shakespeare's English lacks in grammar as we understand it today. You must bear in mind that Elizabethan and Jacobean English were characterized by a kind of flexibility and freedom which are usually associated with Renaissance linguistic ideas in general. As the loss of the inflexional

endings removed the morphological differences, it became possible to use nouns and adjectives as verbs. Elizabethans often interchanged the functions of different parts of speech in such a way as seemed logical to them. They did not always care much about the grammatical correctness.

Shakespeare has used this flexibility to its fullest extent. Jespersen writes, 'One of the most characteristic features of Shakespeare's use of the English language is his boldness'. You have already read about the boldness of his metaphor in his phrases, but you must also be able to appreciate the boldness of his sentence structure. For instance, he does not always care for grammatical parallelism: a thought which quartered hath one part wisdom/ And ever three parts coward (Hamlet). Here, following the rules of grammar, it should have been 'cowardice', for 'wisdom' is a noun and 'coward' is an adjective; he writes the whole ear of Denmark (Hamlet) instead of 'the ear of whole Denmark'; he uses the pronoun as a noun as in Lady, you are the cruellest she alive (Twelfth Night). Here 'she' is a pronoun being used as a noun); he uses double negatives as in nor never none shall mistress be of it (Twelfth Night); he uses double superlatives, like it was the most unkindest cut of all (Julius Caesar) and so on.

What you must remember is that Shakespeare's syntax is that of an orator. It is meant for a drama that is to be seen and not to be read. Drama is supposed be more authentic in capturing the various degrees of emotion of the characters rather than the grammatical correctness of their utterances. Thus, his syntax is familiar, conversational and spontaneous, and not studied, formal and bookish. The greatness of Shakespeare lies in his ability to make his language suitable for the characters and in doing so, he created a unique style that has set a standard for the users of the English language.

3.3.7 Influence of The Bible on the English Language

As students of literature you must be able to understand and appreciate the importance of religious influence on the creativity of man. Man has always reserved the best of his talents for doing God's work; he has made beautiful structures for religious congregation, he has painted the best pictures when depicting the life of God. In the final part of Unit III, we shall be looking at one such splendid creation of man, namely, the Holy Book, or the Bible. The words of wisdom in the two main parts of the Bible, the Old and the New Testaments have travelled far and wide since they first travelled from the Middle East to Rome. The Bible was initially written in Hebrew, since both Judaism and Christianity are Semitic religions and began among the Jewish people. After the Romanisation of Christianity the Bible was naturally translated in Latin and the Catholic priests who did

the work of rendering the Bible in Latin did not always translate the Hebrew versions word for word. The rituals of the Catholic church were conducted in Latin and as it was the Catholic Roman priests who took the message of Christianity to the pagan peoples of the rest of Europe. The newly Christianised pagans learnt Latin terms for Christian rites and rituals. The catholic church of Rome, in order to protect the hegemony of the priests who were well versed in Latin, discouraged vernacular translations. The vernacular translations could not be stopped however. Sometimes patronised by enlightened rulers, sometimes daringly carried out by rebel priests disgusted by corruptions in the church, various open or clandestine translations made their appearance in several European countries. In fact, the most potent force behind the protestant Reformation was the vernacular Bible, made accessible to common people after the invention of printing. English translations of the Bile have a rich and complex history. Some people , like William Tyndale had to die for translating the Bible. So before going into the influence the various editions of the Bible has on English language, we shall briefly look into the history of this translation.

In this section you will learn:

- **History of Bible translation**
- **Importance of Tyndale's translation**
- **Influence of the Authorised Version of the Bible on English language**
- **Importance of the Bible in general in the formation of English language**

You have already read about the story of the Tower of Babel. The languages written and spoken in the early days of the world's history form an absorbing study. It is difficult to have a very definite idea of the languages spoken before the officially recorded history of mankind began. We have to base our conjectures on archaeological finds and historical theories. Many linguists believe that the earliest language spoken is the Akkadian, which was spoken by the people of Akkad, north-western parts of Babylon, Mesopotamia, around 2000 B.C.. The language also had some written forms. This language was gradually replaced by the Semitic Babylonian language that was used till the time of Nebuchadnezzar. After that we come across the language of the Canaanites which was later known as Hebrew. If you collate the story of the Old Testament with this you would find that this language was subsequently dropped by the Jews when they were held in captivity in Babylon and they adopted Chaldean or Aramaic language. This language was spoken till the time of Christ. Many scholars believe that Christ also spoke in Aramaic. All this information would help you to appreciate the complexity of the history of Bible translation, for it derived its roots from so many ancient languages and mythologies of the world. Also remember that, the bible travelled from the Middle East to the West, thus many of its cultural attributes also changed. (This information is taken from Sidney Collett's *All About The Bible*)

3.3.8 History of Bible Translation

According to Judaic tradition , when man failed to follow his conscience, God made laws and he asked Moses to write down his laws. These laws were written down in the Pentateuch (a Greek word, penta means 'five' and teuch means 'book') ,which consists of the first five books of the Bible, Genesis Exodus , Leviticus , Numbers and Deuteronomy . The historical validity of this belief can be contested but it is helpful to remember that the beginning of all history is full of such faiths and beliefs and myths. The Pentateuch is a remarkable document. It has two parts, history and laws. It contains the Chaldean legends that have the stories of ancient Nineveh and Babylon, and stories of creation; and Gilgamesh legends that include the stories of Cain and Abel, the Deluge, and so on. This book also has the Laws of Hammurabi, an ancient King. The Pentateuch is considered to be one of the important sources of the modern Bible. Do remember, the writing of the Bible was done over a period of several thousand years during which many books were lost, or burnt. Also the various scholars who were engaged in this scholarly activity were from different parts of the world and belonged to different historical times. Hence, their interpretations also changed.

We shall now briefly look at a few source-texts that formed the basis of the Bible writing in later years. There are several such old texts written in Hebrew and Greek. They include: (i) Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament, the earliest of which dates back to the 8th century; (ii) Greek Manuscripts of the New Testament; the earliest of which dates back to the 4th century; (iii) Greek manuscripts of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint, which were translated from Hebrew around 277 B.C.; (iv) Early translations of the Scriptures or its parts in Syriac, Latin, German and other languages. For the sake of clarity we shall read about a few important translations to form an idea about the history of the Bible writing.

Septuagint Version

Written around 277 B.C. this Greek translation is also popularly known as the Alexandrian version. The Latin word Septuagint means seventy. It is believed that seventy scholars of Alexandria were engaged in translating the Old Testament for the sake of the Jews who had been scattered abroad and could no longer read the Hebrew original. Though later day scholars have raised questions against the authenticity of this translation yet this Bible formed the basis for many future translations. The original version of this translation is lost but three best copies-the Vatican, the Sinaitic and the Alexandrian-have been preserved. The Alexandrian manuscript is now in the British museum in London.

The Vulgate Version

In the 2nd century of the Christian era Latin superseded Greek, and remained for many years the diplomatic language of Europe. At this time a Latin translation was made in North Africa from the Septuagint version of the Old Testament and the original Greek version of the New Testament. This version is known as the Vulgate. The word vulgate is Latin, meaning 'to make common or public'; hence the word 'vulgar'. This Latin version seems to be England's first Bible. It was brought by the Christian missionaries. In the 4th century the Vulgate was revised by Jerome, a saintly scholar, who had access to the ancient Hebrew Manuscripts. This revision has been an important one and has influenced many future translations.

Important Anglo-Saxon Translations

In the 7th century the first attempt was made to translate the scriptures in the Anglo-Saxon tongue. Caedmon translated parts of the Bible in a kind of a blank verse. You must have read about it while reading about Old English literature.

In the 8th century the Venerable Bede translated the Psalms and the Gospels into Anglo-Saxon, hoping perhaps to translate the entire Bible but death intervened.

In the 9th century, Alfred the Great, one of the most renowned kings of England, ordered a translation of the entire Bible, but like Bede he did not live to see its completion.

Wyclif's Bible

Born around 1320, John Wyclif is the first person to translate the entire Bible into English. It took him about twenty-two years to complete the work and he based his translation on the Latin Vulgate, as well as Greek and Hebrew originals. He also divided the Bible into chapters following the pattern set by Cardinal Hugo in 1250. His version of the Bible was quite popular and it was widely copied and translated.

Wyclif had been much opposed in this work by the Roman Catholics. In fact, Wyclifean Bible must be seen as the beginnings of the Protestant movement which was a pan-European movement and later came to England in the 16th century as Reformation. The Roman Catholic Church was opposed to the translation of the Bible for the sake of preserving the authenticity of the text that they believed would be lost once it was translated in the common man's language and would thus be open to subjective interpretations. The Reformers believed that the Bible should be translated so that every man could read the word of God and not have to wait for the priests to explain it to him.

This battle went on for a long time and history relates a long list of martyrs who died at the stake for translating or interpreting the Bible. Wyclif died in 1384. His Bible was printed in four volumes in 1850.

Tyndale's Version

In 1525, William Tyndale (1494-1536), one of the great Protestant reformers, and a contemporary of Luther, made another English translation based on the Greek translation of the New Testament by Erasmus in 1516. Tyndale's translation was done under great difficulties, partly at Cologne and partly at Worms, both cities situated in Germany, a safe place for Protestants, in exile, poverty and distress, fleeing from the Catholic persecution. Several editions were printed; this was the first English New Testament in print. Fifteen thousand copies were issued, which were secretly brought to England in bales of cloth or sacks of flour. The church also tried its best to stop this Bible from reaching common people, and thousands were executed and the copies were burnt.

Tyndale's version is remarkable for its language and accuracy. This was the main source for the Authorised Version. He also translated the Pentateuch and Jonah.

Coverdale's Version

In 1535, the whole Bible, both Old and New Testaments, was for the first time printed in English by Miles Coverdale, who made the translation from German and Latin versions. It was printed on the continent like Tyndale's Bibles, but was dedicated to King Henry VIII and allowed to circulate freely in England.

The Authorised Version

At the beginning of the 17th century there were three main versions of the Bible existing in England: the Great Bible (made from Coverdale's edition in 1539); the Geneva Bible (prepared in 1560 by protestant reformers in Geneva, where they had fled during the persecutions under Queen Mary); and the Bishop's Bible (published in 1568 by a committee of bishops). Apart from the fact that these translations were by no means perfect, as time went on the meanings of the English words also changed, so the need for a fresh translation rose. Accordingly, under the patronage of King James I, fifty-four translators, including High Churchmen, Puritans and the best scholars of the land undertook the task of translating the Bible, taking as their source all the best editions published up to that time and also the Hebrew and Greek originals. In 1611, after a period of five years of intense scholarship, the Bible was published and it is known as

the King James Bible or the Authorised Version. The Bible that you read today may possibly be this one. Since its language, 17th. Century English is old-fashioned; some Protestant sects use modern versions of the Bible.

There were several other editions of importance but since our aim is to study how the translations of the Bible influenced the English language, so we shall now look at the importance of two specific editions of the Bible and the general influence of the Biblical language on the English psyche.

3.3.9 Importance of Tyndale's Translation

Tyndale seems to have had a genius for using beautiful phrases which have become idiomatic in their continuing usage. Many of his phrases were taken over by the translators of the Authorised Version. He coined the word scapegoat from the Hebrew text. He was also a master in capturing the beauty of the Hebrew poetry in his translation. The now familiar phrases from the Authorised Version: the burden and heat of the day, eat, drink and be merry, the powers that be, and the fatted calf are all from his translation. He was the first to attempt a literal translation of the Greek words which he believed were changed by the later superstitious connotations. Thus he wrote elder for priest (Greek presbyteros), congregation for church (Greek ecclesia) and favour for grace (Greek charis). But before his death he revised his edition and replaced some of these words with the traditional expressions. Thus, he changed the phrase highly favoured that appears in the Annunciation (Luke I, 28) with full of grace. However, the makers of the Authorised Version preferred the previous translation. On the other hand, he translated the Greek word agape as love in

I Corinthians 13: 'Though I spake with the tongues of men and angels and yet had no love I were even as soundinge brasse: or as a tynklynge Cymball'. The Authorised Version used the word charity in its stead: 'Though I speak with tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal'. Again the Latin Vulgate has used the expression pauperes euangelizantur (Luke VII, 22), which the Authorised Version translated as to the poor the gospel is preached; but Tyndale did a better job when he translated it as to the poore is the glad tydinges preached. Thus the phrase glad tidings has entered the language.

3.3.10 Influence of the Authorised Version

This version of the Bible had a great influence in the phrase making in English. In some cases, the beauty of the phrase lies in the image it uses. For instance, you have just

read the phrase sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal that is found in I Corinthians 13. You may consider this to be the skill of the translators. However, once you look at the original Latin aes sonans aut cymbalum tinniens, you would realise the beauty of the phrase lies in its choice of imagery and not on the language skill of the translators for they have almost translated it verbatim. The fact that the makers of the Authorised Version did not limit themselves to available Greek, Latin and English versions , but like Tyndale had extensively used the original Hebrew versions, also accounts for the rich poetic quality of the prose. Hebrew poetry is characterised by rhythm and parallelism, which are marked features of the prose of the English Bible .

Contrary to what reformers like Tyndale did, the translators of the Authorised Version used a little bit archaic language for they felt that the language of faith should be a bit different from the language used daily so as to preserve the mystery of religion. Thus they changed Tyndale's more colloquial expressions with more dignified parlance. It is possible that it was because of this slightly archaizing tendency of the Authorised Version that a few words, which were becoming obsolete, revived, such as damsel and raiment (meaning 'clothing').

3.3.11 Influence of Biblical Language on English

The habit of listening to the Bible every Sunday has a lasting effect on the Englishman's psyche. It influenced the prose-rhythm and phrasing as well as the images used in the daily speech of the common man. These borrowings are not always intentional. For example, when someone says 'I wash my hands of the whole business' he is not aware of the fact that he is actually referring to a Biblical incident. More common expressions like gone to kingdom come, common or unclean, cared for none of those things are all derived from the Holy Book.

The influence of Biblical stories and names has become a part of the common European culture. They form the basis of what is known as the 'cultural history' of the western people. Still, some familiar English references may be given as examples to show how Biblical knowledge is almost unconsciously drawn upon in everyday conversation. For example when a rash driver is called a Jehu the reference is to Kings IX, which mentions Jehu's furious driving. When we refer to a scene of confusion and noise as a 'babel' we are referring to the story of the Tower of Babel.

Another interesting point to note is the way Biblical language influenced the poets of the 19th. century. The 'th' form of verbs in third person (hath , doth, instead of has ,does)had gone out of use by the 18th century. But in Romantic and Victorian poetry

the old form enjoys a brief revival(" He prayeth best who loveth best" : Coleridge).

3.3.12 Let us Sum Up

In this unit you have learnt:

- Shakespeare's extraordinary vocabulary and the variety of the words he used
- His experiments with words and syntax which at times even challenged the rules of grammar to be more authentic in their dramatic effect
- How effectively he could use his words and phrases to individualise a particular character
- The influence of Tyndale's version and the Authorised Version of Bible on the English language
- How Bible reading unconsciously controls the everyday speech of the common Englishman.

3.3.13 Comprehensive Reading List for Philology

Baugh, Albert C. A History of the English Language. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951.

Ghosh, Indranee (ed). History of English Language: A Critical Companion. Delhi: Worldview, 2004.

Jespersen, Otto. Growth and Structure of the English Language. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1938.

Mugglestone, Lynda. The Oxford History of English. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Wood, Frederick T. An Outline History of the English Language. Delhi: MacMillan, 1979.

Wrenn, C. L. The English Language. Kolkata: Book World, 2008.

*** All the maps used in the above units are taken from-Atlas of World History: From Prehistory to the Eve of French Revolution, Vol. 1, edited by Hermann Kinder and Weiner Hilgemann, England: Penguin, 1978.

3.3.14 Comprehension Exercises

Essay-type (20 marks):

1. Discuss the particular features of Shakespeare's use of the English Language.
2. Show, with illustrative examples, Shakespeare's boldness in use of words and phrases.
3. Show how the history of Bible translations in English indicates the development of English prose in general.
4. How did the Authorised version of the Bible come to be translated? In what ways has it influenced the English language?

Mid-length questions (10 marks):

5. Discuss, with suitable examples how Shakespeare uses language to individualize characters. Does Modern English conform to Shakespearean usage?
6. Discuss the merits and demerits of the English translations of the Bible that came before the Authorised Version.
7. Show how the Bible has influenced literary as well as spoken English.

Short questions (5 marks):

8. Show how Shakespeare experimented with words.
9. Write a note on Septuagint and Vulgate versions of the Bible.
10. Discuss the importance of William Tyndale's translation of the Bible.

Module 4

Unit 1 ❑ English Phonetics & Phonology

Structure

4.1.0 Objectives

After going through this module you will be able to

- learn the phonetic Alphabet of English
- understand the production of English speech sounds and manner of anticulation
- understand how the organs of speech are related to speech production
- have the idea of consonants sounds and vowel sounds
- have the basic idea of word stress
- learn transcription of words in phonetic alphabet
- improve your English pronunciation

4.1.1 Introduction

Phonetics is the systematic study of the production, transmission and reception of speech sounds. The word ‘phonetics’ comes from the Greek ‘phone’ meaning ‘sound’ ‘voice’. It is now a science that analyses speech processes, anatomy, physiology,

psychology, neurology, pathology of speech and also the articulation, description, classification, production and perception of speech sounds. Phonology on the other hand, is concerned with the abstract, grammatical characterization of systems of sounds or signs of a particular language.

The phoneme and the phonetic symbols

We have been talking about speech sounds. You must have noticed that in English there is a lot of discrepancy between the way a world is spelt, with letters of the alphabet, and the way it sounds, i.e. is pronunced. For example, call and 'cell' both begin with the letter 'c' but for the first word we pronounce 'c' as 'k' and for the second we pronounce it as 's'. Again 'but' & 'put have the same vowel in the middle, but they are differently pronounced. In order to overcome this problem of lack of correspondence between spelling and pronunciation, which may be very great in English but occurs in all languages, an alphabet was devised to represent speech sounds by the International Phonetic Association (IPA). The IPA devised symbols to describe the sounds of all the languages of the world. These symbols constitute the International Phonetic Alphabet. English speech sounds are represented by the symbols from this International phonetic Alphabet. We shall introduce you to the phonetic symbols in the following sections. The writing down of the sound of a word or a phrase with the use of phonetic symbols is called **phonetic or phonemic transcription.**

The phoneme is the smallest sound unit in a language, which can make a difference in the meaning of a word. For example, take the English words 'fat', 'rat', 'mat', 'hat', 'cat'. Notice that these words differ from one another in respect of one sound only—the initial sound. If one sound is substituted, the word changes its meaning. The difference between /f/, /r/, /m/, /h/, etc is called contrastive difference. All these are phonemes of English.

4.1.2. Branches of Phonetics

Now let us see the branches of Phonetics. The study of Phonetics can be divided into three branches–

(a) Articulatory phonetics (study of the production of speech sounds)

(b) Acoustic phonetics (study of the physical transmission of speech sounds)

(c) Auditory phonetics (the study of the reception and perception speech sounds)

you shall see how these branches of Phonetics help to produce speech sounds.

a) In **Articulatory Phonetics** the speech is produced by some kind of sound making apparatus inside the human body. It is the study of movement of the speech organs in the articulation of speech. Speech is produced by the movement of the organs of speech—lungs, larynx, soft palate, tongue, teeth and lips. These organs of speech help to produce speech sounds while we speak.

b) **Auditory Phonetics :** It is the study of the hearing and the perception of speech sounds. It focusses different auditory impressions of quality, pitch and loudness of sounds. The outer ear catches the sound, the middle ear amplifies them and passes the sounds into inner point.

c) **Acoustic Phonetics :** It is the study of the physical properties of speech sounds such as frequency and amplitude, in their transmission from the speaker to the listener.

4.1.3. Organs of Speech

The organs of the human body which help with production of speech sounds are called the organs of speech. These organs of speech may be divided into three groups :

1) **The Respiratory system :** It involves the lungs, the chest, muscles and the trachea or the windpipe.

2) **The phonatory system :** It involves the larynx, i.e. the upper of part of the trachea.

3) **The articulatory system :** This comprises the pharynx, i.e. the cavity forming the upper part of the gullet), the teeth, the tongue, the roof of the mouth, the lips, and the nose.

The respiratory system :

The respiratory system comprises the lungs, the muscles of the chest and the windpipe (the trachea). The lungs with the help of muscles of the chest perform the function of breathing or respiration. When we speak the air comes out and helps to produce the speech sounds. Through the process of breathing, the system provides an airstream mechanism that acts as a source of energy. Without this airstream mechanism no speech sound can be produced. Not only the lungs, but also the chest muscles and the windpipe are linked to this process of speech production.

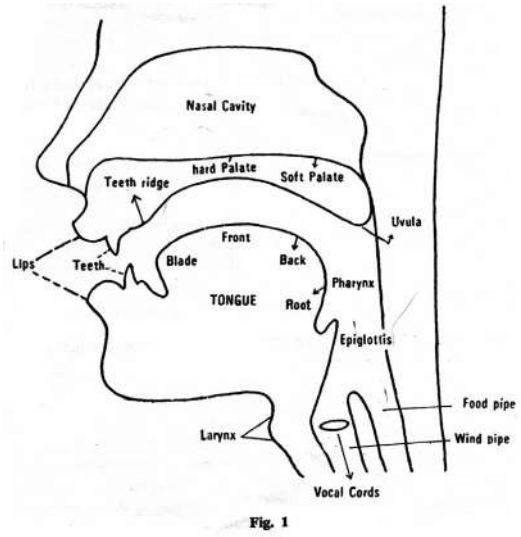


Fig. 1

4.1.4 The Phonatory system :

In the Phonatory system the larynx plays a vital role in speech production. The airstream released by the lungs undergoes several modifications before it goes out into the atmosphere. By this system we have the voiced sounds and voiceless sounds.

The Larynx : The larynx is situated at the top of the windpipe. When we produce sounds the air from the lungs comes out through the windpipe and the larynx. In the larynx a pair of lip-like structures is situated. These are called the vocal cords and these are placed from front to back horizontally. They are attached in front and can be separated at the back. The opening between the cords is called the glottis.

The vocal cords can be opened and closed. When the two cords come very close to each other the glottis will be shut completely. Actually when we drink water eat food or swallow pills, the vocal cords shut the glottis and thus prevent the food or water from entering the windpipe.

Voiceless Sounds : The vocal cords are drawn wide apart. When we breathe in and out, the vocal cords are drawn wide apart and thus the glottis is open. The air enters the lungs or gets out of the lungs through the wide open glottis. For some speech sounds, the vocal cords are wide apart and the glottis is open. The sounds produced with a wide open glottis are called voiceless sounds or breathed sounds. The initial or first sounds in the English words-peel, ten, keen, chin, fine, thin, pin, sin, hat, mat are voiceless sounds.

Voiced Sounds : On the other hand, during the production of certain speech sounds, the vocal cords are loosely apart and the pressure of the air from the lungs makes them open and close rapidly. The sounds produced when the vocal cords hang loosely making the glottis narrow and with vibration, are called voiced sounds. The sounds in English words like bead, dead, judge, zeal, zoo, measure, blare, dazzling, red, are voiced sounds.

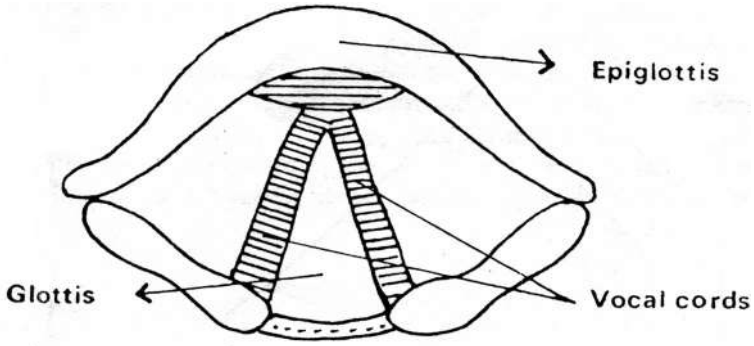


Fig. 2

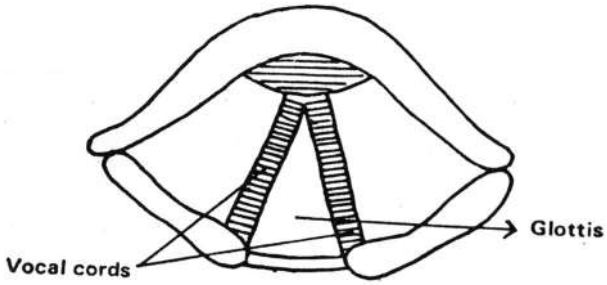


Fig. 3

Fig. 3 : Vocal cords wide apart and the glottis fully open—position for breath are during the production of voiceless sounds.

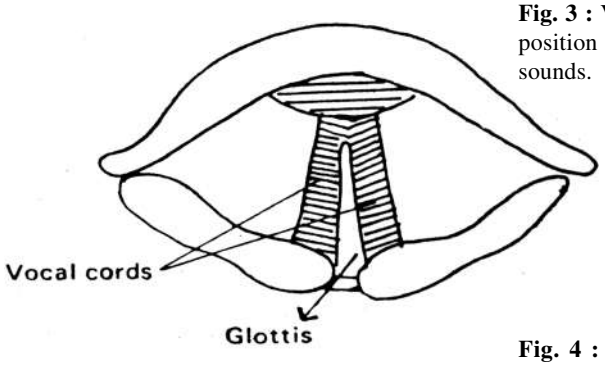


Fig. 4

Fig. 4 : Vocal cords kept loosely together—position for vibration during the production of voiced sounds.

4.1.5 Articulatory System :

After the phonatory system, we have to focus on the Articulatory system. This system comprises the pharynx, the teeth, tongue, the roof of the mouth, the lips, the nose. Let us see the function of these organs.

The pharynx : The pharynx extends from the top of the larynx to the hindermost part of the tongue. The shape and size of the pharyngeal cavity can be greatly modified by the expansion of the muscles. And it is done by the movement of the back of the tongue, the position of the soft palate and by the raising or lowering of the larynx. Each such modification affects the quality of the speech sound.

Now we are going to describe the parts of articulatory system which can be seen in a mirror.

The Lips : The lips play an important role in the production of speech sounds. The upper lip and the lower lip take various positions. The lower lip is more active than the upper lip. They may he shut or held apart in various ways. They are held tightly closed and the closure is abruptly released to produce bilabial sounds like /p/, /b/. If the lips are held apart, this positions may be as follows—

i) they are held sufficiently close together as to allow friction, 'ম, ভ sounds like the initial consonant in bengali words èþ^îylùèþy¥z/èþ^#îûí etc. in Hindi words 'Bhagwan', 'Bhai', 'bhanga' etc.
ii) they are held sufficiently far apart so that no friction is heard, yet in a spread position, as in the vowel in 'see'.
iii) held in a neutral position, that is relaxed position, with a medium lowering of the lower jaw as in the vowels of 'get, 'net', 'set'.
iv) They are also held in an open position in the vowels of 'car', 'part', 'chart', etc.
v) hend in a rounded position in the vowels of 'do', 'to', etc.
vi) held in an open round position as in the vowels of 'got', 'lot', 'pot'.

The Teeth : Some consonants are produced with the help of the teeth. The initial sounds in the English words 'think', 'that, 'fan' and 'van' are produced by the help of the teeth.

Beyond the teeth, in the upper jaw, the whole roof of the mouth comprises the teeth ridge, the hard palate, the soft palate, and the uvula.

The Teeth Ridge : The teeth ridge or the alveolar ridge is the convex part lying just behind the upper teeth. It plays a vital role in producing speech sounds. It can be easily felt by placing the tongue behind the upper teeth. Many consonant sounds are

produced at the teeth ridge. With the teeth ridge, we produce 't' and 'd' sounds as in 'ten', and 'day'. The 's' and 'z' sounds in the words 'sue', 'zoo', are also produced with the teeth ridge.

The Hard Palate : Immediately beyond the teeth ridge the hard, bony surface is called hard palate. It is a curved surface leading to the highest point of the roof of the mouth. At the beginning of the curve are small corrugations that facilitate the movement of food. They also provide obstacles to the outgoing air. They cause the hissing noise that characterises the [s] and [ʃ] sounds as in 'so' and 'show'. The initial sound in 'yes' is produced at the hard palate.

The Soft Palate : When you move your tongue backwards along the roof of the mouth, after the teeth ridge you feel the hard bony part that is called hard palate but after that the soft portion of the roof is called the soft palate or the velum. If we see our mouth wide open in a mirror we may see the soft palate. It helps to produce many sounds. It is both an active and a passive articulator. The fleshy structure hanging loose at the extreme end of the roof of the mouth is the uvula. The soft palate acts like a valve in the opening and closing of the nasal passage. If the soft palate is raised so that it touches the back wall of the pharynx, the passage into the nose is closed. The air then cannot escape through the nose. So sounds which are produced when the air escapes only through the mouth are called **oral sounds.** The English consonants in words like peel, bag, car, beauty, date, late, read are oral sounds. When the nasal passage of air is closed by the velum is called **velic closure.**

When the soft palate is lowered, the passage into the nose is opened. With the soft palate lowered, if the passage into the mouth is blocked, the air from the lungs will escape into the outer atmosphere only through the nose. The sounds during the production of which the air escapes only through the nose are called nasal sounds. The final sounds of gong, sung, sun, ring are nasal sounds.

During the articulation of certain sounds the soft palate is lowered, thus the nasal passage is opened. But the oral passage is not blocked, so both the oral and the nasal passages are open. The air from the lungs will then escape simultaneously through the nose and the mouth. These sounds are called nasalised sounds. The final sound in the french word 'bon' (good), the final sound in English words 'him', 'hen', 'hang', 'bang', the first sound in Hindi words आँख (eye), and ऊँट (camel) are nasalised sounds.

The Tongue :

The tongue is the most important organ of speech for producing speech sounds. It takes up varied positions during the production of various sounds. The tongue can be divided into the

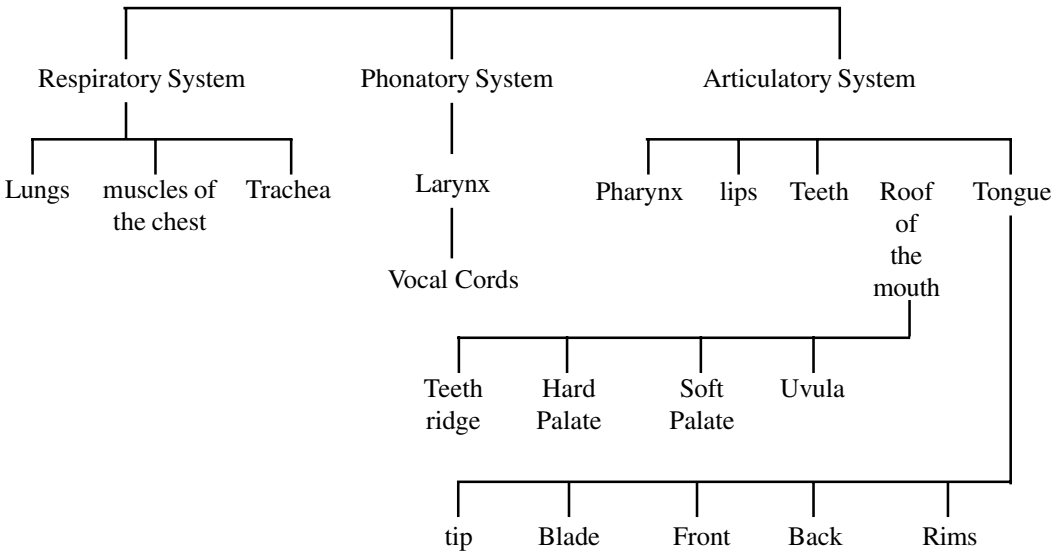
tip, the blade, the front, the back and the root of the tongue. The extreme edge of the tongue is called the tip. Immediately after the tip is the blade and it is the part of the tongue which lies opposite the teeth ridge when the speech organs are in resting position. After the blade is the front of the tongue. This is the past of the tongue which lies opposite the hard palate when the speech organs are in resting position. After the front is the back of the tongue, which lies opposite the soft Palate when the speech organs are in resting position. At the extreme end of the back of the tongue is its root. The tip of the tongue and the rims may touch the upper teeth and produce the sounds/t/, /d/. The initial sounds in the English words - 'ten', 'do', 'no', 'two' are pronounced with the tongue.

4.1.6 Active Articulators & Passive Articulators :

Active articulators are those organs of speech that move from their position of rest to come in contact with other organs of speech that do not move. The latter are called passive articulators. So, in the production of the t, d, n, s, sounds, the tip and blade of the tongue move from their position of rest to touch the teeth ridge. The lip and blade of the tongue and the lower lip are active articulators. The upper lip and the teeth ridge are passive articulators. In the production of the /f/ sound as in the English word 'fat' the lower lip is the active articular and the upper teeth are the passive articulators.

So, let us see organs of speech at a glance–

Organs of speech



4.1.7. Consonants & Vowels :

In this section we shall discuss the Consonants and vowels of English.

Classification and description of speech sounds :

In the description and classification of speech sounds, we shall be thinking in terms of two categories : vowels and consonants. In school you learnt about vowels and consonants in terms of letters of the alphabet. Here we give you their definition in phonetic terms, with reference to the way they are produced in speech. A vowel is a sound which is produced when the oral passage is unobstructed. The air flows from the lungs to the lips and beyond without being stopped. English has twelve pure vowels and eight diphtongs or vowel glides.

A consonant is a speech sound in the production of which the air current is either completely stopped and then suddenly released, or is forced through a narrow constriction which causes audible friction. English has 24 consonant sounds.

4.1.7.1 The Consonants

a) Six plosives –/p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/

b) Two Affricates –/t ʃ/, /dz/

c) Nine fricatives –/f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /s/, /z/, / ʃ/ʒ/, /h/

d) Three Nasals – /m/, /n/, /ŋ/

e) one lateral – /l/

f) One frictiontees continuant – /r/

g) Two semi vowels –/w/, /j/

To describe a consonant we need to know the following details regarding its production :

a) Air stream Mechanism.

b) The state of the glottis (voiced / voiceless)

c) The position of the Soft Palate (oral / nasal / nasalized)

d) Active Articulator

e) Passive Articulator

f) The STRICTURE involved (Manner of Articulation)

So when you are asked to describe a consonant sound you should mention (1) Place of articulation (2) manner of articulation (3) whether it is voiced or voiceless & (4) whether it is an oral sound or a nasal or nasalised sound.

STRICTURE : The term STRICTURE refers to the way in which the passage of air is restricted by the various ORGANS OF SPEECH

STRICTURE	**SOUNDS PRODUCED WITH THAT STRICTURE**
i) Complete closure and sudden release	PLOSIVES
ii) Complete closure slow release	AFFRICATES
iii) Close Approximation	FRICATIVES
iv) Complete Oral Closure	NASALS
v) Complete closure in the centre of the vocal tract	LATERAL
vi) Open Approximation	FRICTIONLESS CONTINUANTS AND SEMI VOWELS
vii) Intermittent Closure	TRILLS OR ROLLED CONSONANTS

THE 24 ENGLISH CONSONANTS WITH THEIR THREE-TERM LABELS

A. PLOSIVES (6)

(Complete closure Sudden Release)

Voiceless	**Voiced**
/p/	/b/ — bilabial
/t/	/d/ — alveolar
/k/	/g/ — velar

/p/ — voiceless bilabial plosive,	'pool', 'pure'
/b/ — voiced bilabial plosive	'belt', 'tub'
/t/ — voiceless alvcolar plosive	'tree', 'bottle'

/d/ — voiced alveolar plosive ‘drop’, ‘feed’

/k/ — voiceless velar plosive ‘kite’, ‘black’

/g/ — voiced velar plosive ‘goal’, ‘big’

B. AFERICATES (2)

(Complete closure slow release)

voiceless	**Voiced**
/tʃ/	/d_z/ — palato — alveolar
/tʃ/ - voiceless palato - alveolar affricate	‘chair’, ‘choose’
/dz/ - voiced plato alveolar affricate	‘giraffe’, ‘badge’

C. FRICATIVES (9)

(Close approximation)

voiceless	**Voiced**
/f/	/v/ — labio — dental
/θ/	/ð/ — dental
/s/	/z/ — alveolar
/ʃ/	/ʒ/ — palato-alveolar
/h/	— glottal
/f/ — voicelss labio — dental fricative	‘fan’, ‘laugh’
/v/ — voiced labio — dental fricative	‘very’, ‘five’
/θ/ — voiceless dental fricative	‘thick’, ‘path’
/z/ — voiced dental fricative	‘the’, ‘brother’
/s/ — voiceless alveolar fricative	‘small’, ‘miss’
/z/ — voiced alveolar fricative	‘busy’, ‘days’
/ʃ/ — vioceless palato-alveolar to fricative	‘shop’, ‘nation’
/ʒ/ — voiced palato alveolar fricative	‘rouge’, ‘pleasure’
/h/ — voiceless glottal fricative	‘ham’, ‘hundred’

D. NASALS (3)

(complete oral closure)

Voiced

/m/ — bilabial

/n/ — alveolar

/ŋ/ — velar

/m/ voiced	bibalial	nasal	'lamb'	'mine'
/n/ voiced	alveolar	nasal	'need',	'begin'
/ŋ/ voiced	velar	nasal	'singer',	'tongue'

E. LATERAL (1)

(complete closure at the centre of the vocal tract)

Voiced

/ɭ/ - alveolar

voiced alveolar Lateral

/ɭ/ is 'clear' or palatalized when it in followed by a vowel or /j/. That is, along with the tip or blade of the tongue making a firm contact with the teeth ridge, front of the tongue is raised in the direction of the hard palate. The /ɭ/ produced thus has a front vowel resonance. Clear /ɭ/ occurs in words like the following :

leave
lad } /ɭ/ followed by a vowel
lull

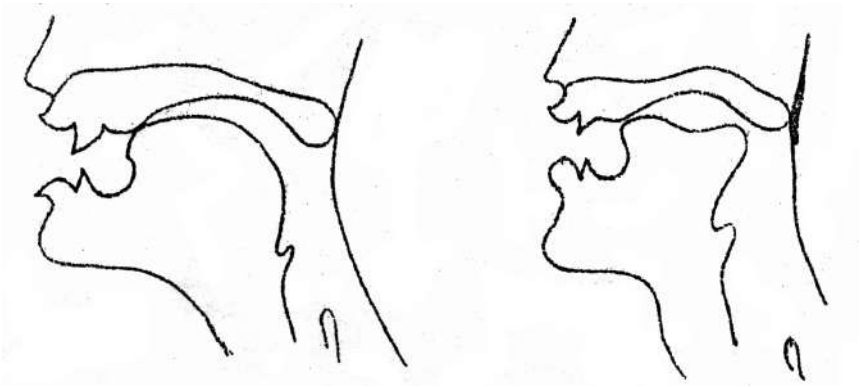
million/milj ə n } /1/followed by /j/
allure

/ɭ/ is 'dark' or velarized (phonetic symbol [†] when it is the final sound in a word or followed by a consonant other than, /j/, that is, along with the tip or blade of the tongue making a firm contact against the teeth ridge, the back of the tongue is raised in the direction of the soft palate. The /ɭ/ produced thus has a back vowel resonance. 'dark' /ɭ/ occurs in word like the following :

tell
tall
pull
call
} Word -final /ℓ/

told
cold
pulled
milk
} /ℓ/ followed by a consonant

The difference in the articulation of clear /1/ and 'dark' /1/ is indicated in the diagrams that follow.



F. FRICTIONLESS CONTINAUNT /r/

(open approximation)

/r/ — post alveolar

voiced post alveolar frictionless continuant

/r/ does not occur finally in a word. In R. P. the letter 'r' is pronounced only when it occurs immediately before vowels.

/r/ is a voiced post-alveolar tap (or one tap trill - phonetic symbol [r] when if occurs between two vowels or when it occurs after /θ/ as in

very
merry
} /r/ between vowels

three
thrive
} /r/ after /θ/

To pronounce /r/ the tip of tongue moves towards alveolar ridge, so that the gap between tongue & the roof of the mouth is wide enough for the lung air to pass through freely without any audible fiction.

Linking /r/ : When a word ends with the letter r (which in RP is not pronounced when the word is in isolation) and the next word begins with a vowel and if three is no pause between the two words in connected speech, the final r of the first word is pronounced. This is called linking /r/

for example /bʌtər ən dzæm /

/fa : ðər ən mʌðə/

Semi vowels (2)

/j/ - palatal.

/w/ - labio-velar

/j/ - voiced palatal semivowel

/w/ - voiced labio velar semivowel.

These sounds are called semi vowels because, phonetically they are vowels but they cannot act as the nucleus of a syllable.

Place	Bilabial	Labio Dental	Dental	Alveolar	Post Alveolar	Palato Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
	VI vd	VI vd	VI vd	VI vd	VI vd	VI vd	VI vd	VI vd	VI vd
Polsive	p b			t d				k g	
Affricate						tʃdʒ			
Fricative		f v	θ ð	s z		ʃ ʒ			h
Nasal	m			n				ŋ	
Lateral				ℓ					
Frictionless Continant					r				
Semi vowel	w						j		

4.1.7.2 The Vowels of English

We have already told you that for a vowel sound the air stream passes throgh the mouth in a continuous stream. There is no stoppage, nor any narrowing of the passage to cause friction. Vowels have a 'humming' sound when produced. In other words, vowels in English are always voiced.

We cannot describe or classify vowels according to place or manner of articulation, since no speech organ stops or slows down the air stream. So we have find a different way to describe them. The differences between vowels are of two types : difference of quality, for example between the vowel sounds in the words 'sit' and 'sat'; and difference of quantity, for example between the vowels in 'ship' and 'sheep'. The differences in quality take place because of 3 factors (1) Which part of the tongue is raised and how high is it raised (2) the shape of the lips—whether they are spread, neutral or rounded, and (3) the position of the velum or soft palate—whether it is raised to produce oral vowels or lowered to produce nasalised sounds.

Cardinal vowels

Because of the difficulty in describing vowels, the English phonetician Daniel Jones devised the idea of eight cardinal vowels, which can be used as points of reference. The cardinal vowels are just a convenient descriptive device. They do not occur in a language. The highest point of the tongue for each of them lies on the extreme outside limit of the vowel area. They are auditorily equidistant. Take a look at the Diagram below.

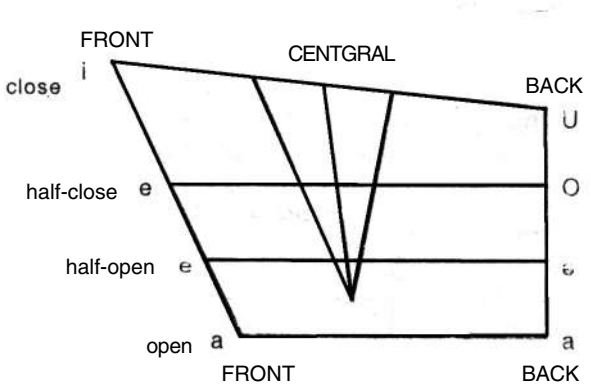


Diagram 1

Diagram illustrating the tongue-positions of eight primary Cardinal Vowels

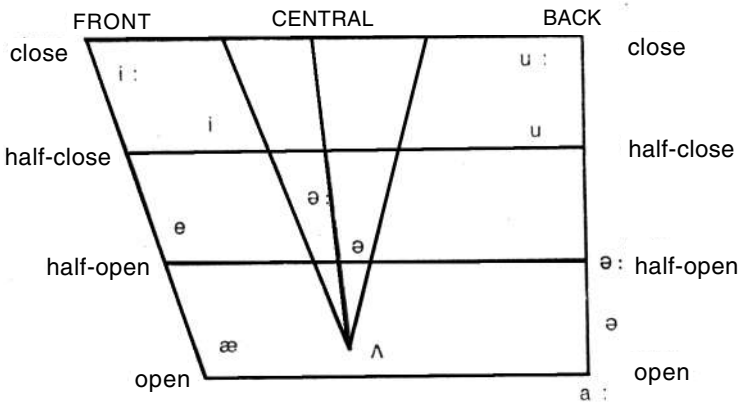


Diagram 2

Diagram showing tongue position for 12 English pure vowels.

Vowels : There are twelve Monophthongs and eight Diphthongs

12. Monophthongs

(a) Four Front Vowels–	/i:/	eat, tea
	/ɪ/	it, pit
	/e/	end, bend
	/æ/	add, apple
(b) Five Back Vowels–		
	/u:/	ooze, blue
	/u/	put, full
	/ɔ:/	all, bought
	/ɒ/	pond, long
	/*a*:/	car, March
(c) Three Central Vowels–		
	/ə:/	her, girl
	/ə/	mother, about
	/^/	up, hut

Eight Diphthongs :

/ei/	came, day
/ai/	time, fly
/ɔi/	noise, boy
/əu/	home, only
/au/	house, cow
/iə/	deer, year
/eə/	care, there
/uə/	poor, tour

For describing vowels we shall mention : (i) portion of the tongue raised or lowered — front, back, centre, (2) height of tongue—close, half-close, half-open, open; (3) shape of lips — spread, neutral, rounded.

Description of English vowels :

Front

1. |i:| — a front close **unrounded** vowel
2. |i| — a centralised front **unrounded** vowel just above the half close position.
3. |e| — a front **unrounded** vowel between half close and half open
4. |æ| — a front **unrounded** vowel just below the half open position.

Back

5. |a:| — a back open **unrounded** vowel.
6. |ɒ| — a back **rounded** vowel just above the open position
7. |ɔ:| — a back ___,,____ vowel between half open and half close
8. |u| — a back ____,,_____ vowel just above half close.
9. |u:| — a back close ____,,____ vowel.

Central

10. |^| — a central **unrounded** vowel just above open
11. |ə| — a central **unrounded** vowel just below half open
12. |ə:| — a central **unrounded** vowel between half close and half open.

Diphthongs : Diphthongs are vowel glides. The tongue moves from one position in the mouth to another. So the phonetic symbols also show a combination of the two vowels. But they represent a single sound and not two sounds.

The diphthongs are

Closing	**Centring**
/ei/	/iə/
/ai/	/eə/
/ɔi/	/uə/
/əu/	
/au/	

Closing

1. |ei| - a glide from a front unrounded vowel just below half close to centralised front unrounded vowel just above half close.
2. |ai| - a glide from a front open unrounded vowel to |i|.
3. |əi| - a glide from a back rounded vowel between open and half open to a centralised front, unrounded vowel.
4. |əu| - a glide from a central unrounded vowel between half-close and half open to a centralised back rounded vowel just above the half close position.
5. |au| - a glide from a back open unrounded vowel to a back rounded vowel above half-cose.

Centering

(6) |iə| - a glide from a centralised front unrounded vowel just above half close to a central unrounded vowel between half close and half open.

Final (iə) - a glide from |i| to a central unrounded vowel just below half open.

(7) Non Final |uə| - a glide from a centralised back rounded vowel just above half close to a central unrounded vowel between half close and half open.

Final |uə| - glide from (u) to a central unrounded vowel just below the half open position.

(8) Non-final |eə|—a glide from a front half-open unrounded vowel to a central unrounded vowel between half-close and half-open.

Final |eə| —glide from a front half-open unrounded vowel to central unrounded vowel just below the half open position.

4.1.8. The Syllable

The phonemes of English combine to make the next higher unit, which is the syllable. The syllable leads to the next higher unit which is the word. A word may have one or more than one syllable. How do we know how many syllables a word has ? It is simple. A word has as many syllables as it has vowels. (We mean vowel phonemes). So 'gate'/geit/has a single syllable because the /ei/is a diphthong. In the case of a word like 'exact'/ig-zakt/we have two syllables.

The vowel is essential to the syllable structure. So it is called the nucleus of the syllable. Using V and C for vowel and consonant the different types of syllable structure may be as follows :

1. V (eye, I)
2. VC (eat, all)
3. CV (tea, see)
4. CVC (give, sit)
5. CCV (clay, style)
6. CCCV (stray, straw)
7. CCCVC (stream, spring)
8. VCC (apt, aunt)

[The list above is not an exhaustive list. There are other possible combinations of syllables]

4.1.9. Word Stress or Word Accent :

Once you know the structure of the syllable, you can find out how many syllables a word has. English words which have more than one syllable are pronounced with only one syllable stressed. That means that one syllable is so pronounced that it is more prominent than other syllables.

What causes the prominence? Several factors : (1) loudness. The breath force is stronger so the syllable sounds louder. (2) pitch change. In words of more than one syllable, depending on the placement of the stressed syllable, there is a pitch change within the word. On the stressed syllable the pitch rises higher. For the unstressed syllables the pitch falls lower. (3) The quality of the vowel. A syllable tends to be stressed if the vowel in it is more prominent (because it is different, or strong, while the vowels in the other syllables are weak) than the vowels in the other syllables

The importance of stress

In English, word stress is often the guide to the grammatical function of words. If a two-syllable word can function as both noun / adjective and as verb, it is stressed on the first syllable as noun / adjective, and on the second syllable as verb. Example :

Word	**noun / adjective**	**verb**
Absent	/'æbsent/	/əb'sent/
Convict	/'kɒnvikt/	/kən'vikt/
Present	/'prezant/	/pri'zent/

4.1.9.1. Rules for placement of stress

We are afraid there are no simple rules for word stress in English. The system is governed by usage. For foreign students the way to learn how a polysyllabic word is stressed is always to consult a dictionary whenever they come across a new word. However please remember that when you are asked to mark the stress in a word, you must first do a phonetic transcription of the word. Then you put the stress mark (for primary stress) on top, just in front of the stressed syllable. Words of three or more syllables may have a secondary stress. You put the secondary stress mark below, just in front of the syllable which receives the secondary stress. Some examples are worked out for you below.

a) Words of two syllable with stress on first syllable i) able (/'eibəl/) ii) dozen (/'dʌzən/)

b) Words of two syllable with stress on second syllable i) address (/ə'dres/) ii) forget (/fə'get/)

c) Words of three syllables with stress on first syllable i) character (/'kæriktə/) ii) industry (/'inəustri/)

d) Words of three syllables with stress on second syllable i) adventure (/ədˈventʃə) ii) consider (kənˈsidə/)

e) Words with primary stress on third syllable and secondary stress on first i) comprehend (/ˌkɒmprˈihend/) ii) introduce (/ˌintrəˈdju:s/)

Questions

Long Answer types (20 marks)

1. What is a phoneme ? What does phonetics mean? Describe the branches of phonetics.
2. Describe the organs of speech

Mid Length Questions (12 marks)

3. Which organs are the active articulators & which are the passive articulators?
4. Describe & explain the difference between consonants & vowels.
5. Explain syllable & word stress.
6. What are cardinal vowels ? Explain the difference between pure vowels / monophthongs and diphthongs.
7. Describe the consonants & vowels in 3 of the words given below (The words are samples only)

   prefer, yellow, become, myself, second, suggest, pleasure, down, gray, buy, toy, drown.

Short question (7 marks)

8. Phonetically transcribe any 3 of the following words (the words here are only samples)

   mountain, reed, scrub, sure, poor, colour, seat, afraid.

9. Put the stress mark after phetically transcribing any two of the following words. (The words are samples only)

   vowel, description, curious, monopoly, degree, between, govern, bicycle, library, example, disappoint, domineer, educate.

Suggested Reading

1. Abercrombie, D. Elements of General Phonetics. Edinburagh, Edinburgh University Press, 1967.

2. Balasubramanian, T. A Textbook of English Phonetics for Indian Students, Macmillan, 2013.
3. Bansal, R. K. and J. B. Harrison. Spoken English for India. Madras, Orient Longman, 1972.
4. Jones, Daniel. An outline of English Phonetics. Ludhiana, New Delhi, Kalyani Pub, 2009.
5. O. Connor, J. D., Better English Pronunciation. Cambridge, U.K. 2003.
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Unit 2 ❑ Rhetoric

4.2.0 Objectives

In this module you will become familiar with the Figures of speech used in language. After going through this module you will be able to—

- comprehend some of the figures of speech.
- understand how figures based on Similarity, Difference Association are closely related and how they are different in form and kind.
- recognise the figures of speech like Imagination, Indirectness.
- identify the figures based on pun and construction.
- apply the figures of speech and analyse the literary texts for deeper meaning.

4.2.1 Introduction

The word 'Rhetoric' comes from the Greek word 'rhetor', which means 'a public speakar'. The art of public speaking, carefully learnt by Greeks and Romans, as well as by high-born men aspiring to a public career was called 'rhetorike' in ancient Greece. The word 'rhetoric' may mean :

i) the art of speaking & writing effectively.

ii) The principles & rules of composition handed down from the tradition of classical civilization. Later the word developed a third meaning–

iii) insincere artificial or grandiloquent language.

The study of rhetoric included, among other things, studying figures of speech, which are loosely referred to as 'rhetorical figures'.

What are Figures of Speech?

The word 'figure' comes from the Latin 'figura' which means the external form or shape of a thing. To quote Prof. Bain, "A figure of speech is a deviation from the plain and ordinary way of speaking, for the sake of greater effect."

What functions do Figures of speech carry out?

Language can be used for many purposes. One of its primary functions is communication. At one extreme, language is used merely to communicate facts, as

simply and directly as possible. This happens in scientific language as also in many other areas of communication, for example at airport or railway station announcements. In everyday communication, language covers a wider range, from facts to feelings. As students of literature, you already know that we do not read literature for the information or message it conveys. So naturally the language used for creating literature differs from scientific language as well as from the language of everyday life. Several factors operate to make literary language different. Figures of speech are to be counted among them. Their proper application constitutes a part of the technique of literary language. Figures of speech are derived from features which exist naturally in a language, and may be present in ordinary, everyday language as well. Some writers can be exceptionally skillful in hiding the advanced technique employed for figures of speech, and make their language seemingly normal or colloquial. Others may employ them more elaborately, so that their style appears more artificial. In some senses, the language of literature is artificial, because the writers employ features like rhythm, imagery, diction, etc., consciously & carefully. The language of literature tends to compress and condense a lot into a limited length, making it tightly packed. Figures of speech are techniques to aid this condensation. They defamiliarise language, jolting us into a more alert response to what is being said.

4.2.2. Let us take a look at the commonly used figures of speech

Figures of speech :

1. Figures based on similarity

a) Simile

b) Metaphor

2. Figures based on Contrast :

a) Antithesis

b) Epigram

c) Oxymoron

3. Figures based on Association

a) Metonymy

b) Synecdoche

4. Figures based on Imagination

a) Personification

b) Pathetic Fallacy

c) Hyperbole

5. Figures based on Indirectness

a) Irony

b) Periphrasis or Circumlocution

6. Figures based on Sound

a) Pun

b) Onomatopoeia

c) Alliteration

7. Figures based on Construction

a) Interrogation

b) Inversion or Hyperbaton

4.2.3. Figures Based on Similarity

Here the figures are based on similarity. Any idea or thought is expressed in a figurative way by similarity, analogy, agreement, likeness between different things or ideas.

The figures based on similarity are

i) Simile, ii) Metaphor,

Let us see the details of these figures

1. Simile (Lat. Similis, like) — A simile is the explicit comparison between two different things.

The essential elements are—

i) A comparison is made

ii) The comparison is made between two different things. It is introduced by like, as, such, so, similarly etc.

Examples

*	Red as a rose is she—	Coleridge
*	I wandered lonely as a cloud—	Wordsworth
*	Her locks were yellow as gold—	Coleridge
*	To follow knowledge like a sinking star—	Tennyson.
*	The child shows the man, as morning shows the day—	Milton
*	Her raiment is like morning mist—	Sarojini Naidu

Here the comparison is made between two different things - 'rose' and 'she', 'I' (the poet) and 'cloud', 'locks' and 'gold', 'knowledge' and 'sinking star', 'child' and 'morning', 'raiment and moring mist.

2. Metaphor (Gk. 'meta' - beyond, and 'phero'-I carry) - Here an implied comparison is made between two different things or ideas for describing one of them. A metaphor states that one object is another.

Essential Features :

i) A comparison is made between two different things.

ii) The comparison is implied. One object is stated to be another.

Examples :

1. Variety is the spice of life — Cowper

2. I cannot rest from travel; I will drink life to the lees. — Tennyson (Ulysses)

3. The camel is the ship of the desert.

4. He is the pillar of the state.

5. Her life is a revolving dream — Sarojini Naidu

Here an implied comparison is made between two different things. The comparison between 'variety' and 'spice', 'life and lees', 'camel' and 'ship', 'he' and 'pillar', 'her life', and 'revolving dream' are expressed in the above lines.

Model Examples :

i) I leant upon a coppice gate

When frost was spectre grey — Hardy

Here 'frost' and 'spectre', two different things are compared. Frost becomes a grey spectre.

ii) The curfew tolls the knell of parting day. — Gray

Here an implied comparison is made between 'curfew' and 'knell'

iii) No tear could melt his stony heart.

Here stone and 'heart' are compared. Heart becomes a stone.

iv) lowliness is young ambition's ladder. — Shakespeare

Here 'lowliness' and 'ladder', two different things, are implicitly compared.

Types of Metaphor

Metaphors are of several types—

- Normal metaphor
- Mixed metaphor
- Strained metaphor
- Dead metaphor

● **Normal metaphor :** Variety is the **spice of life**

● **Mixed metaphor :** When more than one metaphor, drawn from different sources, are used, it is called mixed metaphor.

Example : I bridle in my struggling Muse with pain / That longs to launch into bolder strain.

Here muse is compared to three different things a horse, a ship and a musical instrument.

● **Strained Metaphor :** In strained metaphor, a metaphor becomes strained, when the comparison becomes far-fetched.

Example : "Here lay Duncan

His silver skin laced with golden blood" —Shakespeare

Here the comparison is between gold lace and blood. And it is far-fetched.

● **Dead Metaphor :** In such metaphors. The metaphor through overmuch use has lost its impact.

Example: 'The legs of a table'.

● **Simile vs Metaphor**

Both simile and Metaphor deal with comparison. Simile is explicit, but metaphor is implicit, Simile is different from metaphor only in form, not in content. A Metaphor is compressed simile, whereas simile is an expanded metaphor.

Simile	**Metaphor**
The camel crosses the desert as the ship crosses the sea	The camel is the ship of desert

4.2.4. Figures based on Contrast

The major figures of speech based on contrast are—

i) Antithesis, ii) Epigram, iii) Oxymoron,

Antithesis : (GK, anti, against, and 'tithemi', I place)

Here contrasted words or ideas are placed together in a balanced form for the sake of emphasis.

Examples :

- It is a blessing, and not a curse.
- United we stand, divided we fall.
- The day was gone, the night came on
- He was not the master but the slave of his speech — Macaulay.
- Man is a hater of truth, a lover of fiction.
- Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven. — Milton
- Art is long, life is short.

Epigram : (GK. epi, upon; and gramma, -a writing, signifies an inscription; then, a short pointed poem)

In epigram a striking contradiction is conveyed in the apparent meaning but there is an underlying significance which is revealed when we think over it.

Examples :

* There is a pleasure in poetic pains —Cowper.

* Beware the fury of a patient man — Dryden.
* Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thoughts — Shelly.
* Cowards die many times before their death-Shakespeare.
* The busiest man has the amplest leisure - Goldsmith.

Oxymoron : (GK. 'Oxus', sharp, and 'moros', — dull)

In oxymoron two contradictory words are juxtaposed for a striking effect.

Examples :

* Life is bitter sweet.
* This is the effect of a senseless sense.
* And all its aching joys are now no more — Wordsworth
* Thus idly busy roll their world away — Goldsmith
* Do that good mischief - Shakespeare.

4.2.5 Figures Based on Association

Two ideas or words may be related or associated with each other in such a way that if we think of one, we shall immediately think of the other. Some figures of speech are based on such a process of association.

Two main figures of speech based on Association are—

(a) Metonymy. (b) Synecdoche

Now let us see these figures of speech in details.

Metonymy (GK. 'meta', change; and 'Onoma', name) Here the name of one thing is substituted for that of another, when these two things are loosely associated.

In Metonymy there are different kinds of substitution. They are as follows.

(i) **Name of a passion for the object inspiring it—**

Examples—

He is the pride of his country. (One of whom his countrymen feel proud)

'A thing of beauty is a joy (a matter of joy) forever.—Keats.

"Lycidas, your sorrow (object of sorrow) is not dead."—Milton.

(ii) **Instrument or organ for the agent.**

Here an instrument or organ is named to mean the person, who uses it.

Examples :

* The pen (writer) is mightier than the sword (fighter).
* The press (newspaper) of India wields great power.
* A sweet throat (singer) enchants the audience.

(iii) **Container for the contained**

Example :

* 'England (English people) hath need of thee."—Wordsworth.
* The whole house (The inmates of the house) remains mute in great grief.

(iv) Effect for the cause

Here an effect is mentioned, while the cause is actually meant.

Example :

Gray hair (old age) should he respected.

(Gray hair is the effect, while the cause is old age)

(v) Cause for the effect :

Here an effect is meant, while the cause is stated.

Example :

"Move him into the sun" (the rays of the sun; sun is the cause and its rays—the effect)

* **Author for his work, place for its production**

Here a particular work or book is named but the person who has done it, is meant, or, a place is named, but its production is meant.

Example :

* I am reading Tagore (Works of Tagore)

* Pessimism often overcasts Hardy (Hardy's novels).

* The book is bound in Morocco (Leather from Morocco)

* **Symbol or sign for the thing symbolised**

Here, the symbol or sign is used to mean the thing symbolised.

Example :

He was raised to the bench (the office of a judge : the bench being the sign of the judge's seat.)

* The effect of the red tape (official routine) often delays progress.

A useful aide-memoir is given below for the types of Metonymy

NICE AS

N : Name of the passion for the object.

I : Instrument for the agent.

C : Container for the contained.

E : Effect for the cause and the cause for the effect.

A : Author for his work & place for its production.

S : Symbol or sign for the thing symbolised.

Synecdoche

When one thing is substituted for another and the two things are intimately associated, the figure of speech is synecdoche.

Like Metonymy, Synecdoche has also varied types.

(i) Whole for the part

Example :

* Dust thou (the body) art, to dust returnest.

* Till through the British World (empire) were known.

The names of Pitt and Fox alone.

(ii) Part for the whole

A part is named to mean and signify the whole.

Examples :

* "No useless coffin enclosed his breast. (body)—Wolfe.

* A man bowed down with seventy winters (years).

(iii) Individual for the class

Here an individual who holds a high position in his or her class, is mentioned to mean the whole class.

Example :

Let him be Caesar (a great hero, Caesar stands for the class of heroes.)—Shakespeare.

*** Concrete for the Abstract**

Here an abstract quality is meant by means of something concrete.

Examples :

* Two steady roses (rosy colour, which is an abstract quality of the flower, the rose).

* There is a good deal of the fox (cunning, the concrete 'fox' for the abstract quality) in his character.

*** Abstract for the concrete**

The abstract quality is employed to signify the concrete element, living being or inanimate object, possessing the same.

Example : I am out of humanity's (man's) reach.—Cowper.

*** Species for the genus**

Here the species may be used to signify genus.

Example :

* Man does not live by bread (food) alone.

* Silver and gold (riches) I have none. ('silver and gold' are the species of the genus 'riches'.)

*** Genus for the species**

Here the process is the opposite—putting in the genus for the species—

* "Thou wast not born for death, immortal bird"—Keats (Here the species 'nightingale' is substituted by the genus 'bird'.
* The lazy creature (person) ever sleeps. (creature is the genus)

*** Material for the thing made**

A thing made of a particular material is meant, though only the material is mentioned.

Example :

He was dressed in silk (silk clothes; silk is the material of which the dress is made)

To remember types of Synecdoche we provide an aide memoir.

WI CAMP

* W : Whole (genus) for the part (species)
* I : Individual for the class.
* C : Concrete for the abstract.
* A : Abstract for the concrete.
* M : Material for the thing made.
* P : Part (species) for the whole (genus)

4.2.6 Figures based on Imagination

In our life and in our imagination we often think or speak of inanimate things, like natural objects, in human terms. Since literature springs from creative imagination, in literary language, especially in the language of poetry, inanimate objects are endowed with human feelings and responses, which results in figurative language.

Some figures of speech based on imagination are—

1. Personification, 2. Pathetic fallacy, 3. Hyperbole

Now let us see these figures in details—

1. Personification : (Lat. persona, a person)—When nature, an inanimate object, or an abstract idea is invested with the attribute of a living being, it is called personification.

Example :

* And thirsty earth soaks up the rain,

And drinks and gapes for drink again—Cowley.

* Proud be the rose, with rains and dews—Wordsworth.

* The lovely rose loves her beauty.

Here rose, a natural object, get the attribute of a living being with the verb 'love'.

* Histories make men wise.—Bacon

2. Pathetic tallacy :

Here nature or inanimate objects are represented as echoing the feelings and expressions of man or showing interest in human action, either by sympathy or by antipathy.

Examples :

i) Sky lowered, and murmering thunder, some sad drops wept at completing of the mortal sin.—Milton.

ii) Earth felt the wound.—Milton

iii) The broad stream in his banks complaining.—Tennyson.

3. Hyperbole (GK. hyper, beyond; and balto, I throw)

Here an exaggerated statement is made to present things as greater or lesser, better or worse, than they really are.

This figure is used for various purposes—

(a) for giving vent to passion—

A hyperbolic style is naturally prompted by such passions or strong emotions as love, grief, anger, amazement etc.,

Examples—

* To see her is to love her,

  And love but her forever.—Burns.

* I loved Ophelia; forty thousand brothers

  Could not with all their quantity of love

  make up the sum.—Shakespeare

(b) For imparting vividness to a description :

Examples :

* ...all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.—Shakespeare.

* I have lamps that gild the lustre of the moon.—Davidson.

* The old walls rocked with the crowd and cried—Browning.

(c) For Vituperation, ridicule and humour.

Example :

The English gain two hours a day by clipping their words.—Voltaire.

4.2.7 Figures based on Indirectness

We speak or write ideas or words of expression directly or indirectly. We criticise or satirise somebody indirectly. Two main figures of speech, related to this indirect way of speaking, are—

(1) Irony, (2) Periphrasis or circumlocution

(1) Irony—(GK. eiron, a dissembler)—In irony the opposite of what is meant is stated for the purpose of subtle negative criticism or ridicule.

Example :

* A very fine friend you were to forsake me in my trouble.
* And Brutus is an honourable man!—Shakespeare
* Certainly God did not make man and leave it to Aristotle to make him rational. —Locke.

(2) Periphrasis or Circumlocution—(GK. peri, around; and phrasis, saying)

In Periphrasis we express a thing in a roundabout way instead of saying it directly. It is used more commonly in poetry than in prose.

Example :

* Sleep the sleep that knows no breaking (die)—Scott.
* The Cup that cheers, but not inebriates. (a cup of tea)—Cowper.
* The weakening eye of day" (sun)—Hardy.

4.2.8 Figures Based on Sound

Words have sound as well as meaning. The sounds of words are used for sound patterns and also for play on meaning. Some figures of speech are based on word sounds.

Some Figures of speech based on sound are—

(i) Pun, (ii) Onomatopoeia, (iii) Alliteration

(i) Pun or Paronomasia : This figure rests on a duplicity of sense under the unity of sound. Words are often homophones (have same sound) or homonyms (have same sound & spelling but different meaning). Puns are based on these qualities.

Example :

* The will of a living daughter is curbed by the will of a dead father—Shakespeare.

  [will = wish/testament;]
* I am too light to bear this light.—Shakespeare. [lightweight & lamp]

* Not on thy sole, but on thy soul harsh jew
  Thou mak'st thy knife keen;—Shakespeare

(ii) Onomatopoeia : In this figure of speech the sound indicates the sense.

Example :

* The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft
  And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.—Keats.
* It cracked and growled, and roared and howled.—Coleridge.

(iii) Alliteration : The repetition of the same consonant sound at the beginning of successive syllables/words is a fairly frequent pattern in English verse and prose.

Example :

* The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew, The furrow followed free.
  —Coleridge.
* The field of freedom, faction, fame and blood.—Byron.
* Alone, alone, all, all alone,
  Alone on a wide, wide sea.—Coleridge.
* With blade, with bloody blameful blade.
  He bravely broached his boiling bloody breast. —Shakespeare.

4.2.9 Figures based on Construction

Certain figures of speech are based on the syntactic construction of sentences, both in verse and prose. There are several such figures of speech. We shall tell you here about two of them.

(i) Interrogation or Erotesis (ii) Hyperbaton or inversion

(i) Interrogation :

In this figure of speech the syntactic structure is that of a question. But the answer is implied in the question itself. As a result, the effect is a strong affirmation of what is said in the question.

Example :

* What is wrong with my country?—Jayanta Mahapatra

—Who is here so base that would be a bondman?—Shakespeare

—If winter comes, can spring be far behind?—Shelley

(ii) Hyperbaton or Inversion

Here there is an inversion of the regular grammatical order of words.

Examples :

* Much have I travelled in the realms of gold.—Keats

* Much have I seen and known.—Tennyson.

Some Examples of Figures of speech are worked out for you below.

1. The paths of glory lead but to the grave.—Gray.

* This is an example of epigram.

Here it seems to he shoking for the first time, because how can 'glory' lead one 'to the grave'. But actually it is true because of the mortality of all earthly beings.

* This is also an example of Personification.

Here the abstract idea 'the paths of glory' is invested with the attribute of a living being with the verb 'lead'.

2. He works his work, I mine. —Tennyson.

* This is an example of antithesis. Because two contrasted ideas 'he works his work' and 'I mine' are placed side by side in a balanced form to have a greater emphasis.

3. Yet all experience is an arch.—Tennyson.

* This is a specimen of metaphor.

Here the comparison between 'experience' and 'arch' is made in an implicit manner.

4. And all the earth is gay.—Wordsworth.

* This is an instance of hyperbole.

Here an exaggevated statement is made by saying 'all the earth' is gay.

5. The petty done, the undone vast.—Browning.

This is an instance of antithesis.

Here two contrasted ideas, 'petty done' and 'undone vast', are placed together in a balanced form to have more emphasis.

6. Cowards die many times before their death.—Shakespeare.

* This is an example of epigram.

The fear of death & actual death are different. The statement condenses the thought that cowards constantly fear death even before they actually die.

7. Failures are the pillars of success.

* This is an example of epigram. Failures may be the seeds of success, if one is not discouraged but goes on trying.

* This is also an instance of metaphor. Because two unallied objects 'failures' and 'pillars' are compared in an implicit manner.

8. Life's but a walking shadow.—Shakespeare

* This is an instance of metaphor.

Here 'life' and 'walking shadow' are compared in an implicit manner.

9. 'Myself am hell'.—Milton

* This is an instance of metaphor. Here an implied comparison between the 'speaker' and 'Hell' is made.

10. The sounding cataract haunted me like a passion.—Wordsworth.

* This is an example of simile. Here an explicit comparison is made between two different things 'cataract' and 'passion'.

Here we also see an example of personification. because 'the sounding' cataract', an inanimate element of nature is treated as a living being which 'haunts' the poet.

11. Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thoughts.—Shelley.

* This is an instance of epigram. Initially, one wonders how sweet songs can tell of sad thoughts. On reflection Shelley's meaning—that best poetry is poetry that has deep tragic content—becomes clear.

4.2.10 Exercises

* Name and explain the figures of speech in the following passages :

1) The curfew tolls the knell of parting day.

2) Youth is the seedtime of life.

3) Like a fair star, she remained ever.

4) No alarms of bugles, no high flags, no clamourous haste.

5) Oh, born in days when wits were fresh and clear.
And life ran gaily as the sparking Thames.

6) Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is
What if my leaves are falling like its own!

7) No sound of wheel rumbling, not of foot falling.
And the busy morning cries came thin and spare.

8) O Rome, I make thee promise;
If the redress will follow, thou receives!
Thy full petition at the hand of Brutus.

9) To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death.

10) Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?

Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye.
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?

11) Come sealing night
Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day,
And with thy bloody and invisible hand
Cancel and tear to pieces that great bond
Which keeps me pale!

12) We look before and after,
And pine for what is not;
Our sincerest laughter;
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

13) All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players
They have their exits and their entrances.

14) We are the hollow men
We are the stuffed men
Leaning together
Headpiece filled with straw.

15) Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last grey hairs
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despair.

16) What is wrong with my country?

The jungles have become gentle, the women restless. And history reposes between the college girl's breasts : the exploits of warrior queens, the pride pieced together from a god's tainted amours.

4.2.11 Bibliography

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Unit 3 ❑ Prosody

Structure

4.3.0 Objectives

In this module you will become familiar with the discipline of Prosody. We hope that after reading this module you will be able to—

- understand syllables, foot, metre in stanzas.
- Understand how rhythm and metre are closely related.
- Apply stress in scansion while reading the texts.
- Be able to explain and interpret the prosodic patterns in texts.
- Enjoy reading texts with rhythm and pleasing notes of melody.

4.3.1 Introduction

Prosody is the scientific study of the grammar of verse or principles of versification in poetry. It is the analytical study of metre, foot, rhyme, stanza, form

etc. Prosody also includes the study of some rhetorical figures based on sound effects such as alliteration, assonance, euphony and onomatopoeia. It gives us the splendid charm of reading and enjoying poetry, poetic drama and related rhythmical literary genres. The word 'Prosody' comes from the Greek word 'Prosodia' which means a song sung to music and Latin 'prosodia' which means accent or syllable. It deals with the rules and regulations of versification and treats the laws which form the structure of verses.

To quote M. H. Abrams—

"Prosody signifies the systematic study of versification, that is, of the principles and practice of metre, rhyme and stanza." So it is the grammar of verse. Nesfield says—it is 'that part of grammar which treats of the laws regulating the metrical structure of verse.' It produces harmony and melody in poetry. Without harmony and melody, there will not be proper poetry. Carlyle says, 'Whatever is not sung is properly no poem.' So careful observation of metre, rhyme, regularity of pause and stress, beautifies the structure of poetry. Metre is based on mainly two elements—quantity and accent or stress. As time is expressed by quantity, so tone or tune is embodied in accent or stress. And stress is the important guiding principle. Rhythm adds to the beauty of poetry. Mill remarks—'Ever since man has been man, all deep and sustained feeling has tended to express itself in rhythmical language, and the deeper the feelings, the more characteristic and decided the rhythm. As music is made up of two things—time and tune, so are our poetry and speech.

So let us see about Quantity and Accent or Stress.

4.3.2 Quantity and Stress

Quantity consists of the relative duration of different syllables or vowels at the time of utterance and speech production. Syllables and vowels are classified according to quantity, into long and short. For example the first syllable of 'be-cause' is short, whereas the first syllables of 'vo-cal', 'lo-cal', 'fo-cal' are long. Vowel sounds can be long or short. Vowel letters of the alphabet & vowel sounds in phonetics are different, as you have already learnt. So, your phonetics lessons will help you in learning prosody. Some vowels, for example those occuring in 'grand', 'short', 'chord', 'plump', jump are long by position as the cumulation of

consonants after them prevents us from pronouncing them fluently and speedily.

On the other hand Accent is a particular stress or effort of the voice on certain syllables of words that distinguishes these from the rest by proper distinctness of pronunciation. The word 'accent' is derived from Latin 'ictus', meaning, a blow, and means the force in pronunciation with which a syllable is rendered prominent. Stress tends to increase the loudness of articulation, though it must not be supposed to be synonymous with loudness.

Words consisting of two or three syllables have as a rule, only one stress. But in case of long words we often see two stressed syllables. In the word in-ci-dent, there is a stress on the first syllable, but in the word in-ci-dent-al, two of the syllables, the first and the third, receive the stresses. The first syllable is weaker than the third syllable. So the third gets the primary and the first gets the secondary stress. We have to remember that stress must not be confused with emphasis. A word is emphasized by the intensification of loudness of the stressed syllable. In words having two stressed syllables, the emphasis falls on the syllable which has the chief or primary stress.

4.3.2.1 Importance of Stress :

Stress plays a vital role in the English language. It fixes the form and meaning of the words and it also guides the principles of syllabification and prosody. We shall try to give you some principles of stress.

Stress has a conserving effect on that syllable of a word an which it falls and the stressed syllable retains its from, while the unstressed syllable or words may be shortened. For example have/hæv/may become/ə́v/or apple/æpl/may be come/ ə́pl.

4.3.3 Rhythm and Metre :

The term 'Rhythm' comes from the Greek word 'rhuthmos', from 'rheim' which means to flow. It signifies the measured movement or musical flow of language-consisting of the periodical recurrence of pauses and stresses with a harmonious tone. All languages have the quality of rhythm. There are various degress of formalization of rhythm. Let us say that the ordinary prose of spoken speech has

the least degree of rhythm & strict formal versification contains the highest degree of rhythm. Rhythm is determined by the organization of accented & unaccented syllables & by the pauses that fall within a sentence or line. Metre is the systematization of rhythm in so far as the systematization is determined by the order of stressed and unstressed syllables.

The word Metre comes from Greek "Metron" which means a measure. In Verse, it means the systematization of rhythm. This systematization is determined by the relationships between stressed and unstressed syllables. You already know, from your study of phonetics, that words consist of one or more than one syllables. In English words, one syllable receives the stress & in a polysyllabic word another syllable may receive a secondary stress. A poet uses the natural rhythms that already exist in a language due to the patterning of stressed and unstressed syllables and organizes the rhythms in an artificial pattern in order to amplify or focus on sense, mood & meaning. Metre is a rhythm chosen by the poet, which he repeats and uses consistenty over the length of a stanza or a complete poem.

There are various units of metre that a poet may use. Each individual unit or collection of stressed & unstressed syllables is called a **foot**. When you read a poem to see if it is written in metre, & find out what the metre is, the process is called **scanning** a poem.

Rhythm and metre are closely related. But there is a significant difference between them. Regularity of time intervals is the essential part of rhythm. When a sentence in prose is so constructed that the syllables on which we stress in reading occur in equal intervals of time, the sentence is rhythmical. Between two stressed syllables, in the same sentence, there are sometimes two unstressed syllables, sometimes only one, and sometimes three. On the other hand, in metre, the number of syllables is measured with arithmetical exactness and it becomes a feature of composition in verse.

4.3.4 Syllables

Before we go to further discussion of metres, we would like to give you a brief reminder of the form of syllables in English.

A syllable is a combination of consonant & vowel sounds that can be pronounced

at a time at a single effort of the voice. It contains only one vowel sound, irrespective of the number of vowel letters it may contain. It may be accented or unaccented.

'Peak', 'are', 'were', 'tooth', 'foot', 'goal', 'nice', 'tide', 'thine' have more than one vowel in each case but there is only one vowel sound in each of them. You will find this out if you do a phonetic transcription of them as you have been taught to do.

4.3.5 Metrical foot

Each regular group of stressed and unstressed syllables in metrical verse is known as a foot. A metrical foot may consist of two or three syllables, combining one stressed & one or more unstressed syllables. There are however a few exceptions.

So, a foot is composed of two or three syllables, not more than three or less than two syllables, with one accented syllable. If there is one syllable in a foot and it is stressed, we may take it as an exceptional case.

We give below the terms for different types of foot.

A foot of two syllables is called a **disyllabic foot** and a foot of three syllables is called a **trisyllabic foot.**

We have to keep in mind the following rules.

1. In di-syllabic foot, generally only one syllable is stressed, and the other is unstressed.
2. In some exceptional cases, both syllables may be stressed and sometimes both syllabes may unstressed.
3. But in case of a tri-syllabic foot, only one syllable is stressed and it may occur in the beginning, the middle or at the end.

The following types of feet will describe most metrical of varieties in English verse. We use some signs to indicate whether a syllable is stressed or unstressed.

Note the symbols.

4.3.5.1 Di-syllabic Feet : ắ voīd/ ắ voīd (The sign/or—marks the stressed syllable. The sign ⏑ marks the unstressed syllable)

In a di-syllabic foot usually only one syllable is stressed, but sometimes both

syllables are stressed or both unstressed. The patterning may occur in four ways.

These varieties of feet have particular names—

(i) When the first syllable is stressed and second is unstressed, it is called **Trochee**.

(ii) When the first syllable is unstressed and the second is stressed, it is called **an Iamb.**

(iii) When both the syllables are stressed, the foot is **Spondee**.

(iv) When both the syllables are unstressed, the foot is **Pyrrhic**.

The Disyllabic feet at a glance are :

Regular	Trochee →	— (stressed)	∪ (unstressed)
	Iamb →	∪ (unstressed)	— (stressed)
Variations	Spondee →	— (stressed)	— (stressed)
	Pyrrhic →	∪ (unstressed)	∪ (unstressed)

See the examples :

1) Hópeis / bán -ished
Jóys are / ván -ished

It is Trochaic metre. Here in each foot the first syllables are stressed and the second syllables are unstressed.

2) Fŏr thém / nŏ móre / the blaz /-ing heárth / shăll búrn

This is Iambic. Here the first syllables of all the feet are unstressed and the second syllables of all the feet are stressed.

3) Fŏr thĕe / deár Gód / whŏo lóv- / eth ús,

Hĕ máde / and lóv/eth ăll.

Here the first foot of the first line is **Pyrrhic** and the second foot of the first line is a **spondec.**

Now let us discuss the varieties of Trisyllabic Feet.

4.3.5.2 Tri-syllabic Feet : If a foot has three syllables, there can be only one stressed syllable. The other two syllables are unstressed. So tri-syllabic feet may be of three types.

(i) When the first syllable is stressed, the other two syllables are unstressed, it is called a **Dactyl**. — ⏑ ⏑

(ii) When the second syllable is stressed and first and third syllables are unstressed it is called **Amphibrach.** ⏑ — ⏑

(iii) When the last syllable is stressed and the first and the second syllables are unstressed, it is called **Anapaest.** ⏑ ⏑ —

The Tri-syllabic feet at a glance—

(i)	→ Dactyl →	— (stressed)	∪ (unstressed	∪ (unstressed)
(ii)	→ Amphibrach+	∪ (unstressed)	— (stressed)	∪ (unstressed)
(iii)	Anapaest →	∪ (unstressed)	∪ unstressed)	— (stressed)

Examples :

i) Dactyl :

Cóld iš thў / heárt, ańd iš / frózĕn ăs / Ch́ar - ĭ - ty!

Cóld ańe thў / ch́il – drĕn,– nŏw / Ǵod bĕ thў / cóm - for - tĕr.

— Southey

Here only the first syllable of every foot is stressed and others are unstressed.

ii) Amphibrach :

Thĕ fĺesh wăs / ă píc – tuŕe / fŏr páint – ĕars / t́o st́udў

Thў fát wăs / šo wh́ite, ańd / thў leán wăs / šo rúd - dў

—Goldsmith.

Here you can see that the middle syllable of every foot is stressed and first and last syllables are unstressed.

iii) Anapaest :

Lĭke ă chíld / frŏm thĕ wómb, / lĭkĕ ă ghóst / frŏm thĕ tómb.

—Shelley

In each foot the last syllable is stressed and the first and second syllables are unstressed.

We have to remember that trisyllabic metres may occur in disyllabic verses as variations. For example,

i) Dactylic variations are found in trochaic lines because both the dactyl and the trochee begin with a stressed syllable.

ii) Amphibrachic variations occur mainly in iambic lines because the amphibrach and the iamb begin with an unstressed syllable.

iii) Anapaestic variations, also, occur in iambic lines because both anapaest and the iamb begin with an unstressed syllable.

See the examples of variations.

i) **Dactyl Variation :**

Guárd - ĭ - ăn / án - ĕls / ó pŏ́ro / téct hĕr.

ii) **Amphibrachic variation :**

Mŏst friénd - shĭp / iš feígn - iňg

Mŏst lóv - iňg / mĕre fóll - ў

Thĕn héigh - hŏ / thĕ hóll - ў,

Thĕ lífe / ĭs móst / jó / ĭly

iii) **Anapaest variation :**

Lĭke ă swárm / ŏf gól - /dĕn beés.

4.3.5.3 Number of feet in a line :

The next stage of scanning a poem is to decide how many feet are being used in a line.

The terms are :

i) monometer : one foot per line

ii) dimeter : two feet per line

iii) trimeter : three feet per line

iv) tetrameter : four feet per line

v) pentameter : five feet per line

vi) hexameter : six feet per line

vii) heptameter : seven feet per line

viii) Octameter : eight feet per line

When describing the metre of a poem, start with the description of the foot used, then say how many are there in a line. So you should say 'iambic pentameter' or 'trochaic tetrameter' for example.

Some more examples :

Di-syllabic feet

Fŏr thém/ňo móre/thĕe bláz/iňg heárth/shăll bŭrn.

r bú-/sў hóuse/wĭfe pĺy/hĕr evé/-nĭng cáre.

Ňo chíl/-drĕn rún/tŏ liśp/thĕir síres/ře-túrn,

Oř climb/hĭs knées/thĕe én/-vĭed kíss/tŏ sháre.

This stanza is written in Iambic pentameter without any variation.

Trisyllabic feet

Nŏt ă drúm/wăs heárd/nŏt ă fú/ - nĕr - ăl nóte

Ăs hĭs córpse/tŏ thĕe rám/ - părts ŵe húr/rĭed;

Nŏt ă sól/ - dĭer dĭs - chárged/hĭs fáre/ - wĕll shót

O'ĕr thĕe gráve/whĕre oŭr hé/ - rŏ ŵe bú/ - riĕd

This is written in Anapaestic tetrameter with several variations—

i) The second foot of the first line is iambic

ii) The last two feet of the third line are iambic

iii) The second and the fourth lines are hypermetrical.

(See explanation of 'hypermetrical later)

4.3.6 Metrical Variations

You have learnt the pattern of the regular metres. Poets also use some variant patterns. We shall try to give you some idea of such variations. Sometimes it is found that at the end of a trochaic line or in the beginning of an imabic line, there may be one stressed syllable, without an unaccented one before or after, to complete the foot. Sometimes, at the end of an imabic line, there is one extra unstressed syllable. Such variations have been described below for you.

i. Catalectic : When at the end of a trochaic line, only one accented syllable remains and it is supposed that an unaccented syllable is dropped, such a foot is called a catalectic foot. (Catalectic means stopping short).

Example :

Áll the͡e / jóys thăt / bléss the͡e
Swéet - eř / fár măy / bé

These lines are written in trochaic trimeter with a **catalectic** variation in the **last foot** of the **last line.** So we shall describe the second line as a trochaic catalectic line.

ii. Acephalous : When in the beginning of an imabic line, there is only an accented syllable and it is supposed that an unaccented syllable is dropped, such a foot is called an acephalous. (acephalous means headless)

Example :

Thěy pássed / the͡ háll / thăt é / chŏes stíll
Páss / ăs líght/ - lў ás / yŏu ẃill

These lines are written in Imabic tetrameter with an **acephalous variation** in the first foot of the last line. So we shall describe the second line as an imabic acephalous line.

iii. Hypermetrical : When at the end of an imabic line, there is only one unaccented syllable and it is supposed that the syllable is extra, this incomplete foot is called extra-metrical or hypermetrical.

Example :

Ah͡ hápp/ - y̆ hápp/y boúghts!/thăt cán / nŏt shéd
Youŭr léaves, /nŏr é/vĕr bíd / th͡e sprĭng/ă - díeu
Ănd hápp/ý mé/lŏ dist/ŭn - wéar/ - iĕd
Fŏr é/ - vĕr piṕ/ - iĭng śongs/fŏr - é - /vĕr néw

The stanza is written in Imabic pentameter. But the third line is written in Imabic tetrameter. This line is written with **hypermetrical variation.**

4.3.7 Scansion

Scansion : The word 'Scansion', comes from latin 'Scansio' verb 'scandere' which means 'I climb'. It means the dividing of a verse into the measures of which it is composed. Scansion consists in showing the rhythm and metre of lines of poetry. For you, the students, it is a test of whether you have understood well the rules and regulations of Prosody and also the formal rules of verse making.

While scanning, you must keep it in your mind that the number of measures in a verse depends on the number of accents in it and not on the number of syllables. In the preface to his poem, 'Christabel", Coleridge says—"Count the accents, ignore the number of syllables." Here lies the principle of Scansion.

Scansion deals with finding out the nature and number of feet, rhythmic and syllabic. It is the study of the rhythm of verse.

To scan a poem, read it as naturally as you can and mark down which syllables you are stressing as you read it. For your first practices pencil in the stress marks. Please remember, for words of more than one syllable you cannot change the natural stress pattern of the word. Then mark down the unstressed syllables. We have already given you the signs for stressed and unstressed syllables.

Next, see what type of foot the poet is using and put a diagonal line (/) between each separate foot. Count the number of feet and you have the metre.

If there are variations, mention them, with reference to the line where the variation occurs.

The steps at a glance :

1) Read the poem naturally.

2) Mark the stressed syllables first & then the unstressed syllables.

3) Find the foot used & put a diagonal line between the feet.

4) Count the feet to see if it is dimeter, Trimeter, Tetrameter etc.

5) Point out variations (if any).

4.3.7.1 How are the metres chosen?

It is a matter of the poet's preference or decision. The poets choose the metre or the metrical variation according to the effects they want to create. Nevertheless, there are some traditional ideas regarding choice of metre.

1) Iambic is the most commonly used metre in English poetry and it is manly used in narrative and descriptive poems.

2) All sonnets are written in iambic pentameter.

3) Trochaic metre is generally used for humourous or devotional poems.

4) A trochaic line may have iambs and dactyls as variations.

Let us see one example—

"The Curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me."

So the first thing you have to keep in mind is to divide the syllables. The pattern should be thus—

The Cur-few tolls the knell of part-ing day,
The low-ing herd wind slow-ly o'er the lea,
The plough-man home-ward plods his wea-ry way
And leaves the world to dark-ness and to me.

We have got the disyllabic words—Curfew, parting, lowing, slowing, ploughman, homeward, weary and darkness.

There is no tri-syllabic word. There is an elision in o'er

After dividing the words into syllables, we have to read it properly and carefully and the stressed syllables should be marked distinctly on the vowels as shown below. After marking the stressed syllables, put the mark on the unstressed syllables

Thĕ Cúr - fẽw tólls thĕ knéll ŏf párt - iňg dáy,
Thĕ lów - iňg hérd wĭnd slów - lў o'ĕr the léa,
Thĕ ploúgh - măn hóme - wărd plóds hĭs wéa - rў wáy.
Aňd léaves thĕ wórld tŏ dárk - nĕss ánd tŏ mé.

Next you find the foot used. Here the total number of syllables is ten in each line. A correct reading would show you that the syllables fall in groups of two. So It is written in di-syllabic feet. Each line has five feet, so it is a pentameter poem. The patterning—unstressed syllable followed by stressed syllable shows it is iambic.

Thĕ Cúr/fẽw tólls / thĕ knell / ŏf párt / - iňg dáy,
Thĕ lów / - iňg hérd / - wĭnd slów / - lў o'ĕr / the leá,
Thĕ plóugh / - măn hóme - /wărd plóds / hĭs wéa / - rў wáy.
Aňd léaves / thĕ wórld / tŏ dárk / - nĕss ánd / tŏ mé.

This stanza is written in Iambic pentametre.

4.3.8 Some Examples :

1. Fŏr thém/ño móre/thĕ bláz/iňg heárth/shăll búrn,
Oŕ bú/šy houśe/wĭfe ply/hĕr éve/lniňg cáre.
Nŏ chíl/ - drĕn rún/tŏ lisp/thĕir siŕes/rĕ - túrn,
Oŕ climb/hĭs knéss/thĕ én - /viĕd kiss/to sháre.

—Gray

This stanza is written in Iambic pentameter without any variation.

2. Not ă drúm/wăs heárd/nŏt ă fú/nĕr/ăl nóte,
Aš his córpse/tŏ the rám/ - părts wĕ húr/ - riĕd;
Not ă sól/ - dier dis - chárged/his fáre/wĕll shót
O'ĕr thĕ gráve/whĕre oŭr he/rŏ wĕ bú/riĕd

This stanza is written in Anapaestic tetrameter with several variations. The variations are as follows—

i) The second foot of the first line is Iambic.
ii) The last two feet of the third line are written in Iambic metre.
iii) The second and the fourth lines have an extra unstressed syllable so they are hypermetrical.

3. Ă voíce/sŏ thrílll/ - iŋg ne'ér/wăs heárd
Iñ spríng/ - timĕ fróm/thĕ cú/ckoŏ bírd
Bréak - iŋg/the sí/ - leñce óf/ the séas.
Ă - móng/the fár/thĕst Héb/ri - deš.

—Wordsworth

This stanza is written in Iambic tetrameter with some variations. The first foot of the third line is a **trochee.** The last foot of the fourth line is pyrrhie.

4. The boást/ŏf hér/ - ald - rў, /the pómp/ŏf powé(e)r
Añd áll/thăt beaú/tў áll/thăt weálth/e'ĕr gáve,
Ăwáits/ălike/th inév/i tăble houŕ.
The páths/of gló/ry léad/bŭt tŏ/the gráve.

—Gray

This stanza is written in Iambic pentameter with several variations. The variations are as follows—

i) The fourth foot of the third line is Pyrrhic.
ii) The fourth foot of the last line is also pyrrhic.

5. Thĕ dĕ - sire/ŏf thĕ móth/fŏr thĕ star,
Of thĕ night/fŏr thĕ mo/ - rrow,

Thĕ dĕ - vó/ - tiŏn tŏ sóme/thĭng ă - fár,
From thĕ sphere/ŏf oŭr so/rrow.

—Shelley

This stanza is written in anapaestic trimeter with several variations. The variations are—

i) The second line is hypermetrical.

ii) The last line is also hypemetrical.

4.3.9 Exercises

Scan the following extracts and give the prosodiac name and mention the variations if any.

1. Tell me not in mournful numbers
Life is but an empty dream.
For the soul is dead that slumbers.
And things are not what they seem.

—Longfellow

2. Her life is a revolving dream
Of languid and sequestered ease;
Her girdles and her fillets gleam
Like changing fires on sunset seas;

—Sorojini Naidu

3. Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear

Full many a flower is born to blush unseen
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

—Gray

4. Thy golden light came down into my heart
Smiting my life with thy eternity;
Now has it grown a temple where thou art
And all its passions point towards only thee.

—Aurobindo Ghosh

5. Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever will thou love and she be fair.

—Keats

6. Behold her single in the field
Yon solotary Highland lass
Reaping and singing by herself
Stop here, or gently pass.

—Wordsworth

7. He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us
He made and loveth all.

—Coleridge

8. Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last grey hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin and dies;

Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden eyed despairs.

—Keats

9. An aged man is but a paltry things,
A tattered cloth upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sings and louder sing
For every tatter in its mortal dress.

—Yeats

10. Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds.
Or bends with the remover to remove.

—Shakespeare

11. The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks :
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep
Moans round with many voices; come my friends
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.

—Tennyson

12. Stars, hide your fires.
Let not light see my black and deep desires.
The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be
Which the eye fears when it is done to see.

—Shakespeare

13. We look before and after
And pine for what is not
Owe sincerest laughter

With some pain is fraught
Owe sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

—Shelley

14. The ancient pulse of germ and birth
Was shrunken hard and dry
And every spirit upon earth
Seemed fervourless as I.

—Hardy

15. Much have I travelled in the realms of gold
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.

—Keats

4.3.9 Bibliography

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* H.G. Widdowson (1975) : Stylistics and the teaching of Literature, Longman.
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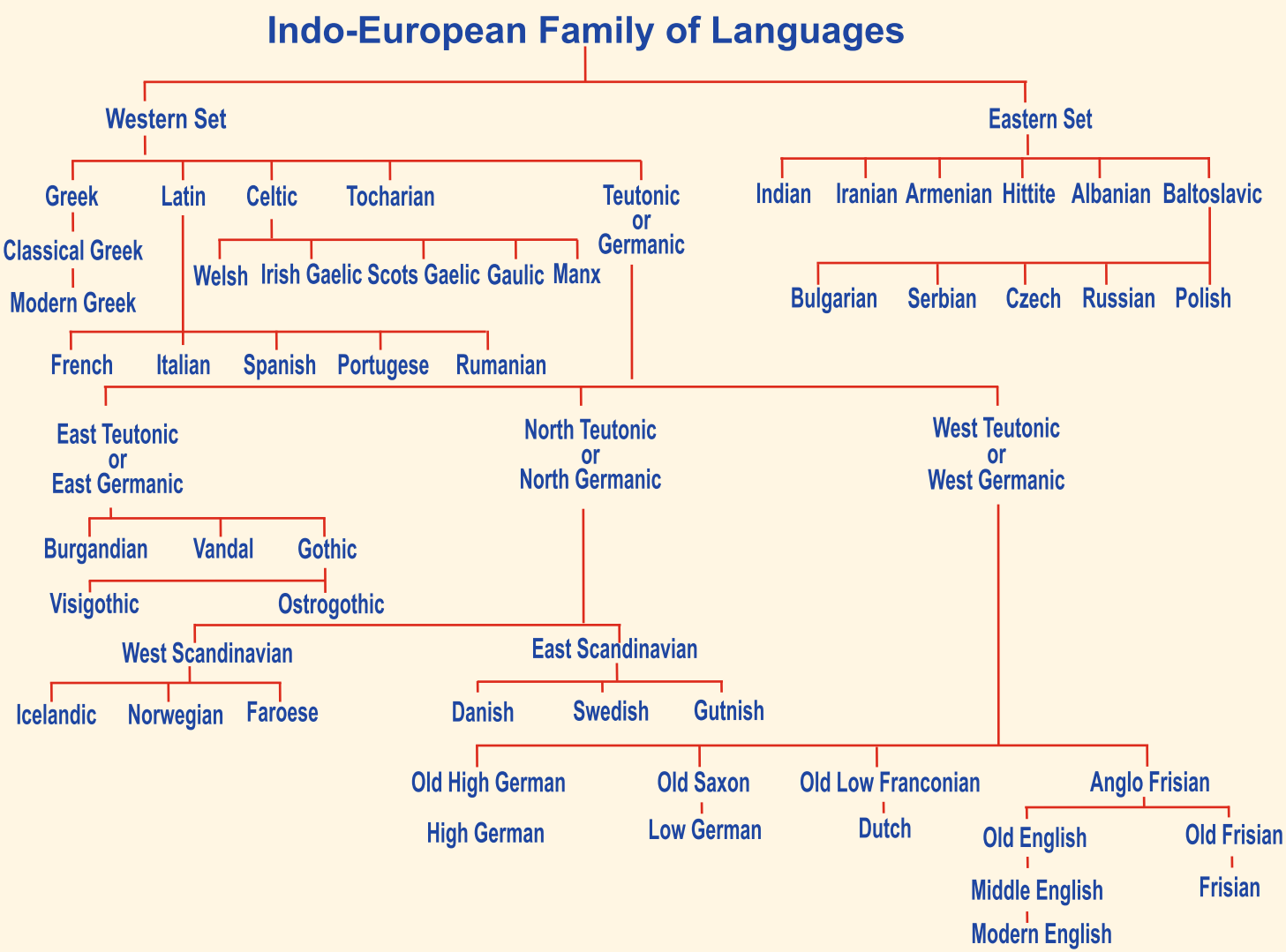
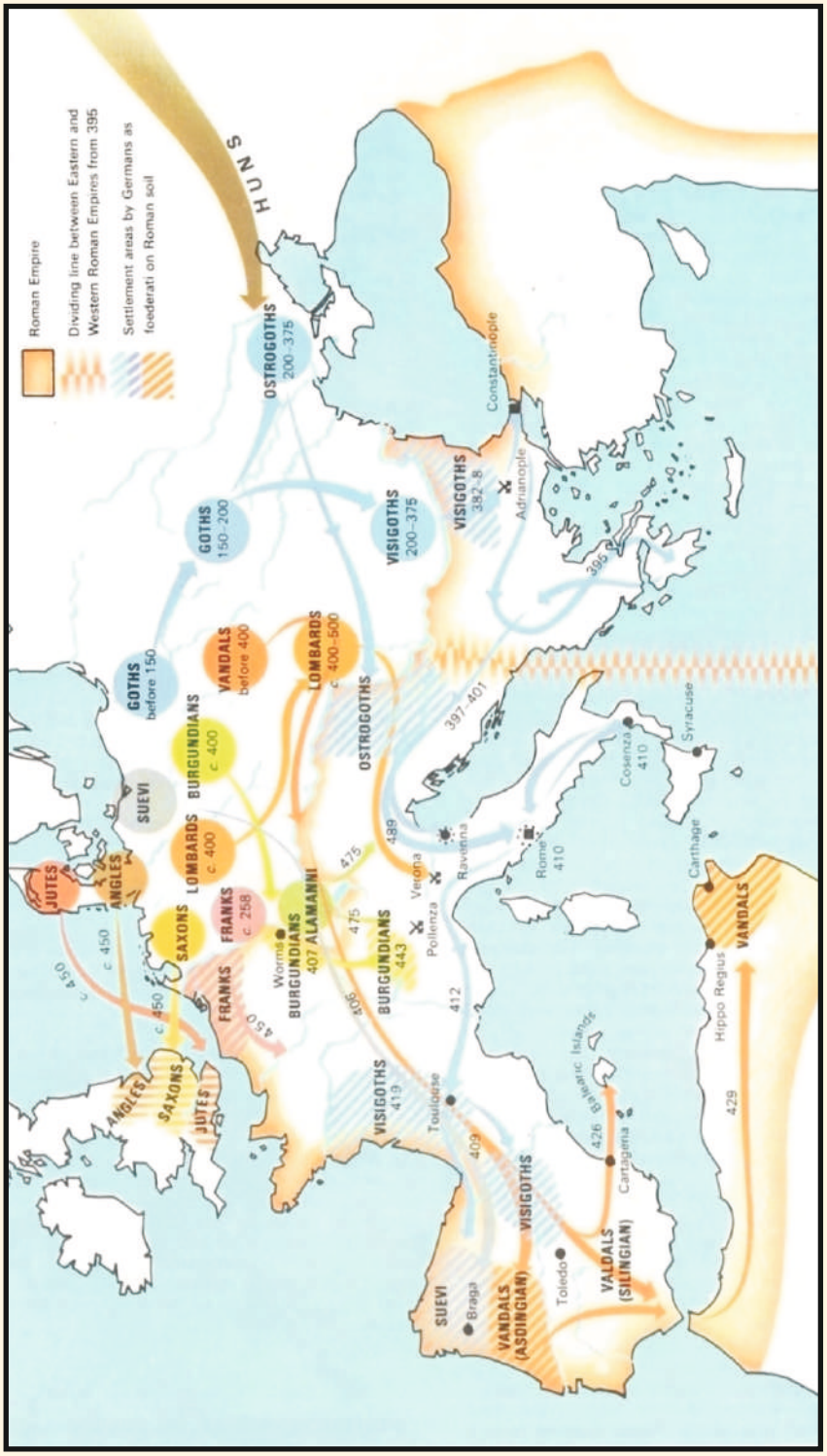

Indo-European Family of Languages
Western Set
Eastern Set
Greek
Latin
Celtic
Tocharian
Teutonic or Germanic
Indian
Iranian
Armenian
Hittite
Albanian
Baltoslavic
Classical Greek
Modern Greek
Welsh
Irish Gaelic
Scots Gaelic
Gaulic
Manx
Bulgarian
Serbian
Czech
Russian
Polish
French
Italian
Spanish
Portugese
Rumanian
East Teutonic or East Germanic
North Teutonic or North Germanic
West Teutonic or West Germanic
Burgandian
Vandal
Gothic
Visigothic
Ostrogothic
West Scandinavian
East Scandinavian
Icelandic
Norwegian
Faroese
Danish
Swedish
Gutnish
Old High German
High German
Old Saxon
Low German
Old Low Franconian
Dutch
Anglo Frisian
Old English
Middle English
Modern English
Old Frisian
Frisian

Plate-1

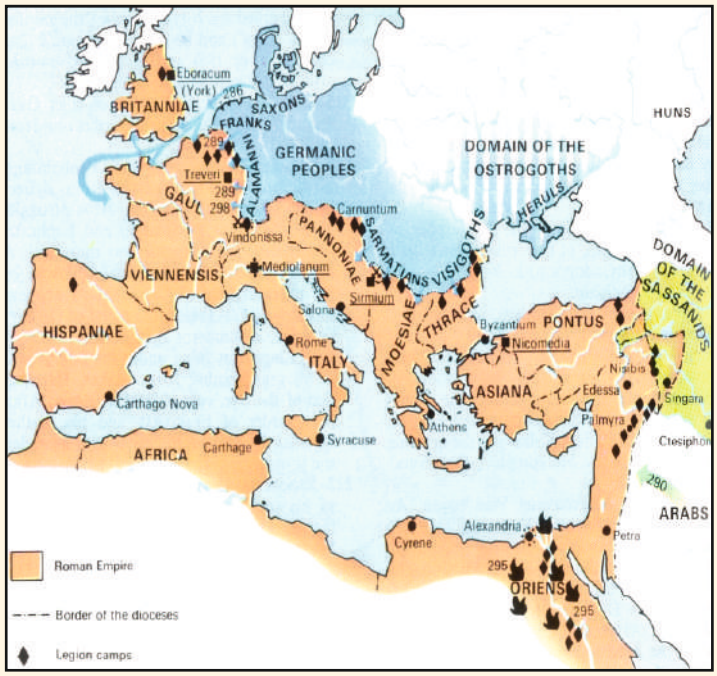


Migrations and areas of settlement of Germanic tribes, 4th and 5th cents.

Plate-2

The Roman Empire in the 3rd cent.

The Roman Empire in the 3rd cent.

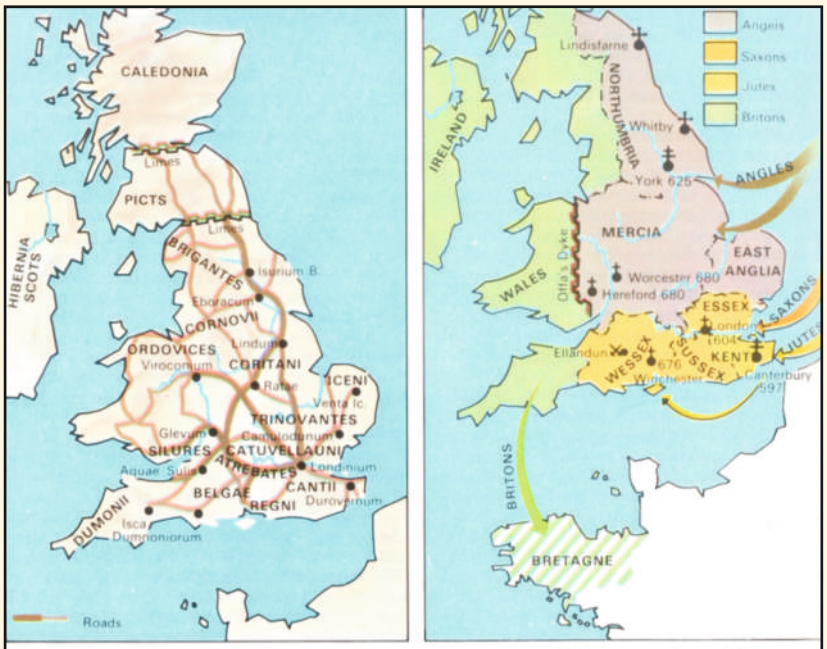


The Roman Empire under Diocletian

Plate-3

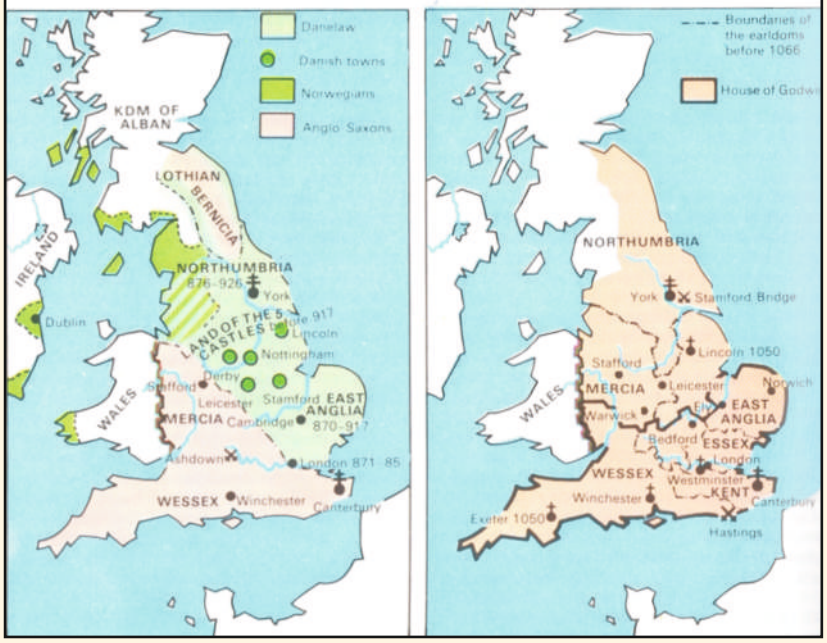
Areas of settlement and origin of the Germanic tribes in Central Europe

Plate-4



England in the Roman period

The conquest of Jutes, Angles and Saxons



The Anglo-Saxon struggle against the Danes England, c. 1066 and Norwegians in the 9th cent.

Plate-5

Norman campaigns in the 8th, 9th and 10th cents.

States established in Europe by the Normans

Plate-6

Timeline Chart-I

Date	Major historical events	Date	Major literary figures and their works
450	Traditional date of the coming of the Saxons to England		
597	St Augustine's mission arrives in Kent		
731		**731**	Bede (673-735), Ecclesiastical History of the English People
793	First Viking raid		
871	Alfred becomes King of Wessex. He dies in 899.		
991	The Battle of Maldon fought between the Essex nobleman, Byrhtnoth, and the raiding party of the Vikings. The heroic poem based on this war was written around 1000.		
992		**992**	Aelfric, Catholic Homilies c. 1000 The four surviving manuscripts of Anglo-Saxon poetry: Vercelli, Exeter, Caedmon, and Beowulf MSS.
1042	Accession of Edward the Confessor. He dies in 1066.		The effect of Norman Conquest was also felt in architecture. Vast Romanesque buildings, notably the new cathedrals at Canterbury (begun in 1070), Ely (begun in 1083), London (begun in 1087) and Durham (begun in 1093), Canterbury (after its part was burnt in 1174), and so on.
1066	Harold succeeds Edward the Confessor but is deposed by William of Normandy in the Battle of Hastings. William of Normandy takes the name of William I (popularly known as William the Conqueror) and		

	ascends the throne of England. This event is also known as the Norman conquest. The effect of Norman Conquest was also felt in architecture. Vast Romanesque buildings, notably the new cathedrals at Canterbury (begun in 1070), Ely (begun in 1083), London (begun in 1087) and Durham (begun in 1093), Canterbury (after its part was burnt in 1174), and so on.		
1086		**1086**	Domesday Book, a manuscript prepared by William the Conqueror that contained the records of the survey of the settlements and taxes in England and Wales under the rule of Edward the Confessor.
1087	William I died. England by this time had an ordered feudal system reinforced by a powerful Norman aristocracy and Church. William II ascends the throne. He was popularly known as William Rufus. He reigns till 1100.		
1100	Henry I ascends the throne. He reigns till 1135		
1135	Stephen, the last king of the House of Normandy (which begins with William the		

	Conqueror), ascends the throne. He dies in 1154.		
1138		**1138**	Geoffrey of Monmouth, Historia Regum Britanniae. His work influenced later day Anglo-Norman poets like Geoffrey Gaimar, Wace and Layamon.
1154	The first king of Plantagenet dynasty, Henry II ascends the throne. He was instrumental behind the murder of St Thomas Becket (c.1118-70), the Archbishop of Canterbury. He reigns till 1189. He was succeeded by Richard I (Richard, Coeur de Lion) who dies in 1199.		
1170		**1170**	Poema Morale written by an unknown preacher in South-Eastern dialect.
1199	King John ascends the throne.		
1200		**1200**	The Owl and the Nightingale, written by an anonymous author. **Orm, Ormulum** **Layamon, Brut**
1215	Magna Carta		
1216	Henry III ascends the throne. He reigns till 1272.		
1220		**1220**	Ancrene Riwle, the anonymous monastic manual for the anchoresses.

1225		**1225**	King Horn, a chivalric romance and considered to be a part of the Matter of England. Anonymous origin.
1272	Edward I, also known as the Hammer of the Scots becomes the ruler. He dies in 1307.		
1275		**1275**	Guillame de Lorris, Roman de la Rose
1303	Robert Mannyng of Brunne, Handlyng Synne	**1303**	Robert Mannyng of Brunne, Handlyng Synne
1307	Edward II ascends the throne of England. He was not a very popular ruler and was murdered in 1327. His life inspired Christopher Marlowe to write the well-known historical play Edward II.		
1314	Battle of Bannockburn, the first war of Scottish independence, in which the English king Edward II lost to the army of Robert Bruce.		
1320		**1320**	Cursor Mundi, universal history, written in Northumbrian dialect by an unknown cleric.
1327	Edward III also known as Edward of Windsor ascends the throne. He reigns for next 50 years. His eldest son Edward, the Black Prince was renowned for his military exploits.		

1337	Beginnings of the Hundred Years War.		
1343		**1343**	Birth of Chaucer, one of the most celebrated poets in English literature. His major works can be divided into three groups: (i) lyrical and allegorical poems-Boke of Blaunche the Duchesse, Parlement of Foules, Hous of Fame, Legende of Good Women; (ii) under Italian influence-Knight's Tale, Troilus and Cryseyde; (iii) The Canterbury Tales
1348	Black Death in England		
1377	Richard II ascends the throne at the age of ten, after the death of Edward III. He was courageous but unbalanced. He sought to bring an end to the Hundred Years' war. He was murdered in 1399. He was the last king of the Plantagenet House. 1377 Langland (c. 1330-c.1400), Piers Plowman. According to many historians the text has three versions: first written around 1362, the second around 1377 and the third around 1398.	**1377**	Langland (c. 1330-c.1400), Piers Plowman. According to many historians the text has three versions: first written around 1362, the second around 1377 and the third around 1398.
1381	The Peasants' Revolt		

1382		**1382**	Wycliffe (1324-84) completed his translation of the Vulgate into vernacular English. This is known as Wycliffe's Bible.
1390		**1390**	Gower, Confessio Amantis
1399	Accession of Henry IV (Bolingbroke), first king of the House of Lancaster. He was also the first king to address the Parliament in English.		
1400		**1400**	Sole surviving manuscript of Sir Gawain and the Greene Knight, Pearl, Patience and Cleanness
1411		**1411**	Hoccleve, The Regiment of Princes
1413	Henry V ascends the throne after the death of Henry IV. He rules till 1422.		
1422	Henry VI, the last ruler of Lancaster house becomes the ruler. He was the founder of the famous Eton College. He was murdered in 1461.		
1453	Fall of Constantinople (currently known as Istanbul, a famous city in Turkey), the Eastern capital of the Roman Empire. The city was captured by the Ottoman Turks. This historical event signals the beginning of the Renaissance in Europe.		