PREFACE

In the curricular structure introduced by this University for students of Bachelors Degree Programme, the opportunity to pursue Honours course in any subject introduced by this University is equally available to all learners. Instead of being guided by any presumption about ability level, 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 Honours 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 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 they 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.

Professor (Dr.) Subha Sankar Sarkar
Vice-Chancellor

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বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মঞ্জুরি কমিশনের দূরশিক্ষা ব্যুরোর বিধি অনুযায়ী মুদ্রিত।
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BACHELORS DEGREE PROGRAMME : ENGLISH

[BDP: EEG]

New Syllabus effective from July 2015 Session

EEG : Paper - II

Course Writers:

Module 1

Unit 1 Kushal Andrews Biswas
Unit 2 Anindita Halder
Unit 3 Devalina Gopalan

Module 2

Unit 1 Anindita Halder
Unit 2 Pritha Banerjee
Unit 3 Kushal Andrews Biswas

Module 3

Unit 1 Pritha Banerjee
Unit 2 Ajanta Paul
Unit 3 Srideep Mukherjee

Module 4

Unit 1 Devalina Gopalan
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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 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 on 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 16th April, 2014

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

Paper Editor's Introduction to Paper II

Dear Learners,

Having completed the four Modules of Paper I you are surely more confident about continuing with the other papers of the Elective English Course of the Bachelor's Degree Programme under Netaji Subhas Open University. It is our pleasure to guide you through Paper II, that is, the period of time in the history of English literature dealing with the two major movements, the Renaissance and the Reformation.

Beginning in Module I with a broad outline of the impact of the Renaissance and the Reformation on English literature we have sought to acquaint you, in the following Modules with some of the best known poems, prose-pieces and plays of the period with accompanying commentaries which have been designed for easy comprehension by you.

While Module II deals with poetry, Module III takes up prose pieces and Module IV addresses drama. An attempt has been made to maintain parity between the different Modules in terms of focus and arrangement of the matter so that you do not have to encounter the difficulties of uneven treatment of the materials.

The timeline chart will help you with a ready reckoning of major historical events of the times enabling you to link the same with contemporary writers and their works. The part of the Study Materials devoted to questions is expected to familiarize you with the pattern of questions that are generally set for the Term End and Assignment Examinations.

The distribution of marks will be according to the following pattern:

a) 20x2 Questions (Out of a choice of 6 questions)
b) 12x3 Questions (out of a choice of 8 questions)
c) 6x4 Questions (out of a choice of 8 questions)

We suggest, at this point, that you may regard the Study Materials that we have prepared for Paper II as an introduction to the subjects addressed which must be studied in conjunction with the interaction that you are expected to share in the Personal Contact Programmes (PCPs), and with a reference to, at least, some of the books recommended for further reading.

We conclude by hoping that you will find the materials prepared by us to be useful, and wishing you every success in your endeavour to earn a Bachelor's Degree through the mode of distance learning.

16th April 2014 Editor
Kolkata

SYLLABUS

EEG 2 : The Renaissance and the Reformation

Module 1 – Renaissance and Reformation: The Manifold Perspectives

Unit 1 – Impact of the Renaissance and the Reformation
Unit 2 – Developments in Poetry and Prose
Unit 3 – Developments in Drama

Module 2 – Reading Poetry

Unit 1 – Thomas Wyatt: 'Farewell Love' ; Philip Sidney : 'Loving in Truth'
Unit 2 – Shakespeare: 'Shall I Compare Thee'*;* 'That Time of Year'
Unit 3 – John Donne: 'The Good Morrow'; George Herbert: 'Virtue'; John Milton: 'On His Blindness'

Module 3 – Reading Prose

Unit 1 – Bacon: 'Of Studies'; 'Of Gardens'
Unit 2 – 'Sermon on the Mount'. From the *New Testament Bible, The Authorised Version*
Unit 3 – Philip Sidney: Apologie for Poetry. From *English Critical Texts*, Ed. D.J Enright and Ernst De Chickera. Pp 3 – 6. "Since the authors of ...Poesy therefore is an art of imitation."

Module 4 – Reading Drama

Unit 1 – Marlowe: *Edward II*
Unit 2 – Shakespeare: *Macbeth*
Unit 3 – Shakespeare: *As You Like It*

Netaji Subhas Open University

EEG - 2
Elective Course in English

Module 1

Module 2

Module - I
Renaissance and Reformation : The Manifold Perspectives

Unit-1 ❐ Impact of the Renaissance and the Reformation

Structure

1.1.0 Introduction

You must have heard the terms *Renaissance* and *Reformation*, and perhaps even read something about these movements in your school level study of History or even English literature. Based on what you know already, try and define the two movements, using a sentence for each; then compare your definitions with what is set out below:

(a) …the great flowering of art, architecture, politics and the study of literature, usually seen as the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the modern world,…

(From your reading of Paper 1 you already know which period is referred to as the

Middle Ages in the History of English Literature. So you can well understand what kinds of differences are being suggested from the Middle Ages when we are talking of the 'flowering of art, architecture, politics ….')

(b) …the great religious movement of the 16th cent(ury), aiming to reform the doctrines and practices of the Church of Rome, and ending in the establishment of the various Reformed or Protestant churches…

Both (a) and (b) have been taken from *The Oxford Companion to English Literature, 5th Edition,* edited by Margaret Drabble. Which definition, do you think, refers to which movement? Since each movement is obviously too complex to be defined in a single sentence, more detailed discussions on these will follow in the pages of this unit.

This unit will therefore help you focus on two of the most significant movements in European, as well as English, history: the **Renaissance** and the **Reformation**.

The progress and distinctive features of these two occasionally-overlapping movements will be dwelt upon; as well as their impact on the cultural and social spheres in England.
Finally, we will make a brief survey of the different kinds of literature associated with the two movements.

1.1.1 Brief Histories of The Renaissance and The Reformation

The Renaissance.

The word *renaissance* (sometimes spelt *renascence*) means 'rebirth'. In connection with the history of literature, the term originally refers to the rediscovery, by post-medieval Italian scholars, of ancient Greek and Roman culture and texts. This happened most notably after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, when the sacking of the Roman city by the Turkish invaders caused many scholars to escape to Italy, carrying with them precious manuscripts of classical antiquity. These documents were now available to Italian and other scholars, and led to a renewed interest in the cultural and intellectual ideas of the classical ages. You may refer to the Timeline charts at the end of SLM's for EEG 1 and 2 for more precise details of the happenings of this great period of multiple transitions.

The term has subsequently been used to indicate a time span following the Middle Ages, and to include a number of political, economic and cultural developments in Europe between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. (Some critics believe the movement began even earlier, with Dante and Petrarch in fourteenth-century Italy.) During the Renaissance

Europeans were exposed to ideas of the universe, and the place of human beings in it, that differed from what the medieval Roman Catholic Church (or the Church of Rome) had imposed on them. The medieval worldview laid down by the Church preached that humans should subdue bodily desires and encourage spiritual purity, considering life on earth as merely a preparation for life after death. Instead, the Renaissance worldview believed that human existence on earth itself possessed both value and interest; that there could be a balance between physical and intellectual development; and that human beings might attain and enjoy knowledge and beauty.

The new ideal encouraged individualism in life and art. Other developments in Europe contributed to this as well. These included voyages of discovery; the replacement of the older Ptolemaic system of astronomy by the Copernican theory; increased access to literature following the introduction of printing; decline of the prevailing feudal system, and economic and political changes leading to stirrings of early European nationalism.

The impact of the Renaissance was felt at different times by different European nations. If Italy was one of the earliest to feel the stirrings of the movement, its influence in general spread to the west and north, creating a great impact in countries like France and Spain before eventually reaching England. When the cultural results of the Renaissance began be noticed, therefore, Italy, France and Spain had already begun producing works, and a sense of needing to catch up with them was to energise England and inspire her creative minds, notably writers, to concentrate on the composition of a body of national literature.

Some scholars believe that the crowning of the first Tudor king, Henry VII, in 1485 marks the beginning of the English Renaissance; it is also held by some that the end of the movement coincides with the passing of King James I in 1625.

Activity for the learner

To see and understand for yourselves how widespread the impact of the Renaissance was in contemporary Europe, look up the interactive map by keying in the following link on your internet browser:

http://www.worldology.com/Europe/renaissance_lg.htm

The Reformation

The word *reformation* means the improvement or correction of something that is wrong or corrupt. In *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, M.H. Abrams notes that the Reformation (or, as it is sometimes called, the Protestant Reformation) was a sixteenth-century religious movement developing out of the Renaissance. But it was linked to the very spirit of individual expression and experience, and the resistance to imposed systems and structures, which inspired much of the human activities during the European Renaissance.

The Reformation is commonly considered to have begun with Martin Luther, the German reformer, who in 1517 protested against certain actions and teachings of the powerful Roman Catholic Church, headed by the Pope. There had been, even before Luther, theologians who had observed that the Church was moving away from its originally simple religious objectives. However, Luther's response was inspired by his belief that it was not the prescriptions of the Church, but a person's individual faith and spiritual responses, which brought about his salvation. In that sense Luther's protest may be seen as an assertion of Renaissance individualism, and may be related as well to larger issues of the time, including profound socio-economic changes in Europe and the emergence of new nations.

Luther inspired a number of protests in other European countries, led by personalities such as John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, John Knox and, ultimately, even the English king Henry VIII, against the conduct of the Church and its priests, and the authority of the Pope. The Reformation led to a division in the Christian world, and to the setting up of a number of Protestant or non-Roman-Catholic churches in different European countries, including England, where the breakaway church was known as the Anglican Church (or the Church of England).

If the beginning of the Reformation in Europe can be given a date, its duration is more difficult to fix with certainty, though some historians feel it reached a high point in the mid-seventeenth century. In English history, the movement began when in 1534 King Henry VIII formally announced himself to be the Supreme Head of the English Church. Then followed about one-and-a-half centuries of conflict, with kings owing religious loyalty to either Rome or England, till the Glorious Revolution of 1688 led to the Bill of Rights that claimed, among other things, that Parliament was more powerful than the king, who incidentally could not be a Roman Catholic.

1.1.2 Salient features of the two Movements

The Renaissance and the Reformation proceeded and developed in different ways among the many nations that felt their impact. We take a look here at some of the main features of these movements in Europe, and especially in England.

It is customarily held that the **Renaissance** had begun in Italy by the fifteenth century, if not earlier, and spread through Northern Europe and then England. For various reasons, not the least being its insular geographical position off the north western coast of mainland Europe, England was slow to receive the ideas that were well-established elsewhere. The crowning of the first Tudor king Henry VII in 1485 is sometimes suggested as the beginning of the English Renaissance; England had by that time seen an end to the infighting between feudal groups of aristocrats, and something like a modern state was about to emerge. However, it was only later, during Queen Elizabeth's reign that the movement flourished in England.

The delayed arrival of the Renaissance in England had some specific consequences. Scholars in a number of European countries had been influenced by the Greek and Roman classics, and had even produced their own works inspired by the same by the time the Renaissance came to England. As a result, English scholars could study works produced by continental disciples of the classics, and this was an influence that characterized English literature.

One of the most noteworthy features of the Renaissance was the emergence of Humanism; this was an intellectual movement developed by secular scholars rather than the priestly personages who had dominated learning in medieval times. Briefly, humanism may be defined as a philosophy that emphasizes human interests rather than divine ones, and upholds the dignity of man and the study of human culture. Two of the greatest works of the English Renaissance show, in different ways, the influence of humanistic vision: Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, typically in the utterance beginning "What a piece of work is man!"; and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, notably in Book IV, where Satan spots, among all the creatures in Eden, Adam and Eve, "(t)wo of far nobler shape erect and tall.." This was a distinctly new development from the literature of the earlier periods.

In Europe, the Italian scholar and poet Francesca Petrarch was an early humanist and noteworthy source of inspiration for English writers. A later scholar, the Dutchman Erasmus, is important for students of English literature because of his interactions with early English humanists and educationists, including Sir Thomas More, John Colet and Thomas Linacre.

The Renaissance also brought in a significant modification to the idea of *virtu* or "virtue", which in the Middle Ages signified moral excellence, but in the works of Niccolo Machiavelli and other writers, indicated an amoral ability to act in a decisive way. Machiavelli's *The Prince*, for example, argues that in order to function effectively, a ruler may need to behave in ways that are beyond conventionally-accepted moral codes. Such explorations of Renaissance virtu abound, among others, in the plays of Christopher Marlowe.

Another distinctive characteristic of the Renaissance is the expression of new attitudes to art, architecture and literature, in a period of extraordinary creativity. England's creative genius, when compared to that of, say, Italy, expressed itself more in literature, and less in art and architecture. An abundance of poets, dramatists and prose writers helped in the creation of a rich and complex national literature in England. Its high point would undoubtedly be represented by the brilliance of Elizabethan drama, which you will study in some detail in later units and modules.

In most European countries, the Renaissance was followed by the Reformation, which often developed out of the former movement. In England, however, the events of the Reformation practically coincided with the blossoming of the Renaissance which, as has been noted earlier, came later to the island than elsewhere on the continent.

Unlike the religious nature of the **Reformation** in most European countries, England experienced the movement more as a political phenomenon, a tussle for authority between the Pope and the English ruler, King Henry VIII, who in 1534 snapped all ties with the papacy in Rome, dissolved the English monasteries and took away all their wealth. The immediate provocation was the Pope's refusal to grant the English king a divorce, but behind it lay a long history of English dissatisfaction with the supremacy of the Pope, as was made clear by the considerable popular support that Henry VIII gathered.

As far as religious issues were concerned, the newly- formed Anglican Church (or the Church of England) moved more slowly and carefully than other Protestant institutions in Europe, while bringing about changes. There tended to be an alternation between a following of older Catholic traditions and newer reformed practices, till eventually a middle ground was laid down, which owed something to both traditions.

It is also worth noting that the progress of the English Reformation was not followed in neighbouring Scotland or Ireland, areas related to the English state. In Scotland, the efforts of the priest John Knox resulted in the spread of Calvinism, an extreme Protestant philosophy

deriving from French reformer John Calvin. In contrast, Ireland remained loyal to Roman Catholic principles, which was a cause of bitter and long enmity with England.

To make sure you have grasped what this section has covered, here is a brief check-list of salient features. Go through each, and put REN after each sentence if you think it refers to the Renaissance, and REF if you think it is about the Reformation:

1. **It was the earlier of the two movements to occur in most European countries.**
2. **It was a predominantly religious upheaval.**
3. **A defining characteristic was the idea of humanism**
4. **In England, in connection with this movement, the King ordered that monasteries were to be done away with.**
5. **English scholars were able to study the works of Continental followers of the classics as part of the influence of this movement.**
6. **This phenomenon was also characterized by the emergence of new ideas of art and architecture.**
7. **Calvinism was one of the philosophies related to this movement**

1.1.3 Impact of the Movements on the Culture of England

The Renaissance and the Reformation were bound to affect almost all aspects of life in Europe in general and England in particular. We take a look now at some of the cultural effects of the two movements in England, then go on to survey some of their effects on society:

One way in which the impact of the **Renaissance** was felt by different countries in Europe lay in the **revitalizing of national cultures** following the recovery and translation of classical literature. The process, however, worked a little differently in England. Before English scholars could access the classics, Italian scholars, as well as their French, German, Spanish and Dutch counterparts, had examined them and composed translations and critical responses to them. The English scholars, later, felt the influence of these contemporaries as well as that of the classics. For example, it has been pointed out that Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives* came from a French version rather than the original Greek.

The classical literary works provided the writers of different countries with models to base their own works on, and this aided the rise of several national literatures throughout Europe. Here, too, England figures in the list, but differently. The nation's insular situation ensured a distance from the abundance of foreign literary influences, so that **English literature retained its distinctive vigour** longer, and could utilize native traditions despite the availability of foreign ideals. The literary achievement of Edmund Spenser is a great indicator of this. Moreover, the development of a large body of vernacular literature in other countries inspired nationalistic feelings in English writers and the desire to match them.

The introduction of **printing technologies and movable type** in the fifteenth century, first in Germany by Johannes Gutenberg and then in other countries, including England, further aided the development of national literatures. In England, William Caxton is credited with bringing the first printing press, and with it came mass-production of texts, the first attempts to standardise spelling, and the freer movement of ideas and information. The large number of texts would find a ready market in first the nobility and then the emerging newly literate readership among the middle class.

The humanistic philosophy that characterized the European Renaissance also helped to **revolutionize education**. The schools and colleges that were set up had courses which included Latin and Greek, and ancient philosophies, such as Platonism, which had almost been forgotten, but would from now onward influence thinkers anew. In England, secular scholars who were products of the new education and contributed to popularizing it included Sir Thomas Elyot, Sir John Cheke, Sir Thomas Wilson, John Colet and Roger Ascham.

And now for a look at some of the cultural consequences of the **Reformation.** Among the positive effects would be the **intellectual and cultural developments** over the ages in response to the movement, among both Roman Catholics and Protestants. In this connection, scholars point to the academically strengthened universities of Europe, the Lutheran church music composed by J.S. Bach, or the huge altarpieces of Peter Paul Rubens. In England, an important by-product of the Reformation was the introduction of the *Book of Common Prayer* in 1549, which contained in English, instead of the Latin used earlier, prescribed forms of worship in English churches. It provided a model which was followed, with slight changes, by Protestant churches in other countries.

Closely related to this would be **the emergence, in 1611, of the King James**

Version of the Bible (or the Authorized Version) in England, commissioned by King James I after the Reformation had encouraged, elsewhere in Europe, vernacular translations of the holy book of the Christians. This was to help common people uncomfortable with the Latin that had for long been used in churches; and to make it easier for them to interpret the scriptures in their own way. The King James Version was not the first English translation of the Bible, but it was certainly the most influential, for at least three centuries after its publication.

A major offshoot of the Protestant Reformation was the **Catholic Church's delayed response** to the issues that had contributed to the split in the Christian world. This was known as the Catholic Reformation, and sometimes as the Counter-Reformation. It resulted in the setting up of newer religious orders and the rise of more literate and learned priests, in whom spirituality and intellectual sharpness co-existed. The ideas that inspired these people also influenced some writers, including at least one notable English poet. (He is mentioned in the section titled 'Further Activity'.)

1.1.4 Impact of The Movements on The Society of England

The **Renaissance** broke up feudal societies, in which power was concentrated in the hands of wealthy nobles. In England, as elsewhere, the **new merchant classes** that emerged were no longer dependent on agriculture, but participated in a nationwide movement out of the countryside to towns and cities. They took up a number of urban trades, and developed educational skills. This new class over time gained wealth, influence and power.

Some scholars have theorized that it was this newly-developed **social mobility** that made it possible for people from humble origins to make use of opportunities to grow and prosper. From a literary point of view William Shakespeare — the greatest English dramatist of the age — as well as some of his contemporaries, were products of the new social system.

An important concept that was discussed in the time of the Renaissance concerned governance, and **the effect a ruler had upon society**. That is in fact one of the themes in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, a play you will study in the module on 'Reading Drama'. This theme was relevant to English society, as would be demonstrated in the mid-seventeenth century, when a struggle between Parliament and monarchy led to the execution of the English king Charles I.

An interesting example of how the **new social systems were not without their share of problems** can be seen in the periodic attacks of plague which swept through entire regions in Europe. The widespread movement of people to urban areas, and consequent unplanned growth, meant that towns and cities like London lacked proper facilities to protect the population against the rodents that spread the plague. With each plague outbreak, public areas such as theatres would be closed down.

And now, here are some of the ways in which the **Reformation** affected European and English society:

Since religion was so much a part of people's lives, **the Reformation directly affected practically every European**, and forcing a choice between the existing order and the new one. In many European societies, there was an attempt by the authorities to subdue the protesters by force. In England, the initial division between Roman Catholic and Protestant led to social tensions that increased or decreased under different rulers, but the split was followed by others. For example, the Puritans, with a more rigid set of beliefs, emerged out of the Protestant Church and were in turn repressed till some of them eventually left England for America. Some historians believe that today's fragmented societies were actually born out of this religious conflict.

The movement **led to the establishment of national churches** in different countries, such as the Anglican Church in England, and the Lutheran Church in Germany. These churches interacted with believers to create new social systems as they tried to win mass support as well as government approval. To this end they organized public meetings and discussions, involving the newly emerging social order called the bourgeoisie or middle class, so that the religious experience became to some extent a social one as well.

The Reformation **laid much stress on personal piety, and on a sober, simple and dignified lifestyle**. Many of the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, such as pilgrimages, were no longer insisted upon. The Protestant Reformation also questioned the relevance of certain rituals and practices that were part of a believer's life, right from birth to death, in a social setting. Even later, groups like the Puritans strongly disapproved of the pomp and grandeur in church services; some of these had been taken from Roman Catholic ceremonies.

The Reformation essentially desired that believers should go back to the simpler attitudes and practices of the earlier Christian Church, before these were diluted by Roman Catholicism. However, recent studies are also examining **certain social implications of**

the movement, which **look forward to more modern attitudes**. It is, for example, argued that by challenging the Roman Catholic distinction between priests and lay leaders, or the requirement that priest and nuns should not marry, the Reformation may be said to have attempted a revaluation of the position of these men and women in society.

1.1.5 Literary Genres Associated with the two Movements

A number of literary **genre**s (or types) and writers came to be associated with both the Renaissance and the Reformation, and this is a brief introduction to some of them in England.

The most noteworthy literary achievements were noticeable in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, from the mid-sixteenth century onwards, in the fields of poetry and drama. The Elizabethan period is known as the **golden age of English drama**. Before this era, there was a time when the English theatre prepared for its period of glory, combining earlier traditions with ideas introduced by the Renaissance and the Reformation. Emile Legouis notes that in the early sixteenth century the popular morality plays, usually dramatized forms of moral lessons, gave way to works like John Skelton's *Magnificence*, which examines corruption in court, and John Bale's religious plays influenced by Protestantism. From 1550s onward, classical elements began to enter English **comedy** via plays such as *Ralph Roister Doister*, in which a classical plot is mingled with characters taken from English life. This kind of fusion occurred in much of the comedy that followed: whether by Shakespeare or Jonson, or later, by Dekker, Massinger, Beaumont and Fletcher. As classical and English elements sometimes mingled, so did notions of tragic and comic, and of realism and romance, not least in the works of the age's greatest playwright, Shakespeare. Another kind of mingling – of drama, music and dance; of myth, history and fantasy – was seen in the emergence of the **masque**.

In **tragic drama**, classical elements were noticed in *Gorboduc*, the first English tragedy to be written in the blank verse used later so brilliantly by Shakespeare, Marlowe and others. *Gorboduc* was based on the Senecan model of drama, and subsequent plays using the revenge theme and Senecan elements include Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet***.** Shakespeare's other tragedies, in different ways, explore themes that concerned people in the time of the Renaissance. Coming immediately before Shakespeare as a writer of tragic plays and chronicles, Christopher Marlowe, in *Edward II* and *Dr Faustus*, deals with such issues as the Renaissance notion of individual worth.

Elizabethan tragic drama was also enriched by those dramatists who, with Marlowe, were known as the University Wits. Towards the end of the period came the tragedies of John Webster, who worked with dramatic themes of brooding evil and portrayed strong heroines, characteristics that would gain popularity over time.

Elizabethan **verse**, too, flourished during the English Renaissance. Perhaps the most important poet of his time was Edmund Spenser, whose allegorical romance *The Fairie Queene* was a greatly influential poetic work. Here, as in his adoption of the pastoral form in *The Shepherd's Calendar*, Spenser displays the characteristics of a Renaissance artist influenced by the classics. But his poems are sources of Reformation themes and elements as well. In addition, he is one of the earliest poets to believe in the powers of his native language, and tries to create a body of verse with a distinctive English identity.

The majority of other English poets during the Elizabethan age experimented with a **wide variety of lyric poetry.** Influenced by Italian models, English courtiers Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey popularized a number of lyric forms, which later were used by many important writers of the English Renaissance, including Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, Shakespeare, Michael Drayton and John Donne. All of them figured in the development of the English **sonnet** and the **sonnet sequence**, deriving from Petrarchan love poetry. In addition, Shakespeare excelled at writing long **narrative poems** such as *Venus and Adonis* or *The Rape of Lucrece*, inspired by classical narratives. Among experimenters in other poetic forms, mention may be made of George Gascoigne, credited with writing *The Steele Glass*: the first Eng **verse satire** to be constructed along lines suggested by Italian models. Many of the poets continued their writing careers into the Jacobean period: a time which also witnessed the achievements of the **Metaphysical** poets, and those of the **Cavaliers**.

In **prose**, the literature of the period appeared in the early stages as **translations** of famous works that express the values of the Renaissance: Erasmus's *In Praise of Folly* or More's *Utopia*. Early original compositions were by the English educationists, whose writings constitute a body of English prose of various styles; some like Roger Ascham revealing the influence of Latin; others like Sir John Cheke trying to develop a vigorous native flavour. The **essays** of Francis Bacon, first published at the end of the sixteenth century, soon after those of the Frenchman Montaigne, were important additions to Renaissance English prose of the time. Also written during this period was one of the earliest examples of Eng **critical prose**: Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie*.

During this period the different **Bible translations**, culminating in the Authorized Version, and the Book of Common Prayer contributed to creating a rhythmic prose that influenced

many writers in succeeding ages. **Religious prose** of a different sort can be seen in the collections of sermons by John Donne early in the seventeenth century. Religion mixes with science, philosophy and other branches of learning in the prose of Robert Burton and Thomas Browne.

Towards the end of the age being studied here came the works of John Milton. He, perhaps more than any other writer of this era, was equally a product of the Renaissance and the Reformation. In English literature courses it is mainly his poetry that is studied, and he has been referred to as the greatest non-dramatic poet in English. His poetic compositions include **epics**, **elegies**, **sonnets**, **odes** and **masque**, as well as verse paraphrases of the Biblical psalms. However, in a career dedicated to literature, he tried his hand at a variety of literary types, including a staggering amount of prose; and towards the end of his writing career created *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes*, works inspired by two of the most respected of literary forms in classical ages: the **epic** and **tragic drama**. Whether in his poetry or his prose, he for the most part displayed a preoccupation with issues that assumed great importance during both the Renaissance and the Reformation. These included considerations of political, personal and religious liberty and questions of choice and rule.

1.1.6 Summing Up

Here are a few points concerning what this unit/section has covered. Included is **one observation that is NOT true**. Strike out the incorrect one, and you will be left with a concise summing-up.

- Both the Renaissance and the Reformation believed in the expression of individual belief and experience.
- The Renaissance occurred throughout Europe, but its influence was felt in England later than in some other countries, such as Italy.
- In England the Renaissance was mainly a literary one.
- The Reformation, even more than the Renaissance, affected all levels of society.
- In most countries the Renaissance followed the Reformation.
- John Milton's writings provide a good example of the European literary traditions being influenced by both the Renaissance and the Reformation

1.1.7 Comprehension Exercises

1. **Essay type**: [20 marks]

a) Attempt an estimate of the progress and impact of the Renaissance on the culture and society of the English people.

b) Examine the distinctive features of the English Reformation and consider its consequences.

c) Mention some of the literary genres that flourished during the English Renaissance and Reformation, and identify the main writers concerned.

2. **Medium-length** [12 marks]

a) Mention some characteristics of the English Renaissance.

b) Discuss how European and English societies were affected by the Renaissance and the Reformation.

c) Write a note on the Elizabethan sonnet sequence.

3. **Short-answer type** [6 marks]

a) Write a short note on the drama of the English Renaissance.

b) How may the Reformation be said to have contributed to the creation of new social systems?

c) Show your familiarity with any one: i.*The Fairie Queene* ii.*Paradise Lost* iii. *The Authorized Version of the Bible*

d) Discuss the impact of the introduction of printing technologies and movable type in the fifteenth century.

e) Write a short note on Humanism.

1.1.8 Suggested Reading

1. M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 7th Ed. Thomson Heinle, 1999.

[While most dictionaries of literary terms tend to focus on the Renaissance rather than the Reformation, this glossary specifically considers the latter in relation to the former, and as developing out of it.]

2. Margaret Drabble (ed). *The Oxford Companion to English Literature, 5th Edition.* Oxford: OUP. 1995.

   [Provides a concise entry on each of the two movements, indicating progress and impact throughout Europe.]

3. George Sampson, *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature, 3rd Edition* (Revised by R.C. Churchill). New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2001. 97-144. [Devotes one whole chapter to the impact of these two movements on English literature and society. Subsequent chapters provide even more material, including specific studies of the Elizabethan sonnet and the Authorized Version of the Bible.]

4. Andrew Sanders, *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*, 2nd Edition. New York: OUP, 1999. 84-186.

   [Has an entire chapter studying, in considerable detail, the verse, prose and drama written in England at the time of these two movements.]

5. Marion Wynne-Davies (ed). Guide to English Literature. [London]: Bloomsbury Publishing Limited, 1994.

   [Includes entries on each of the two movements, and pays special attention to their progress and results in England.]

   The internet is always a good source of information, though you need to be careful about the reliability of the material you are using. This is a basic yet trustworthy starting point: a couple of links to specific online pages created by the editors of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*:

http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/497731/Renaissance

http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/495422/Reformation

1.1.9 Further Activity

Examining the Renaissance man

The notion of the **Renaissance man** (also called Universal man, a translation of the Italian *Uomo universale*) developed in Italy during the Renaissance, and indicates a talented individual who is exceptionally good at a number of activities. Such a person would embody the idea that the human being was the supreme creature in the universe, possessing unlimited abilities

that should be developed to their fullest. In other words, for the Renaissance man, nothing was impossible. Can you think of any Elizabethan playwright whose lines or characters may be related to this notion?

A number of people throughout history have been hailed as Renaissance men, and the term survives even today to refer to talented and accomplished individuals. You might wish to make your own list of such people: from the Renaissance times till today. Would the following people make it to your list? Leonardo da Vinci? Francis Bacon? Benjamin Franklin? Rabindranath Tagore? Why, or why not?

Studying the Counter-Reformation

You will have come across the term **Counter- Reformation** during your study of the Reformation. It refers to a movement within the Catholic Church that developed in response to the Reformation, with the aim of countering or meeting the challenges posed by the Protestant reform movement. You might wish to trace the progress of the Counter-Reformation (sometimes also referred to as the Catholic Reformation), or examine how some English writers (such as Richard Crashaw) reflected, in their works, the influence of this religious counter-development. Here are a couple of online links by way of starting points:

http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/140219/Counter-Reformation

http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/the-counter-reformation.htm

1.1.10 Answer keys to Activities

Key to check-list

1,3,5 and 6 – REN

2,4 and 7 - REF

*Odd one out in the Summing Up Section:

"In most countries the Renaissance **followed** the Reformation." This is incorrect. Actually in most countries the Renaissance **was followed by** the Reformation.

Unit - 2 ❐ Developments in Poetry and Prose

Structure

1.2.0 Introduction

In Unit 1 of Module 1 you have learnt about the overall impact of the Renaissance and Reformation on England and English Literature. In this unit, you will learn about the development of the various forms of prose and poetry that gave a fresh lease of life to literature in English. Classical influences, creative experimentation with different styles, idealism and enterprise marked the literature of this era. Just as the fine arts flourished in Italy, England saw the rise of lyrical poetry (both the Cavalier and Metaphysical schools). In the following pages you are going to learn about the development of the sonnet form (Petrarchan and Shakespearean), the rise of narrative poetry and the first English epic. In prose fiction, the Renaissance outlook and the Reformation spirit made way for ground-breaking philosophical as well as theological discourses. Discussions regarding the political pamphlet, personal essay, travel literature and prose-romances will help you understand the importance given to wit and individualism during this period. Some of the general background you have come across in Unit 1 may be repeated here, but that is specifically with the purpose of situating the respective literary genres against the diverse, complex and multitudinous milieu of the period that we are studying. Do remember that your entire

understanding of the bases of modern English literature depends on a thorough comprehension of this highly nuanced era and its literary output. For a detailed understanding of the multiple strands of poetry in particular that flourished in this period, we have divided it into three separate sub-units. It would be your task to identify the points of convergence and departure in these poetic trends.

1.2.1 Historical Background of the Renaissance

The Renaissance in Europe formally announced the end of the Middle Ages and historically marked the beginnings of the Modern Period of human civilization in the West. It had its roots in Italy, from where it spread to the other countries of Europe, like England, France and Germany. In Medieval times, people in Europe, and particularly in England, were forced to follow the ideas and doctrines imposed on them by the highest religious authority, i.e. the Church. They were hardly given any freedom of thought or action, and were insistently discouraged to question the narrow-minded restrictions which controlled their lives. With the coming of the Renaissance (a French word which literally means 'rebirth') men were able to liberate themselves from the shackles of religious bias and express their thoughts freely. During the early 15th century, the people of Europe tried to question the world around them and discover the truths of the natural world, with new vigour and reason. They were no longer afraid to know the unknown or seek the unseen, as their curiosity and thirst for knowledge started to increase. The study of ancient Greek and Roman literature was encouraged, just as scientific inventions and geographical discoveries were made. It was a rebirth of a new culture, which valued learning and art above anything else. The concept of **Humanism**-the idea of achieving the highest glory for mankind- dominated the collective

A sneak peek into the Renaissance

Notice for yourselves how the Renaissance was virtually a movement that brought on a common platform the entire Western Europe. Look up the map of Europe (link given in Unit 1) to understand geographically the route taken by the Renaissance wave in its journey from Constantinople till it finally arrived in England.

Culturally it might be said to have been the first continental movement that ushered in the beginnings of modernism, putting a fitting end to the ill-famed 'Dark Ages'.

While your study material will focus in detail on the literary implications of the Renaissance, your counselor will guide you on the socio-cultural aspects and show how it was all very integrally related.

mindset. Old conventions, fears and blind beliefs were removed and the people developed a new attitude, where every thought was investigated rationally, before it was accepted as a truth. Another important characteristic of the Renaissance was the value that was given to human achievement. Any individual effort, made to ensure the progression of the human race, received praise. The **end of Feudalism** and the establishment of cities as prominent trade centres allowed free-thinking. In England the end of the War of the Roses made way for the establishment of the Tudor dynasty, with King Henry VII. William Caxton introduced the **printing press** in England and the first book in English was printed in 1473. Queen Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558. During the formative years of the Renaissance (1500-1579), artists, writers and musicians were encouraged by the court and the constant study of Greek and Latin by the scholars, contributed immensely to the enrichment of the English vernacular. We will discuss the influence of the **classical texts** on English literature in the following sub-units.

1.2.2 Historical Background of The Reformation

As we have already learnt at the beginning of the chapter, the Renaissance stressed the importance of personal freedom and individual effort. The Reformation was a similar social and political movement in Europe which was a result of the demands of the transitional age. The corruption of the Roman Catholic Church, the practice of selling pardons in return of money and the immoral lives led by some of the most selfish clergymen, was since long causing deep resentment among the common people. As a result, the Reformation became a **mass movement** against all the malpractices of the Roman Catholic Church. It began in the 16th century in Germany under the leadership of the brave **Martin Luther**, the founder of the Protestant Church. It was a religious movement in principle, inspired by the concept of Humanism, which celebrated free will and human worth in general. In his book *The Praise of Folly*, **Desiderius Erasmus**, a Renaissance thinker and man of learning, criticized the greed of the clergymen and the illogical laws preached by the Christian religious heads. In England, **John Wycliffe**, who was called the "Morning Star of the Reformation", translated the Bible into English from Latin, to make it easily available and comprehensible to the common people. His followers were known as the Lollards, and one of them was John Huss, who was burnt alive by Pope Leo X for questioning the rules of the Church. The Reformation gave rise to a revolutionary spirit in men and as a result of this movement the influence of the Church

in the affairs of the state decreased greatly. One of the major outcomes of the Reformation was the **establishment of absolute monarchy** in England. The power and influence of the Pope, the Roman Catholic Church and the regional kings and feudal lords decreased considerably. King Henry VIII of England established the 'Church of England' and declared himself to be the highest religious head in the country.

The Reformation – At a Glance

A Protestant movement, also known as the Protestant Revolution, the Reformation marked a radical break in Western Christianity. While Luther's publication of 'The Ninety-Five Theses' in 1517 is generally taken as the beginnings, it must be remembered that earlier attempts by Wycliff and Huss were also equally important. Luther started by criticizing the relatively recent practice of selling indulgences (pardons in exchange of money), but the debate widened until it touched on many of the doctrines and devotional practices of the Catholic Church.

The result was the rise of new Protestant churches – the Lutherans in Germany; the Baltics, the Reformed churches in Switzerland, France, Netherlands and Germany; and of course decisively influenced the Church of England.

While the basic change was apparently theological, other factors like the understanding and rise of nationalism, the new learning as a result of the Renaissance, the schism in the minds of people over absolute faith in the Roman Catholic papacy (rule of Pope), new technological inventions like the printing press that helped to spread new ideas in vernaculars and ensured wide dissemination of the Bible – all played their parts. Given below are some related areas that you would like to research on:

Role of King Henry VIII

Legislative action against Catholic Christianity

Monarchial action against clergy

Dissolution of monasteries

1.2.3a. The Development of Poetry: Spenser to Marlowe

English Renaissance poetry was heavily influenced by the Latin and Italian poetic models. Francesco Petrarca or **Petrarch** had already perfected the classic form of the love-poem in his sonnets dedicated to Laura. **Dante Alighieri** had in 1295 composed the sonnet sequence *La Vita Nuova* or *The New Life*, where he saw a divine presence in his love for Beatrice. These sonnets fused together secular as well as spiritual thoughts which were later freely adopted by the English poets of the Renaissance. A typical Petrarchan sonnet has the rhyme scheme *abbaabba cdecde.*

- **EDMUND SPENSER** (1552-99)

Edmund Spenser was hailed as the "New Poet" during the Elizabethan literary Renaissance. He was born in London and after getting educated at Cambridge University, served the English Royal Court for over 18 years. His first lyrical work was *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579), a group of 12 **eclogues** i.e. pastoral verse dialogues, written in the form of a conversation between different characters. He was inspired by the folk tradition of the Greek Sicilian poets, like Theocritus, and united a rural worldview with allegory in this poem. Spenser based each eclogue on each month of the year. He presented the themes of unrequited love, sorrow and friendship in a rustic, idyllic setting and created the figure of the **shepherd Colin Clout** as a reflection of his own self. Spenser chose to keep his verse decorous in tone and diction, maintaining the Renaissance aesthetic model. He experimented with thirteen different verse forms in the 12 eclogues.

His collection of love sonnets ***Amoretti*** (1595) was written in imitation of the Petrarchan mode. These poems were written for his ladylove Elizabeth Boyle. He maintains the conventions of Elizabethan courtly love poetry by portraying his beloved as the beautiful ideal, who at first refuses and then accepts his heart. Apart from the Italian poet Francesco Petrarch, he was also inspired by the classical masters Tasso and Desportes. Personal feelings and experiences are expressed passionately in the 89 sonnets that make up the collection. The skill and craftsmanship of the poet is revealed through the subtle employment of words and the flow of lines complement the images. He introduced the **Spenserian form** of the sonnet with three quatrains and a couplet, following the rhyme-scheme *abab, bcbc, cdcd, ee.*

The work that earned him the highest regard was of course the magnum opus, ***The Faerie Queene***. Its elaborate versification and digressive narrative actually stands as an allegory of the political-historical-religious issues of the Elizabethan Age. Spenser had

intended to write twelve books, each depicting the adventure of a virtuous knight, but could only complete six. The first three books (based on the virtues of Holiness, Temperance, Chastity) were published in 1589/90, the next three (based on the virtues of Friendship, Justice and Courtesy) in 1596 and the incomplete Book VII (two cantos and two stanzas) were published after his death. Prince Arthur appears in the poem at intervals and is set to marry **Gloriana,** the Queen of *Faerie-londe* (a portrayal of Queen Elizabeth) in the end. His other works include *Epithalamion*, a brilliant ode, celebrating his marriage to Elizabeth Boyle, *Astrophel*, a pastoral elegy mourning the death of his friend Philip Sidney, *The Ruins of Time*, *Mother Hubberd's Tale*, *Four Hymns* (on Love, Beauty, Heavenly Love, Heavenly Beauty), *Colin Clout's Come Home Again*, and *Prothalamion*, a poem commemorating the double wedding of the daughters of the Earl of Worcester. Ben Jonson once commented "Spenser writ no language", and even though his style is often labelled old-fashioned by the critics, one cannot deny the unmatched sense of music, alliteration and harmonious diction in his poetry.

● **SIR PHILIP SIDNEY** (1554-86)

He was born in an aristocratic family and educated at Oxford University. He was an illustrious member of the Elizabethan court and took part in the military expedition against Spain. He lost his life at the young age of 32 in the battle of Zutphen. His sequence of 108 love sonnets and 11songs titled ***Astrophel and Stella*** was published posthumously in 1591 and was heavily influenced by the works of Ronsard and Petrarch's sonnets to his beloved Laura. He wrote the lyrics for his beloved Penelope Devereux, who later married Lord Rich. "Astrophel" is a combination of two Greek words meaning 'star-lover' and "Stella" in Latin means 'star'. The sonnets maintain the **Petrarchan form** in the rhyme scheme of the octave (*abba, abba*) but Sidney introduced variations in the sestet. Though autobiographical, the sonnets reflect ingenuity through the use of well-phrased analogies. The formality of construction, witty use of metaphors and bitter-sweet tone make the lyrics both dramatic and elegant. The classical conventions are maintained to reflect the mood of the lover, who is in turn optimistic and hopeless. Some of his sonnets were also published under the title 'Certain Sonnets' included in the 1598 edition of 'The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia'. The pastoral romance ***Arcadia*** (the original draft was referred to as 'Old Arcadia') was mainly written to amuse his sister, the Countess of Pembroke. The love-story, drawing inspiration from the Greek tradition of chivalry and romance) starts with Basilius, the king of Arcadia, who rejects court-life and settles in a rural paradise, with his wife and two daughters. Two princes visiting Arcadia fall in love with the two daughters,

Pamela and Philoelea and start courting them in disguise. Various obstacles are placed in their paths and finally it is the King of Macedonia, Euarchus, who clears up the misunderstandings. The work is essentially a celebration of the Renaissance ideal of Humanism and Arcadia becomes a symbol of earthly perfection.

- ***TOTTEL'S MISCELLANY***

Miscellanies were collections of short poems and lyrics which were published in the latter half of the 16th century and early 17th century, to help promote and nurture new poetical talent. The most popular of these compilations was Tottel's *Miscellany* published in 1557 by **Richard Tottel**. Also known as *Songes and Sonettes*, it was a large anthology of poems written by a few known and some unknown poets. **Sir Thomas Wyatt** (1503-42) was born to a noble Yorkshire family and after completing his education at Cambridge University, entered the King's Service. He contributed 96 love poems to Tottels' *Miscellany*, (although it was published after his death), out of which 31 were sonnets (e.g. "I find no peace, and all my war is done", "How oft have I, my dear and cruel foe", "Farewell, Love, and all thy laws for ever"). He started by imitating the Petrarchan sonnet model but introduced the couplet ending to his own English form. He utilised the brevity of his sonnet form excellently in his personal poems, whereas the Italian **Terza rima** was employed extensively in his satires. **Henry Howard, the Earl of Surrey** (1516-47) was another contributor to Tottel's *Miscellany*, who primarily wrote love sonnets of which "The Fancy of a Wearied Lover", " The Frailty and Hurtfulness of Beauty", "Complaint of the Lover Disdained", are famous. He refined the **English form of the sonnet** (i.e. 3 quatrains and 1 couplet) and was the originator of the first English **Blank Verse**. Other contributors to the Tottel's *Miscellany* were Nicholas Grimald, Thomas Churchyard, Lord Vaux, and John Heywood.

There were other miscellanies or songbooks which were published by various printing- presses during this time (from 1590 to 1600), namely *The Phoenix Nest*, *England's Parnassus*, *Belvedere* and *England's Helicon*.

Some of the recurrent features of the **Renaissance love sonnets** are as follows:

- Sentimental argument made by a lover to his idealised beloved
- Grand conceits or comparisons based on the themes of lament, hope, despair and praise.(E.g.: "Rose"- symbol of beauty, "Lily"- symbol of purity, "Sickle" or "Wheel"- symbol of time)
- Melodious metre (imitation of the classical masters like Petrarch and Dante)
- Word play and inventive use of figures of speech

● **SAMUEL DANIEL** (1562-1619)

Daniel was the Poet Laureate of England who composed the sonnet sequence *Delia*, apart from the haunting soliloquy 'The Complaint of Rosamond' and the poetical essay 'The Civil Wars'. As he was appointed the Master of the Queen's Revels, he also wrote pastoral tragic-comedies and brought out among others, two **masques** titled 'The Queenes Wake' and 'Hymen's Triumph'.

● **WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE** (1564-1616)

The concepts of **ideal love** and **fleeting time** find expression in most of the sonnets by William Shakespeare. Drawing from the roots of Renaissance Humanism, Shakespeare tried to establish the permanence of his art (poetry, in this case) over mortality of the natural world. Love inspires the poet to compose his verse and again that verse gives eternal life to his love. Critics have over the years tried to read biographical details in Shakespeare's sonnets, trying to interpret actual incidents and personal experiences of the poet's life in the themes of the sonnets. L.C. Knights believed that even if the sonnets were written to commemorate a broken friendship with a young patron and a possible intrigue with Mary Fitton, they should only be of value to the readers for their poetic worth. He wrote **152 sonnets** in total, out of which the first 126 are addressed to a **Fair Youth** and the rest to the **Dark Lady**. His sonnets are characterised by a fresh outlook or attitude towards conventional literary subjects, and a visually appealing imagery where love is consciously depicted in both an emotional and logical light. His narrative poems are namely, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. You will read in greater detail about the nuances of Shakespeare's sonnets in Module 2 Unit 2.

The 154 sonnets by William Shakespeare seem to weave an intricate plot of love, friendship, betrayal which may have been adapted from his own life. If we overlook the biographical details, what we find in his sonnets is the true reflection of natural human emotions. The metrical style developed by his predecessors, the other Renaissance poets like Wyatt, Sidney and Spenser, was perfected by Shakespeare. To the conventional Elizabethan philosophical and allegorical themes of art/nature, death/immortality, permanence/ temporality Shakespeare added images drawn from the lived life of the Elizabethan Age. Real-life references taken from Renaissance socio-economic life and imagery derived from various professions such as husbandry, medicine, navigation, law, court- music and painting, set apart his verse from the others. Shakespeare also invented the Shakespearean form of the sonnet (also known as the English form) which is considered to be the most flexible among all sonnet forms (the others being Spenserian and Petrarchan). It consists

of three quatrains of alternating rhyme scheme and an ending couplet (abab cdcd efef gg).

- **PHINEAS** (1582-1650) and **GILES FLETCHER** (1586-1623) :

He wrote *The Purple Island* or *The Isle of Man* (1633), an **allegory** in 12 cantos, and *Christ's Victorie and Triumph*' (1610), an epical poem in 4 cantos respectively.

- **THOMAS SACKVILLE, EARL OF DORSET** (1536-1608):

Employed in the service of Queen Elizabeth, and later as the Privy Counsellor, Thomas Sackville was in accord with the proclamation of King James. His political career reached a milestone when he was appointed the High Treasurer. His allegorical poem 'Induction', written in a heroic tone in **rhyme royal** stanzas, and 'The Complaint of Henry, Duke of Buckingham' was published in the miscellany *Mirror for Magistrates* in 1563.

- **GEORGE GASCIOGNE** (1535-77):

His controversial collection of courtly poems *A Hundredth Sundry Flowres* was published in 1573 and republished as *The Posies of George Gascoigne, Esquire* in 1575. '**Steele Glas**' (1576) was a satirical work on the irrationality of war.

- **MICHAEL DRAYTON** (1563-1631) :

Influenced by Edmund Spenser, he composed the eclogues 'Idea, the Shepherd's Garland' in 1593. A collection of love-sonnets *Idea's Mirror* was published n 1594, which was later developed into the **sonnet sequence** *Idea*. His **mythological narrative poem** 'Endymion and Phoebe' (later revised as 'The Man in the Moon') inspired the Romantic poet Keats to write 'Endymion'. 'Poly-olbion', a narrative poem of 30000 lines, gives an account of the geographical expanses of England along with its historical tales written in alexandrines. 'England's Heroical Epistles' *(1597)* , an imaginative exchange of **verse letters** (following the footsteps of Ovid) between England's historical lovers, 'The Battle of Agincourt', an **ode** and 'Nymphidia, the Court of Fairy' a **mock-heroic** series of poems, go on to reveal the variety of his art.

- **THOMAS CAMPION** (1567-1620):

He started off by composing epigrams in Latin and then advanced to English. His lyric poems and songs were published in four consecutive books namely *A Booke of Ayres* (1601), *Two Books of Ayres* and *The Third and Fourth Booke of Ayres*. In honour of King James I he wrote 'The Lord's Masque' in 1613. You have already read about the masque as a literary form in Unit 1.

● **FULKE GREVILLE** (1554-1628):

He served in Queen Elizabeth's court along with Edmund Spenser and Philip Sidney. He is best known for his sonnet sequence 'Caelica' and for his **philosophical verse tracts 'A Treatise of Humane Learning'** and '**An Inquisition upon Fame and Honour**'. He also composed an elegy on the death of Philip Sidney.

● **CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE** (1564-1593) :

He deserves a special mention for his two excellent **narrative poems**, namely 'Hero and Leander' based on the Greek myth in 1598 and 'The Passionate Shepherd to his Love', published in 1600 in *England's Helicon*. An excerpt from one of the poems is given below:

From *Hero and Leander* by Christopher Marlowe

"It lies not in our power to love or hate,
For will in us is overruled by fate.
When two are stripped, long ere the course begin,
We wish that one should lose, the other win;
And one especially do we affect
Of two gold ingots, like in each respect:
The reason no man knows; let it suffice
What we behold is censured by our eyes.
Where both deliberate, the love is slight:
Who ever loved, that loved not at first sight?"

1.2.3b. The Development of Poetry – Metaphysical and Cavalier Traditions

The early 17th century saw a departure from the Spenserian tradition with the appearance of Ben Jonson (1572 to 1637) and John Donne (1572 to 1631). They intentionally resisted the elaborate and ornate style of Spenser, though they were still much influenced by the Greek and Roman poets. John Donne laid the foundation of the **Metaphysical School of Poetry** whereas the followers of the clear-cut classical symmetry of Jonson later came to be known as the **Cavalier Poets**.

● **METAPHYSICAL POETS:**

✦ **John Donne** :

He was raised a Roman Catholic but later became a member of the Anglican Church. His poetry was never published in his lifetime but was circulated in manuscripts. His best known

work is ***Songs and Sonets***, a collection of love poems for different moods addressed to several persons. Some of the poems are cynical in tone while the others are warm and candid. He usually opened his poems with a shocking declaration and ended them with a turn of a phrase. Complex, rich imagery and passionate declarations formed part of his style. His major poems include 'A Valediction, Forbidding Mourning', 'The Extasie', 'Holy Sonnets' etc. ***The Progress of Soul*** is a religious work with a deep moral chord, evoking diverse female figures like Eve and Queen Elizabeth in a satirical and pessimistic voice. In his last days he composed 'Divine Poems' which are argumentative in nature, exploring the absurdity and truthfulness of life and devotion.

It was Dr. Samuel Johnson who first used the term 'metaphysical' to classify poets like Donne and Cowley under a specific category. According to him, one of the recurrent features of their poetry was the yoking together of contrasting and heterogeneous ideas and imagery. T.S. Eliot, in his essay 'The Metaphysical Poets'(1921), talks about the development of sensibility in this particular kind of verse in the Elizabethan period. He terms the re-creation of thought into feeling or emotion as 'unification of sensibility'- a "direct sensuous apprehension of thought". The metaphysical poets wrote intellectual poetry and Eliot says of John Donne "[a] thought to Donne was an experience; it modified his sensibility." By fusing together feelings with disparate ideas, the metaphysical poets of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century could 'devour' (or express) all kinds of experience (spiritual, religious, carnal and amatory). Eliot further added that the later poets such as the Romantics and Victorians were reflective poets whose poems were characterized by a 'dissociation of sensibility'. You will definitely get to experience these striking features of Metaphysical poetry when you read the poems in subsequent units.

Some of the recurrent features of **Metaphysical Poetry**:

- Portrayal of deeply personal emotions in addition to sensuous and spiritual subject matter.

  E.g.: "My feeble spirit, unable to look right,/ Like a nipt blossom, hung/ Discontented." (George Herbert 'Denial'.) Here the speaker compares the state of his broken spirit to a pruned flower, crestfallen in discontent.

- Imagery derived from real-life; shocking analogies and conceits used often.

  E.g.: Andrew Marvell reworks the *carpe-diem* theme of enjoying the present in his poem "To his Coy Mistress", by making the speaker remind his ladylove of the unpleasant truth that 'life is short'. The cruelty of time is described in graphic images of the dead, decomposing corpse of the beloved being eaten by worms in the grave.

"...then the worms shall try/ That long preserv'd virginity,
And your quaint honour turn to dust/ and into ashes all my lust."

- Inventive verses in colloquial and realistic tone.

  E.g.: John Donne uses the following phrases "Busie old foole, unruly Sunne', 'Gluttonous death', 'At the round earth's imagined corners' in his poems which reveal the expression of serious thought in everyday speech and metaphors.

- A curious mix of violent and meditative versification.

  E.g.: The following lines fuse together impossible ideas and unanswerable questions with 'poisonous' and 'evil' images effectively.

"Go and catch a falling star, /Get with child a mandrake root
Tell me where all the past years are, /Or who cleft the devil's foot." (Donne's 'Elegies')
The following poets are generally classified as Metaphysicals, in the sense that their works show most of the features enumerated above:

✦ **George Chapman** (1559-1634) :

Considered by some as the first poet of the tradition, he combined philosophical ideas with themes of passion. Often obscure, his sonnet sequence-*Ovid's Banquet of Sense* (1595), and poems like 'The Shadow of Night', are famous for the innovative use of metaphors.

✦ **George Herbert** (1593-1633) :

He was an Anglican poet and his most prominent work is the witty and symbolic **'The Temple'** (1633). He used his art to propagate the ideas of the Christian religion, and to explore worldly emotions and faith. 'Denial' and 'The Collar' are some of his best poems and 'Easter Wings' is one of the earliest and finest examples of pattern-poetry.

✦ **Richard Crashaw** (1612-1649) :

He was another Metaphysical poet with a religious inclination. He regarded Herbert as his inspiration and composed '**Steps to the Temple**' in 1646. His images and symbols were taken from the physicality of the sensory world, but they successfully highlighted a very distinct Christian viewpoint. He also wrote epigrams in Latin titled 'Epigrammata Sacra'.

✦ **Henry Vaughan** (1622-95) :

He was a disciple of Herbert and composed the collection of religious poems named' Silex Scintillans' (1655). Through his verse, he tries to unravel the mysterious realm where God resides, away from the eyes of the human world. There is a mystical quality

in his poems like 'The World', 'The Waterfall', 'The Night' and 'The Retreat'- the last one drawing on the concepts of purity and innocence of childhood, similar to the Romantic poet William Wordsworth.

✦ **Abraham Cowley** (1618-67) :

He supported the King during the Civil War, was exiled and returned only after the Restoration of monarchy. 'The Davideis' (1656) written in heroic couplets, 'The Mistress' (1647), a group of love-poems and 'Pindarique Odes' are some of his better known works.

✦ **Andrew Marvell** (1621-78) :

Educated at Cambridge, he was a colleague of John Milton, a Christian Humanist, and a Member of Parliament. His poems reveal a melodious grace in portraying witty arguments. "To his Coy Mistress" is one of his best works which is based on the theme of 'Carpe diem' (i.e. 'seize the day'). Apart from lyrics like 'On a Drop of Dew' he also wrote satirical poems like 'Flecknoe'.

● **CAVALIER POETS:**

They were lyrical poets who composed poems mainly on the themes of love and war. Ben Jonson's poems such as 'Hymn to Cynthia' and 'The Hour-Glass' acted as their models.

✦ **Robert Herrick** (1591-1674) :

He followed the classical tradition just like Ben Jonson, and his poems were based on various themes such as religion, life, nature, love and battle. 'To the Virgins, To make much of Time', 'Hesperides' (1648), 'To Anthea,' 'To Julia', 'Oberon's Feast' combine a classical formality with a countryside spirit of joy and celebration.

✦ **Richard Lovelace** (1618-58) :

He brought in gallantry into English poetry with 'The Fair Beggar', 'To Althea, from Prison' and 'To Lucasta, going to the Wars'. Some of the major themes present in his works are honour, courage, longing and hope for a good life. Traces of metaphysical wit and imagery are found in some of his poems like 'The Grasshopper'.

✦ **Sir John Suckling** (1609-42) :

He served under King Charles I, and was one of the Cavaliers who modified the metaphysical convention to suit a Petrarchan outlook. His famous poems include 'Loving and Beloved', 'A Ballad upon a Wedding', 'Why so pale and wan, fond lover?'

1.2.3c. The Development of Poetry : John Milton and The English Epic

Milton was a learned man, who was appointed the Secretary for Foreign Tongues to the council of state of the new Commonwealth in 1649. He was a Puritan (Protestant who wanted to 'purify' the Church of England and remove unnecessary ceremony and rituals) who supported the Parliament during the Civil War in England. His most famous poems include 'Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity' (1629), '**L'Allegro**' and '**Il Penseroso**' (in octosyllabic couplets). He also composed a masque titled 'Comus' (1634) and an elegy called '**Lycidas**'. In the latter half of his life, he created some of his finest sonnets, even though his eyesight was failing, such as, 'On His Blindness', and 'On the Late Massacre in Piedmont'. However his greatest contribution to English literature was the composition of the epic ***Paradise Lost*** (1658-1667) which he wrote in 12 books. He took the story of Adam and Eve and the Fall of Man from Heaven from the Bible and wove it into a grand narrative, while maintaining all the classical conventions of imagery and scale. He composed *Paradise Lost* in blank verse and set out to "Justify the ways of God to men". His last published volume of poems included '**Paradise Regained**' and '**Samson Agonistes**'. A deep religious (i.e. Puritan) strain runs through most of his compositions, especially during the last phase of his life. Religious and moral preaching also takes centre- stage in his writings. Milton was heavily influenced by the high-flown language and grand style of classical drama, which he freely adapted to enrich the native tongue.

- **Milton's Treatment of the Epic:** An epic is an extended narrative poem dealing with a serious or elevated subject matter, celebrating heroic deeds of the protagonist/s with the help of elaborate metaphors and exalted language, written in a grand style. It begins with an invocation to the muse for creative inspiration and the presence of a supernatural, higher authority (mythological gods and goddesses) is not uncommon. It must maintain a high moral tone throughout. The subject of the epic 'Paradise Lost' is stated right at the onset as 'Man's first disobedience'. Milton follows a highly Latinised syntax ("Never since created Man") and draws his subject matter from Hebrew and Christian sources. He declares his wish "to justify the ways of God to men". 'Paradise Lost' is a secondary epic, which is not derived from an oral tradition of incantative verses or repetitions. Like Virgil's 'Aeneid', Milton compensated the ritualistic element of the primary epic with the help of grandeur and elevation of style. His muse is referenced from the wisdom of the Judio-Christian Divinity. He uses words in unfamiliar and archaic contexts ('ruin'- 'fall', 'combustion'-burning together'), unfamiliar constructions ("Beyond compare"),

alliterations ("Him, hurl headlong"), sonorous nouns and epic similes (Satan's shield is compared to the full moon). He celebrates the anti-hero Satan in the first Book itself, provides richness and variety by drawing allusions from The Bible and ultimately makes God's greatest creation-Man- the 'hero' of his work.

Here is a small chart to help you remember the classification of Milton's works:

Type of Work	**Title/s of Work and Theme/s**
Sonnet (A poetic form derived from the Italian word 'sonetto', referring to a fourteen line poem following a particular structure and rhyming pattern.)	*On Shakespeare:* In praise of William Shakespeare *On His Blindness*: On his own limitations and failure to serve God.
Epic	*Paradise Lost* : On the theme of the Fall of Man from Paradise *Paradise Regained*: A shorter epic in Four books; on the temptation and subsequent triumph of Christ
Narrative poem	*L'Allegro* : On the concept of Mirth *Il Penseroso*: On the concept of Melancholy
Dramatic Poem	*Samson Agonistes:* Tragedy about the Biblical hero Samson who was imprisoned by the Philistines
Elegy (a poem of lamentation on the death of a dear friend or relation)	*Lycidas*: To commemorate the death of his friend Edward King
Masque (Form of festive courtly entertainment (pageant) that flourished in 16th- and early 17th-century Europe.)	*Comus*: In honour of John Egerton, the Earl of Bridgewater
Ode (a lyrical poem in praise or dedicated to a person or a natural abstraction)	*On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*: Asserting his role as a poet-priest.

1.2.4. The Development of Prose

The Reformers of the English Church, anxious to use the vernacular in worship insisted on an accurate translation of the Bible which would free them from their dependence on the Latin Vulgate. Hence was undertaken a series of translations of the Holy Scriptures which culminated in the Authorized Version of 1611. Under the influence of the Renaissance translations of the ancient classical writers were also being carried out.

- **Importance of The Bible:**

✦ **William Tyndale (1494- 1536)** is considered as the greatest modern Bible translator of the 16th century. He was also a religious pamphleteer and a theologian. His writings revealed his support for the **Lollards** and rejected the supremacy of the Roman Catholic Church. He was a Protestant and his translation of the Bible was condemned by the Church authorities. He used simple language and honest expressions to translate the Hebrew/Greek Bible into English and make it accessible to the common people. Instead of using the word 'Church' he used 'congregation' to challenge the hierarchical nature of society.

✦ **Miles Coverdale** brought out the first complete Bible (1535) and was much inspired by Tyndale. He was supported by King Henry VIII in his work. 'The Great Bible' written by a group of translators commissioned by the King himself came out in 1539.

✦ '**The Book of Common Prayer'** was published in 1549 and was composed under the guidance of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer.

✦ The Calvinistic '**Geneva Bible**' was published in 1560.

✦ Finally, the 'Authorised Version of the Bible' in English was published by **King James** in 1611. King James identified the importance of a standard religious text and employed more than 40 scholars in 1607. It was a work of great artistic skill and dignity. The narration of the grand events (*The Pentateuch, Gospels, Acts of the Apostles*) was done with suggestive clarity. Phrases like 'a good Samaritan', 'eleventh hour', and 'sweat of the brow' were introduced to the English vernacular and it went on to greatly influence contemporary prose- writers.

- **Theological Works : John Foxe** published 'Acts and Monuments' (later named 'The Book of Martyrs') in 1563, recounting the biographies of true Christians who

sacrificed their lives. There emerged sermon writers also like **James Usher** ('Chronologia Sacra') and **Joseph Hall** ('Virgidemiarum').

- **TRANSLATIONS :** The works of Virgil were translated by Phaer and Stanyhurst, Plutarch's 'Lives' by North, the writings of Homer by **Chapman** and 'Essays of Montaigne' by **Florio**.
- **TRAVEL LITERATURE :** The pride and glory of the Elizabethan empire lay in the courageous expeditions of its brave sailors to far-off land and unknown sea-routes. Apart from trade purposes, sea voyages were sponsored and encouraged by the Royal Court to extend the boundaries of the Empire as well as learn more about the world outside. John Cabot set sail with his son Sebastian under the patronage of King Henry VII and discovered Newfoundland as early as 1496. Sir Humphrey Gilbert returned there to establish a colony almost a hundred years later. Sir Francis Drake circumnavigated the world successfully in his ship 'Golden Hinde' in 1579, sailing under the orders of the Queen herself and Thomas Cavendish did the same a few years later. Other explorers included Sir Martin Frobisher (Baffin Island) and Sir John Davis (west coast of Greenland) and their main aim, in the words of Sir Walter Ralegh was "To seek new worlds for gold, for praise, for glory."

Richard Hakluyt was a clergyman, compiler and editor of numerous accounts of actual journeys of discovery and adventure by the English. He declared himself to be a patriot and a follower of science**.** His final three-volume book of voyages was titled 'The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation', which was published in between 1598 and 1600. It was in this collection that two important accounts of **Sir Walter Ralegh,** namely 'Discoverie of Guiana' and 'Report of the Fight about the Azores' was included. The historian and geographer **Samuel Purchas'** wrote 'Purchas his Pilgrimage' in 1613, which was a detailed survey of the past and present life of England. The four volume edition of 1625 was titled 'Hakluytus Posthumus or, Purchas his Pilgrims' which aimed at providing a complete history of land and sea expedition by Englishmen and others. The influence of travel literature, its importance in proving how England as a nation extended its geographical boundaries and knowledge, can be traced in William Shakespeare's **'The Tempest'**. Prospero, the exiled Duke, discovers a new home in a far-off island and becomes the master of its native resident Caliban.

- **Essays : Francis Bacon** (1561-1626): He was a man of letters who was made a Member of Parliament in 1584. His most erudite work was 'Essays' (58 in number in the final edition) published in 1597, and then again in 1612 and 1625. He wrote on familiar day-to-day subjects like 'Of Studies, 'Of Travels', 'Of Truth', 'Of Goodness and Goodness of Nature'. He introduced an epigrammatic style in his writing which was influenced by Latin diction and rhetoric. ***The Advancement of Learning*****,** a philosophical treatise, ***The New Atlantis***, a prose fiction imagining a perfect world, and ***Novum Organum*** a logical work explaining the foundations of his philosophy, are some of his other relevant works . As an essayist he is usually brief, very objective and rational in his approach.

For Francis Bacon, the source of all human knowledge was observation and his new philosophy meant to explain the natural foundation and the logical premise of all universal phenomena. He was interested in science, astronomy and medicine and believed in the potential for progress of the Renaissance Man. His 'Essays' were basically general reflections on human life based on the ethics of Humanism. Montaigne was the inventor of the essay form, who wrote in a self-conscious reflective manner and treated matters with a light-hearted curiosity. It was from him that Bacon adopted the essay into English literature. But Bacon added to the form his own wisdom and aphoristic style. He drew his subject matter from both the personal and the public life. References from the world of contemporary politics, religion and history can be found in his essays. Some of his observations have found the status of idioms in the English language and are used even today. E.g: "Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man", "A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds", "It is impossible to love and to be wise". English literature insofar as the development of the 'Essay' as an established form of non-fictional prose, owes much to the early efforts of Bacon.

Pamphlets

The Elizabethan satirical pamphlet developed in order to criticise the evils of the time. The pamphleteer **Stephen Gosson** wrote 'School of Abuse' in 1579 which was refuted by **Philip Sidney** in his 'Defense of Poesie' (1595). The University Wit, **Thomas Lodge** (1558-1625) wrote pamphlets titled 'Honest Excuses', 'Alarm against Usurers' and 'Wit's Misery' in such a style that humour disguised the deep sarcastic tone in most of the cases. **Thomas Nashe** (1567-1601) who wrote 'Anatomy of Absurdity' and 'Pierce Penniless', mixed a colloquial ease and a high rhetorical style in his writings. **Robert Greene** (1560-92) is most remembered

for his 'Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance' (1592) in which he referred to William Shakespeare as an "upstart crow".

- **Historical Works:**

- **Edward Hall (**1499-1547) wrote the 'Union of the two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancaster and York', describing the reigns of King Henry, the Fourth to King Henry, the Eighth.

- **Raphael Holinshed's** 'Chronicles' was published in 1577, recording English, Scottish and Irish histories, which was later used by William Shakespeare as his source material for his plays.

- **Walter Ralegh** compiled 'The History of the World', where he applied a typical Renaissance world view in heroically depicting the past and present of his country.

- **Miscellaneous Prose:**

- **Sir Thomas More** published 'Utopia' (1516) in Latin, where he created the perfect world or the ideal state of his imagination. His works in English are also noteworthy, such as 'The Historie of Richard III', 'The Lyfe of John Picus' and 'Dialogue'. In this last work he opposed the arguments of the reformers such as Tyndale and Martin Luther. He revived the native English tongue by presenting serious religious theories in a colloquial, humorous manner.

- **Sir Thomas Elyot** (1490-1546) wrote 'The Book of the Governor' which was sort of a guide to the ruling class, in matters of practical instruction. Humanism was one of the common points of reference for the prose-writers of this age.

- **Roger Ascham** (1515-1568): Two of his main works were 'Toxophilus' (1545) (a nationalistic treatise on the English sport archery) and 'The Scholemaster' (1570) (on the practical needs of teaching ethics). He took up the onus of writing in plain and straight-forward English and as one of the earliest prose-writers during the Renaissance, helped in breaking the over-burdening influence of Latin on the vernacular tongue.

- **John Lyly** (1554-1606) - He created the character of Euphues, a young citizen of Athens and narrated his adventures and travels in his 'Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit' and 'Euphues and his England'. From his works is derived the term 'Euphuism', which is a name given to a particular style of English prose which includes a decorative, grand manner of address, full of alliterations and rhetorical devices.

- **Richard Hooker (**1554-1600) published his four books 'Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity' in 1594, a work which is both a philosophical as well as a theological masterpiece.
- **Robert Burton's** (1577-1640) 'The Anatomy of Melancholy' (1621) is an in-depth study of melancholy, done in a pessimistic tone in a conversational style.
- **Thomas Lodge** wrote 'Rosalynde: Euphues Golden Legacy' in 1590 (which later influenced Shakespeare's 'As You Like It') and **Thomas Nashe** wrote 'The Unfortunate Traveller' in 1594, which are considered as rudimentary novels.
- **John Milton**: He wrote pamphlets against the socio-political evils of his time, some of which caused a lot of controversy during his lifetime. '**Areopagitica**' (1644) was the most famous one, in which he advocated the freedom of the press. 'Of Education' was published in the same year and 'Letters of State' in 1694. He also wrote two pamphlets on the need for divorce.
- **Sir Thomas Browne** (1605-82): he was a distinct figure during the Reformation who initiated a rare fusion of faith and reason in his works. In 'Religio Medici' (1643) he gives the true meaning of Christianity (relating it to Humanity above all) and discusses the relation between Catholic and Protestants and in 'Urn Burial' he meditates upon the mysteries of life and death.
- **Thomas Hobbes** (1588-1679) was a rationalist and a philosopher who wrote 'Leviathan' (1651), a materialistic discourse on political theories. He declared that human life is 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short'. According to him an ideal commonwealth should be an absolute state.
- **Jeremy Taylor** (1613-1667) was a preacher above all and wrote sermons for the benefit and instruction of pious Christians. His important works include 'The Liberty of Prophesying' in 1647 and 'Holy Living' in 1650.
- **Thomas Fuller** (1608-1661) was an Anglican preacher and historian, who is remembered for 'Holy State', 'The History of the Holy War' (on the Crusades) and 'History of the Worthies of England'.
- Another Historian, **Edward Hyde** wrote 'The History of Rebellion and Civil Wars in England' (published in1704).
- **Sir Thomas Overbury** was a practitioner of the prose form known as 'Character', which was basically a portrait in words of a real –life person highlighting his virtues and vices. He wrote 'Characters or, Witty Descriptions of the Properties of Sundry Persons'

(1614). The form was influenced by Joseph Hall and the classical Greek writer Theophrastus, who wrote about typical vices observed in actual persons.

1.2.5. Summing Up

Developments in poetic forms during the Renaissance and Reformation:

The 'modern' English poets of the 16th century differed from the 'medieval' ones of the preceding centuries in that their lyrics were condensed and subjective, and free of allegory and didacticism. In contrast to the poetry of Chaucer, Spenser's verse withstands the test of modernization remaining, according to George Sampson "as firm and fast as ever".

1. The Renaissance saw the encouragement of court-poets by the royal circles. The court- poets wrote poems which ranged over a variety of subjects including friendship, love, jealousy and betrayal.
2. The rich, noble patrons of arts played an important role in influencing the literary genres, as the poets had to cater to their tastes and value their judgement in order to continue being in their favour.
3. The sonnet, epic, elegy and pastoral poetry- all followed particular conventions when it came to grandeur and ostentation of style.
4. The poets did not shy away from depicting intimate feelings or making passionate declarations in this new style and the theme of 'carpe diem' was evoked again and again.
5. The concept of humanism can be traced in most of the works, and the search of earthly beauty and perfection was a recurring theme. Greco-Roman myths were often retold in experimental verse.
6. The employment of subtle wit and double meanings in poetry was common enough.

The following are some of the important forms of poetry which found expression in the mentioned age.

- Lyrical Poetry, mainly the sonnet (Derived from the Italian tradition of the song of the wandering minstrels).
- Descriptive and narrative poetry, mainly allegorical and pastoral works with references to Greek mythology.

- Religious and didactic poetry.
- Satirical poems.
- The Epic.

Developments in prose forms during the Renaissance and Reformation:

While during the Old English period and the age of Chaucer the basic nature of the English language changed due more to the loss of inflections than because of changes in vocabulary from 1400 AD onwards this trend was reversed. With the passing of inflections came a growing use of prepositional forms. Between 1400 and 1600AD the English language underwent radical changes with the triumph of the vernacular in the 15th century and the steady import of French and Latin words in the 16th century. Also, as is inevitable, the influences of both the Renaissance and the Reformation are seen in the writings of the time.

1. The Reformation produced great theological translators, preachers and sermon-writers
2. The Renaissance, in its advocacy of classical Humanism, inspired works on history, philosophy, polity, travel and various other disciplines.
3. The new trends in prose exhibited a thirst for knowledge, imaginative force and a reliance on reason.

   The following are some of the important styles of prose which gained an impetus during the discussed age.

- Pamphlets
- Essays
- Prose-fiction
- Travel literature
- Historical works.

1.2.6. Glossary :

Sonnet: A poetic form derived from the Italian word 'sonetto', referring to a fourteen line poem following a particular structure and rhyming pattern.

Lyric: A particular type of poem which has a song-like quality (can be sung in accompaniment of a lyre or harp) and is emotional in appeal.

Ballad: A narrative poem (a poem which tells a story), usually of folk origin which can be set to music. It often has a repetitive stanza or 'refrain' at the end which deals with a romantic or melancholic truth of life.

Blank Verse: Unrhymed iambic pentameter- the most common verse form in English poetry.

Epic: An extended narrative poem with the following features:

- Serious or elevated subject matter
- Elaborate metaphors and exalted language
- Celebrating heroic deeds of the protagonist/s
- Grand style
- Invocation to the muse and presence of a supernatural, higher authority
- High moral tone

Ode: A lyrical poem in praise of or dedicated to someone.

Heroic couplet: Rhyming pairs of lines in iambic pentameter, suitable for epic or narrative poetry.

Terza rima: A typical verse stanza form which consists of an interlocking three-line rhyme scheme (aba bcb cdc). This was introduced by the Italian poet Dante Alighieri.

Rhyme royal: Stanza consisting of seven lines, usually in iambic pentameter following the rhyme scheme ababbcc. Extensively used by the medieval poet Chaucer and considered to be a relevant structure for composing ancient, elegiac verse.

Masque: Form of festive courtly entertainment (pageant) that flourished in 16th- and early 17th-century Europe.

Pattern-poetry: Standard archaic verses designed to form a specific shape (such as a swan, an egg, wings, etc.) and with a similar theme, originating from the classical Greek poems composed in the pastoral tradition.

1.2.7. Comprehension Exercises

Long Answer Type: - 20 Marks

1. Discuss the rise of the sonnet in England during the Renaissance and comment upon

the works of any two major sonneteers.

2. Write an essay on the contribution of the Metaphysical Poets to English literature.

3. What was the significance of the publication of the Bible and other theological works during the Renaissance?

4. Write an essay on the major philosophical and historical works published during the Reformation in England.

Medium Length Answers: - 12 Marks

1. Discuss some of the common themes found in the Elizabethan sonnets, with special reference to William Shakespeare.

2. Assess the contribution of Edmund Spenser as a Renaissance lyric poet.

3. Analyse the contribution of John Milton as a poet and prose-writer during the Reformation.

Short Answer Type : - 6 Marks

1. Assess the importance of Tottel's Miscellany during the Renaissance.

2. What role did Francis Bacon play in enriching English prose?

3. Who were the Cavalier poets? Comment on the works of any two of them.

4. Discuss in brief some of the popular pamphlet- writers of the Elizabethan Age.

1.2.8 Suggested Readings

History of English Literature by Edward Albert.

A Short Oxford History of English Literature by Andrew Sanders.

The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature by George Sampson.

The Pelican Guide to English Literature (Volume 2): The Age of Shakespeare (Ed. Boris Ford).

The Pelican Guide to English literature (Volume 3): From Donne to Marvell (Ed. Boris Ford).

Unit - 3 ❐ Developments in Drama

Structure

1.3.0 Introduction

As in the genres of poetry and prose, drama too was largely influenced by the Renaissance. In this Unit you will see for yourselves how different from medieval dramaturgy and varied in itself the dramatic output of this period was. Notice that the one significant break in dramatic traditions found here is the complete independence from any kind of religious motives. Of course, the Interludes in the earlier period had already signalled this break; but the departure is much more pronounced in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. The insistence here is on incorporating in themes and characters, the diverse aspects that contemporary culture had incorporated as a result of the Renaissance. You have had some acquaintance with this multiplicity in the previous unit(s). Given below are some of the significant heads under which we shall be studying anew this aspect:

- To understand the movements that influenced the development of drama.
- To identify the major dramatists and their plays.
- To study how playhouses and patrons were important
- To note how drama suffered a decline and ultimately the theatres were shut down.

1.3.1 The Movements that Influenced Drama

"The Renaissance is a European phenomenon. In all literatures in the sixteenth century the same general causes were at work: the liberation of thought from the scholasticism that bound it; the revolt against spiritual authority incited by the Reformers, who were later the bitterest enemies of the same revolt; wonder at the new earth and sky as revealed by navigators and astronomers; perception of greater beauty in the Greek and Latin classics—especially in the former, which had lately been recovered. But while these characteristics were common to all, the effect of the Renaissance in each country was the formation of a national literature. In the Renaissance as in the Reformation there was a strong element of individualism. The desire for literary beauty led to an intensive cultivation of the language spoken by each nation, to an increased use of its own power of expression." (Legouis 62)

The word Renaissance as you already know, literally means 'rebirth' and signifies the complex processes of change that transformed England like many other European countries during the late 16th and early 17th centuries. The "new learning" had already made itself felt in various parts of Europe during the 14th and 15th centuries. The revival of classical learning also fostered an interest in the vernacular language. Those scholars who helped to bring about a revival of learning were called Humanists. They shifted the focus from God to man and promoted an interest in the commonplace. The Humanists flourished around 1490 to 1578 (Legouis 64) and included names like William Grocyn; Thomas Linacre; John Colet; Sir Thomas More and the Educationists like Sir Thomas Elyot; Sir John Cheke and Roger Ascham among countless others. "Humanism did not long remain undisturbed. Scarcely had it reached literature when the Reformation crossed and thwarted it." (Legouis 67) A large number of Humanists were forced to choose between the Pope and Luther or Calvin.

The **Bible** and the **Prayer Book** got translated in several versions, notably by William Tyndale and Miles Coverdale and introduced the "biblical dialect" in English prose. The vernacular language translations of the Bible culminated in King James I sanctioning the *Authorized Version* of the Bible in 1611. The dissolution of the monasteries between 1535 and 1539 (Legouis 68) gave rise to antiquarians and chroniclers like John Leland, Edward Hall, Raphael Holinshed, John Stow and John Speed. The Reformation manifested itself in literary movements in Scotland as well. The reduced influence of the church and the rise of Protestantism meant the beginning of the 'modern era'. In England the Act of Supremacy that declared the King as the Head of the Church of England was passed. The King began to confiscate church property,

demolishing some, and selling others. This helped in the growth of a new class of gentry who would patronize the arts and drama in the future. Elizabeth tried to reconcile the papists and the Protestants but neither was appeased by the measures she adopted and the Queen was to be troubled throughout her reign by the schism. The Reformation movement led to the dominance of Puritanism which gradually turned an enemy of drama and led to the closing of the theatres in 1642.

1.3.2 Drama in Transition

"None the less it is a fact that although the Renaissance and the Reformation beckoned her onwards to new paths, England remained more faithful to the past than did the Continent. This is explained by the increasing influence of the people, later exerted particularly strongly in the theatre; popular taste in literature is for things of the past." (Legouis 63)

English drama traces its origins to Christianity. Plays were written by priests and performed in the church precincts. Early plays were called 'Mysteries'—they took their stories from the Bible and 'Miracles'—those plays dealing with incidents in the lives of saints and martyrs. The miracle plays were viewed with disfavour by Protestants and Humanists. Later the plays shifted out of the church and into the market places. Four cycles of plays have been preserved—those of Chester, Coventry, York and Towneley. These plays contain religious instruction and sometimes crude jokes in the Biblical scenes. In *The Second Shepherd's Play* that you've read in Paper 1, remember how Mak steals a sheep and hides it in his wife's bed, passing it off as a baby in a cradle.

Drama evolved into the 'Morality play' which replaced Biblical characters with personified abstractions. Vice was a common and sometimes comic character in a Morality. A famous example of the Morality play was *Everyman*. "The Reformation early sought to use the moralities for her own ends; and the attempt was made simultaneously in Scotland and England." (Legouis 75) In Scotland Sir David Lyndsay and in England John Bale wrote moralities mingling the political or historical with the religious. Bale's *Kyng Johan* anticipates Shakespeare's *King John*. Skelton's morality *Magnyfycence* written about 1516 is the first example of a secular morality. It gives Henry VIII apparently a lesson in wisdom and against extravagance. The influence of the Renaissance appears more clearly in *The Four Elements* (1519) and the play of *Wyt and Science* (towards 1540). The next stage of drama was the 'Interludes'. These were short plays with mainly ordinary characters like citizens or

friars. There was broad farcical humour too. The Interlude was the predominant form of drama under the Tudors. John Heywood (1497?-1580?) showed a keen sense of stage-craft. Heywood's Interludes are comic dialogues or slight jesting scenes, based as a rule on French originals. The best known is *The Four P's* which involves a dispute between the Palmer, Pardoner, 'Pothecary (apothecary) and Pedlar about who can tell the biggest lie. "During 1520 to 1578 no masterpiece was produced." (Legouis 74)

Drama after 1550 shows the Classical influence: The "high comedy" of the first purely secular play in English, Henry Medwall's *Fulgens and Lucrece* (1497) had inspired no immediate successors. From 1550 onwards various writers produced original comic plays in English adopting the five-act structure, the unity of action and consistency of characterization from Latin playwrights like Plautus. Before 1552 Nicholas Udall wrote *Ralph Roister Doister*, a robust comedy. In the play Ralph is a braggart and a fool, Matthew Merygreke is inspired by the "parasite" figure of classical comedy and Dame Custance or Constance is a loyal English matron and her servants resemble real English servants. "Mirth", says Udall "prolongeth life and causeth health". (Legouis 76) *Gammer Gurton's Needle* (c.1559) acted in Cambridge is an equally vigorous native comedy. Mother Gurton loses her needle while mending the breeches (trousers) of her husband Hodge. The whole village is turned upside down and finally Hodge discovers the needle was all along in his breeches!

Romance was not considered necessary to comedy despite the success of Richard Edwards' lost plays *Damon and Pythias* (1564) and *Palamon and Arcite* (1566). Between 1550 and 1578 many English plays were performed. Some of these like *Appius and Virginia*, John Pikeryng's *A newe Enterlude of vice, conteyninge the History of Horestes...*(1597?) were like moralities, Thomas Preston's *Cambyses* (1569) was in form like a Shakespearean history play and Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra* (1578) was notable.

Early English Tragedy was shaped by the Senecan plays of Italy and by Seneca himself whose dramas were translated by 1581. The Senecan form was a vital influence in England and later playwrights adopted its pattern of high tragical action, the revenge motif, the ideas of fate and retribution told in blank verse, the mechanism of the supernatural in the shape of a ghost, the chorus and the play-within-a-play. *Gorbuduc* or *Ferrex and Porrex* (acted c.1561) was written jointly by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton. It was written in blank verse and had a loftiness of style. Gorboduc abdicates in favour of his two sons Ferrex and Porrex. The younger prince kills the elder. The Queen takes revenge for the murder. There

is rebellion, a civil war; the King and Queen are killed before things settle down. Spanish, Dutch and Italian plays also influenced the fledgling English theatre. Thomas Hughes' *Misfortunes of Arthur* (acted 1588) was an embryonic tragedy, lacking the vitality and vim of later tragedies. Gascoigne's *Jocasta* was acted in 1566 and was adapted from a play by Euripedes.

The History play was called the Chronicle play. John Bale's *King John* was a morality play with real figures from the reign of King John. *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, *The Troublesome reign of King John* were predecessors of the history plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare. All these playwrights transformed plots and writing material from different sources into plays reflecting the might of their ruler.

1.3.3 The Stage

It was the formation of companies of professional players and their patronage by powerful noblemen that helped to establish drama on a more secure footing. The first company to obtain a Royal grant of a patent was that of the Earl of Leicester in 1574. The performances took place at first in the inn-yards, but in 1576 the first theatre was built outside the city boundaries. James Burbage, a joiner by trade, erected a playhouse beyond the city walls. The playhouses included the Red Lion, the Theatre, the Curtain, the Rose, the Swan, Fortune, Red Bull, the Hope, Blackfriars, Whitefriars, Paul's and the most famous the Globe. The Shoreditch Theatre was either the "first or the second permanent playhouse constructed in Europe since late antiquity" (Mullaney 18). In his *The Schoole of Abuse* (1579) Stephen Gosson attacks and states a number of objections to public theatre. The real fear was that of the illusory effect a play could produce and thus seem like the work of the devil. By the end of the century the city was ringed with playhouses to the north and south, posted strategically outside the jurisdiction and powers of civic containment and control or in the "liberties". Here the citizens pursued pastimes in the gaming houses, marketplaces, taverns, bear-baiting arenas and brothels which stood beside monasteries, sites of executions and at the extreme ends leprosy or 'lazar' houses.

From 1594, London was where the players were officially licensed by the Privy Council to perform in their own custom-built playhouses, week after week and year after year. On this stage the actor was important. His dress was gaudy and expensive and his delivery and timing needed to be perfect. There were no women performers yet and boys or young male actors played those parts (which sometimes caused uneasiness and

disapproval). The audience was heterogeneous, made up of the "groundlings" and courtiers. Andrew Gurr's important study *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* shows how women also attended public theatres in significant numbers and included courtesans, aristocratic ladies and citizens' wives. Leading actors were very sought after and if they sometimes owned shares in the theatre they could make their fortune. Plays were later rehearsed before The Master of Revels before their public performance because theatre had become prominent and was therefore potentially dangerous. The story of companies between 1572 and 1642 is one of increasing royal favour and protection. Patrons included the Earls of Leicester, Essex, Sussex, Pembroke and Oxford, Lord Strange, Lord Admiral's Men, The Queen's Men, Lord Chamberlain's Men and later The King's Men in the time of James I. For nearly forty years London never had fewer than six playhouses with four regular companies (enjoying royal patronage), performing daily except on Sundays and for most of Lent, or when the plague set everyone apart.

1.3.4 The Dramatists and Their Plays

The number and diversity of the plays make classification difficult as does a lack of exact dates. The principal predecessors of Shakespeare in the history of English drama were the "University Wits". These were young men who were associated with Oxford and Cambridge universities that trained their students in rhetoric with the aid of Seneca, Terence and modern Latin imitations. The most notable were Marlowe, Greene, Peele, Kyd and Lyly. Among the plays acted before court were the plays of John Lyly (1554?-1606) whose comedies were euphuistic romances. These witty comedies like *Campaspe* (1581), *Sapho and Phao* (1582), *Endimion* (1586), *Midas* (1590) address and flatter the various attributes of the majesty of the queen, Elizabeth. The mythological pastorals were *Galathea*; *Love's Metamorphosis*, *The Woman in the Moon* and *Mother Bombie*. Lyly wrote a prose ('euphuistic') that was artificial in structure and language but refined in manner, witty and graceful beneath the artificiality. His plays paved the way for Shakespeare's *Love's Labour Lost*, *As You Like It* or *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

George Peele (1558-1597) also flatters Elizabeth in his graceful pastoral *The Arraygnement of Paris* (1581) He uses the same ornate manner in his scripture drama *The love of David and Fair Bethsabe, with the Tragedy of Absalon*. He turned to history in his rambling chronicle play *Edward I* and parodied the romanticists in *The Old Wives' Tale*. In the play Madge, the old wife begins to tell a story but breaks off after

several false starts, once the actors enter. In the story two brothers are seeking their sister who is under the spell of a magician.

Thomas Kyd (1558-1594) wrote *The Spanish Tragedie* which revealed great dramatic power as did another play written by an unknown author *Arden of Feversham* (1586). The latter play is based on details of a recent crime taken from Holinshed's Chronicle. The subject is the murder of a rich citizen, Arden, by the tailor Mosbie who is the lover of Alice, Arden's wife. Alice instigates Mosbie to commit the crime but dies repentant. The play has a striking realism. Kyd's play borrows heavily from Seneca, especially his scenes of horror, madness and the supernatural. *The Spanish Tragedie* is a revenge drama. Horatio is the son of Hieronimo, the marshal of Spain. He is murdered for daring to love Bel-Imperia, a Spanish princess. She and Hieronimo swear to discover the murderers and take revenge. Hieronimo pretends to be mad to find out his son's murderers. At Bel-Imperia's wedding where she is about to marry Horatio's murderer, Hieronimo enacts a play which enabled him to attend the wedding and at the same time take revenge. Every member of the wedding party is killed or kills himself. Kyd's revenge formula was successful and inspired many imitators. Kyd may have written a *Hamlet* twelve years before Shakespeare's famous play but it is now lost.

Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593) wrote a play that attracted as much attention as Kyd's play. This was *Tamburlaine Parts 1 and 2*. Marlowe was a University wit who graduated from the University of Cambridge. He brought his intellectual expertise to the profession of writing plays. His Tartar conqueror Timurlane was a humble shepherd who goes on to become the master of Asia and shows how man can aspire to the infinite. *Doctor Faustus* (1588) is based on a thirst for infinite knowledge. The main character Faustus sells his soul to the devil in exchange of twenty-four years of wish-fulfilment. The agony of Faustus as he realises at last the price he has to pay for his damnation is brilliant. In *The Jew of Malta* (1589) the Jew Barabas wants infinite riches. His greed makes him destroy several Christian enemies, his own daughter until he is caught in the very trap he sets for others. Marlowe's historical play *Edward II* is mature and its versification approaches the tone of the human voice. There are passages of lyricism but some scenes like the abdication and murder scenes are simply brilliant. The play begins with Edward's accession to the throne after the death of his father, it traces his troubled reign which came about because of his favouritism (Gaveston is his most favourite) and his clashes with his noblemen. The play culminates in Edward's murder and the accession of his able son Edward III who takes revenge. The Queen is a strong figure in the play. Marlowe made his heroes speak in 'high astounding terms' and their power instilled a sense of

patriotism in the hearts of his audiences. Marlowe writes in his Prologue to *Tamburlain*e that he will shape the diction and metre of drama away from the prevalent "... jigging veins of rhyming mother wits/ And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay."

Robert Greene (1560?-1592) imitated and parodied the extravagance of *Tamburlaine* in his *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (1587) and *Orlando Furioso* (1591). Greene wrote a play with Thomas Lodge entitled *The Looking Glass for London and England*. He returned to his own style in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (1589) and the pseudo-historical drama *The Scottish History of James IV slain at Flodden...* (1592) Greene has more suppleness and grace than Marlowe and his heroines like fair Margaret of Fressinfield; Ida and Dorothea foreshadow the romantic heroines of Shakespeare.

1.3.5 William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) "He was the man," said Dryden, "who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul." (Albert 106) In 1592 Robert Greene wrote in his book *A Groatsworth of Wit* about an "upstart crow" who was "the only Shakescene in the country". In 1595 Shakespeare's name appears on the payroll of the Lord Chamberlain's company of actors, who performed at the Court. This company also played in the provinces, especially during the plague of 1603, in the Shoreditch Theatre till it was demolished, in the Globe Theatre and finally after 1608 in the Blackfriars. During this period Shakespeare prospered and purchased property in Stratford and London. He was an actor also; tradition states he enacted the role of Adam in *As You Like It* and the Ghost in *Hamlet*, minor character roles. About 1610 Shakespeare left for Stratford and his connection with the acting company may have ended when the Globe theatre burned down during a performance of Henry VIII in 1613. Shakespeare died on April 23, 1616.

Shakespeare was a famous poet too. He wrote many sonnets and his lyricism found an expression in his plays as well. Mostly songs, they range from grace and rusticity in his comedies *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night* and last plays like *The Tempest* to wry humour, nonsense verse, as well as dirges in his famous tragedies. All the manuscripts of his plays have perished. During Shakespeare's lifetime 16 of his plays appeared singly in Quarto form, but they were unauthorized editions. In 1623, after Shakespeare's death, the First Folio edition edited by John Heminge and Henry Condell was printed containing 36 dramas, minus *Pericles*. Contemporary references like Elizabethan schoolmaster Francis Meres' book *Palladis Tamia, Wit's Treasury* (1598) mentions twelve of Shakespeare's plays and other works. The style of

the plays and internal references of contemporary events help in dating some of the plays. The dates are thus:

1591-92: 1 Henry VI, 2 Henry VI, 3 Henry VI

1593: Richard III, The Comedy of Errors

1594: Titus Andronicus, The Taming of the Shrew, Love's Labour's Lost, Romeo and Juliet

1595: A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, King John

1596: Richard II, The Merchant of Venice

1597: 1 Henry IV

1598: 2 Henry IV, Much Ado about Nothing

1599: Henry V, Julius Caesar

1600: The Merry Wives of Windsor, As You Like It

1601: Hamlet, Twelfth Night

1602: Troilus and Cressida, All's Well that Ends Well

1603: Theatres closed

1604: Measure for Measure, Othello

1605: Macbeth, King Lear

1606: Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus

1607: Timon of Athens

1608: Pericles (in part)

1609: Cymbeline

1610: The Winter's Tale

1611: The Tempest

1613: Henry VIII (in part)

Classification of the Plays according to Edward Albert:

1. The Early Comedies: these are relatively immature, the plots are less original, the characters less finished. *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* fall into this category.
2. The English Histories: These plays show a rapid maturing of Shakespeare's technique. The characters are increasingly complex and have depth. He mingles chronicle history and low life. There is more blank verse in the style. *Richard II*, *1 Henry IV*, *2 Henry IV* and *Henry V* fall into this category.
3. The Mature Comedies: The spirit of Shakespeare's comic genius expresses itself. There is the sophisticated wit of Beatrice and Benedick or the clowning of Dogberry and Verges in *Much Ado about Nothing*, the jovial robust humour of Sir Toby Belch in *Twelfth Night*, the lighter clowning of Sir Launcelot Gobbo in *The Merchant of Venice*, the urbane worldlywise humour of Touchstone in *As You Like It*. In style there is much prose and the plays reveal a vitality, warmth and humanity.
4. The Sombre Plays: These are comedies in the sense that their chief characters do not die but the tone is sombre and tragic. They reflect a cynical, disillusioned attitude to life and a fondness for objectionable characters and situations. *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida* fall in this category.
5. The Great Tragedies: These plays are supreme in intensity of emotion, depth of psychological insight, and power of style. They include *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear*.
6. The Roman Plays: These plays are written at wide intervals and based on North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*. *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus* soar in imagination and tragic power.
7. The Last Plays: The dramatist shows a mellowed approach in these plays, the style is more serene. *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* fall in this group.

Shakespeare's characters are memorable, his plays are quotable and the lines contain sweetness, flexibility, and rant where needed. Moving in the realm of poetry the plays express a vast gamut of human emotion and at all times reflect his genius.

1.3.6 Post – Shakespearean Drama to the closing of Theatres

Shakespeare's chief rivals were among the humanists. The hostility shown to him at the beginning by some of the University wits like Greene was renewed later by Chapman and Jonson. Ben

Jonson (1572-1637) was the most prominent of Shakespeare's contemporaries. But their styles are studies in contrasts. Jonson was a classicist and deliberately opposed popular taste. Jonson's really great play is his comedy *Everyman in his Humour* (1598). In *Everyman out of his Humour* (1599) Jonson portrays contemporary types. His Aristophanic comedies are *Cynthia's Revels* (1601) and the *Poetaster* (1602). The characters in the latter play satirized his fellow dramatists Marston and Dekker. *The Alchemist* (1610) is a great play. Its main figure Sir Epicure Mammon is a generalised type of human greed and extraordinary vitality. Subtle poses as an alchemist and draws around him a set of dupes and gulls who allow themselves to be cheated by the hope of sudden riches. Ultimately the chief dupers are duped. *Volpone, or the Fox* (1605) is a study of exploitation. The main character is a miserly sensualist. *Epicoene, or the Silent Woman* (1609) is more like the Comedy of Manners and the main character cannot tolerate noise. *Bartholomew Fayre* (or Fair, 1614) portrays Elizabethan London and satirizes the growing Puritanism of the day. In tragedy Ben Jonson was less successful. *Sejanus* (1603) and *Catiline* (1611) depict their Roman background faithfully but fall short of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Jonson's characters are "Humour" characters. One element in their nature is displayed throughout the play and exposed to ridicule. Taken from the prevailing medical belief that the human body is composed of four basic humours of fluids (blood, choler, melancholy and phlegm), they determine the characters of individuals. Too much of a particular humour throws a man's character off balance. Thus humour provided Jonson with tools for satire. He brought out the moral diseases of human nature. His humour characters would inspire later novelists like Fielding, Smollett and Charles Dickens.

George Chapman (1559-1634) was also a contemporary of Shakespeare. He translated Homer and wrote plays quite late in his life. His chief comedies are *Al Fooles*, *Monsieur d'Olive* and *The Gentleman Usher*. These comedies all published in 1605 and 1606 have a graceful style and pleasant wit. In his tragedies he gives way to romanticism, and shows the influence of Marlowe. Moral reflections of Greek and Latin authors peppered his plays. The best known tragedies, founded on contemporary French history, are *Bussy d'Ambois* (1598), *The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois* (1613), *The Conspiracie and Tragedie of Charles, Duke of Byron, Marshall of France* (1608). *The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois* is a kind of *Hamlet*. Bussy d'Ambois is assassinated and his brother Clermont who is a philosopher decides to avenge his death after much thought. Byron is depicted as a braggart, full of "overweening ambition" (Legouis 135) Chapman had a sound intellectual base and a romantic temperament but in his plays he sometimes lacked a sense of balance.

● **Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy**

✦ **John Marston** (1575?-1634) was "a ruffian in style" (Legouis 139) his plays have plenty of coarse and violent speech. His first plays like *Antonio and Mellida* (1600) and *Antonio's Revenge* are melodramas. They contain a few impressive passages of horror. His best plays are a kind of tragic-comedy cf. *The Malcontent* anticipates some of Shakespeare's last plays. His *The Dutch Courtezan* (1605) is a counterpart of Dekker's *The Honest Whore*. *The Parasitaster, or the Fawne* (1606) has heroines similar to Shakespeare's Beatrice and Rosalind but stained with a coarseness. He shared honours with Jonson and Chapman in writing *Eastward Hoe*. The play portrays the life of a tradesman, apprentices and the interior of middle-class households realistically. Marston was incisive and nervous, his talent helped his contemporaries.

Thomas Dekker (1570?-1632) Dekker unites everyday realism with irresistible romanticism. He struggled with poverty and years in a debtor's prison. He wrote mostly in collaboration with other dramatists. The gayest of his comedies is *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599). The hero is Simon Eyre, a jovial London shoemaker, who is vividly described as are his shrewish wife and his apprentices and journeymen. In *Old Fortunatus* (1599?) the poet Dekker is visible in the scene where the goddess Fortune appears with her train of cowned beggars and chained kings. His best known work is *The Honest Whore* which was published in two parts. The first part (1604) shows us the courtesan turning from her shame and responding to love. In the second part she is married to her first seducer, a terrible man, who tries to make her return to her old profession for gain. Unknown to them her father Orlando Friscobaldo is disguised as a servant and watches over her.

Thomas Heywood (1575?-1650) is the nearest to Dekker in terms of pity and gentleness and has been described by Lamb as 'a sort of prose Shakespeare' (Legouis 141). Like Dekker he kept his plays confined to the city and Heywood was an actor as well as playwright. He appeals to the patriotism of his audience sometimes and sometimes he appeals to honest emotion. In *The Foure Prentises of London, with the Conquest of Jerusalem* there is open flattery of the city. The citizens of London play chief parts in his *Edward IV*, *The Troubles of Queen Elizabeth* and *The Fayre Mayde of the Exchange*. Heywood succeeded best in domestic drama—*A Woman Kilde with Kindnesse*, acted in 1603 and *The English Traveller* (1633). A woman destroys her happy home by her adultery and her grieving husband banishes her in a fit of revenge. She suffers agonies of remorse and at last when her husband forgives her she dies in that instant. Heywood had an instinctive goodness, a broad pity for his fellow humans that was untouched by Puritan rigour.

Thomas Middleton (1580-1627) was a city chronologer and writer of municipal masques and pageants. He was attached to London like Dekker and Heywood and the city was the subject of his plays. Middleton was a cynic and like Jonson showed up the crooked ways and vices of the people. From 1604 to 1612 he wrote several lively comedies. The best are *Michaelmas Terme* (1604), *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, *A Mad World, My Masters*, *Your Five Gallants* (1606) and *A Chast Mayd in Cheap-side* (1612). The people who star in these plays are types of revellers, gamblers, thieves and vagabonds. Middleton showed vice openly on stage though he did not approve of it. Towards 1612 Middleton turned his hand to writing tragedies, sometimes in collaboration and showed great skill in doing so. *Women beware Women* deals with the scandalous crimes of the courtesan Bianca Capello and how she transforms from a pure, innocent loving wife into something horrifying. Middleton and the actor William Rowley (1585?-1642?) jointly wrote *A Faire Quarrell* (1617), *The Changeling* (1621) and *The Spanish Gipsie* (1623). *The Changeling* is their masterpiece, drawing horrifying events and bringing to life the character of De Flores with tragic force.

Cyril Tourneur turned to stark melodrama and threw a fantastic light on crime and torture. *The Revenger's Tragedie* (1607) and *The Atheist's Tragedie* (1611) are his major contributions. Vindice in the former play forces his mother to look her villainy in the face and the play has Italian garb.

John Webster (1575?-1625?) has written many plays, some in collaboration with other playwrights but is remembered for two outstanding dramas of horror—*The White Devil* or *Vittoria Corombona* (c.1611) and *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614) *The White Devil* is based on the character of the end of the sixteenth century Italian beauty Vittoria Accorambona who scandalized Rome with her crimes but Webster also makes us see her fascination even when she is at the centre of a wicked plot. There are extravagant scenes of physical horror and fantastic strangeness. *The Duchess of Malfi* centres on the love of the Duchess for her steward Antonio whom she marries to the disapproval of her brothers. Ultimately the Duchess is driven mad and dies and Bosola takes revenge on the guilty brothers as a manner of atonement. Webster's genius was individual.

John Fletcher (1579-1625) and his collaborators wrote several plays collected in the folio of 1647 and the folio of 1679. Fletcher (1579-1625) was inclined to write plays and made use of collaborative ventures to meet the players' needs. With **Francis Beaumont** (1584-1616) who was the son of a judge, Fletcher formed a friendship towards 1607. Separately Beaumont produced his comedy *The Woman Hater* and Fletcher his half-lyrical pastoral *The Faithfull Shepheardesse*. But they wrote comedies like *The Scorneful Ladie*, *The*

Knight of the Burning Pestle or tragicomedies like *Philaster* or pure tragedy like *The Maides Tragedy* and *A King and no King* (1611) together. All the plays demonstrate knowledge of stage-craft. With Shakespeare Fletcher collaborated on certain passages in *Henry VIII* and *Two Noble Kinsmen*. Fletcher had written many romantic tragedies alone like *The Tragedie of Valentinian*, *The Tragedie of Bonduca*, *The Loyal Subject* (1618) and *The Humourous Lieutenant* (1619). He also wrote comedies like *Monsieur Thomas*, *The Pilgrim* and *The Wild-Goose Chase*. Fletcher's chief helper after Beaumont was Philip Massinger. They wrote ten plays together, tragedies like *The False One* or comedies like *The Little French Lawyer*, *The Spanish Curate* and *The Beggar's Bush*.

● **Shakespeare's Successors till the closing of the theatre in 1642**

✦ **Philip Massinger** (1583-1639) was the playwright who dominated the stage both by the sheer number and quality of his plays. He combined Ben Jonson's exaggeration of human eccentricities and vices in his comedies with the romanticism of Fletcher in his tragedies. Massinger's drama is a "drama of ideas" (Legouis 148) His best comedies are *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (before 1626), *The City Madam* (1632) *The Guardian* (1633) and his serious plays are *The Fatall Dowry* (1619), *The Duke of Millaine* (1620), *The Unnatural Combat* (1621), *The Maid of Honour* (1626) among others.

John Ford (1586-1639?) wrote at the same time as Massinger but his plays were narrower in compass. He was a fatalist, morbid and convinced that passion justifies all things. He mainly collaborated with Webster, Dekker, and Rowley. His own works were produced between 1627 and 1633. He wrote a historical play *Perkin Warbeck* and tragedies like *The Lover's Melancholy*, *'Tis Pity Shee's a Whore*, *The Broken Heart* and *Love's Sacrifice*. Melodrama and morbidity mingle with incest unhappy virtue amidst perverse suffering. These themes label Ford's work as decadent but as an artist he ranks high.

James Shirley's (1596-1666) plays were more prolific and varied than Ford's. Lamb called him "the last of a great race". (Legouis 150) His tragedies like *The Traytor* (1631) and *The Cardinall* (1641) show the influence of Tourneur and Webster. There is more novelty in his comedies, lively sketches of fashionable life under Charles I, *The Wedding*, *Changes*, *Hyde Park*, *The Gamester* and *The Lady of Pleasure* written between 1626 and 1635. Shirley also wrote tragic-comedies in the style of Fletcher. There are many minor dramatists as drama grew greatly during the Renaissance. This growth stopped with the closing of the theatres by the order of Parliament in 1642.

1.3.7 Summing Up

- We should, on the basis of the foregoing discussion be able to have a fair idea of how the Renaissance and Reformation affected English drama.
- We should be able to trace the growth and transition from a drama that was religious and was performed on travelling stages to a drama that was secular and later led to permanent theatres being constructed for staging popular plays. We note the need for patronage and its influence on acting companies.
- We should have an idea of the major playwrights of the period and some of their plays; also note the variety as well as enormous output of such plays.
- We follow the progress of drama, till its decadence and decline until the closing of the theatres in 1642.

1.3.8 Activity Corner

- Many of these plays can be found on You Tube. View some.
- You can see films of Shakespearean plays made by the BBC production or American, English and other language versions which adapt these plays: *Twelfth Night* (UK, 1995), *Macbeth* (USA, 1948 dir: Orson Welles. UK, 1971 dir: Roman Polanski), *Throne of Blood* (Japan, 1957, dir: Akira Kurosawa adapts *Macbeth*), *Romeo and Juliet* (USA, 1996), *The Taming of the Shrew* (USA/ Italy, 1966), *Richard III* (UK, 1996), *Othello* (UK, 1995), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (UK, 1996. USA, 1999), *Julius Caesar* (USA, 1953), *King Lear* (UK, 1971. Japanese adaptation *Ran* by Kurosawa, 1985), *Hamlet* (UK, 1948 dir: Laurence Olivier. UK, 1990 dir: Franco Zeffirelli. UK, 1996 dir: Kenneth Branagh). Modern adaptations include *Ten Things I Hate About You*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *She's the Man*, *Tromeo and Juliet*, *West Side Story*, among countless others.
- Read Books which adapt Shakespeare's life or his plays like Angela Carter's *Wise Children* (several references), Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day* (*The Tempest* story) or Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres* (*King Lear*) or Kalyan Ray's *Eastwords (A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest* mainly).
- Look up on the net some words given to the English language by Shakespeare. He has many famous quotes which could be compiled. E.g. "To be or not to be"

1.3.9 Comprehension Exercises

Long Answer Type – 20 marks

1. Trace the growth of drama till the Renaissance.
2. Who were the 'University Wits' and what was their contribution to drama?
3. Write a note on English Revenge Tragedy.
4. Who were the predecessors of Shakespeare in English drama? Describe the contribution of two of them and indicate how they advanced drama.
5. Give an account of the works of William Shakespeare.
6. Describe the kind of plays that were written post- Shakespeare.

Medium Length Answers – 12 marks

1. Describe the importance of Ben Jonson and his drama.
2. Write a brief note on two dramatists who wrote after Shakespeare.
3. Describe the importance of Beaumont and Fletcher.
4. Mention the contribution of Ford and Massinger in English drama.

Short Answer Type – 6 marks

1. What is a Miracle and what is a Morality play?
2. What is an Interlude? Give an example.
3. Name the first English tragedy and give its author and date.
4. Name the first English comedy with its author and date.
5. When was the First Folio of Shakespeare published? Name the editors.
6. Who was Raphael Holinshed? Why is he memorable?
7. Name one comedy and one tragedy by Shakespeare.
8. Mention two tragedies by Ben Jonson.
9. What is the Comedy of Humours? Give an example.
10. Give two examples of Elizabethan City Comedy and state their playwrights.

11. When was the first English theatre constructed? In which year did the theatres close?
12. Name two revenge tragedies and their dramatists.
13. Who was Seneca? Name an English play written under his influence?
14. Name one play by John Ford and one play by Philip Massinger.

1.3.10 Suggested Readings

General

1. Edward Albert (ed.) *History of English Literature*, OUP, India, 5th edn, 1979 rev. J.A.Stone.
2. David Daiches, *A Critical History of English Literature*, Vols. 2 and 3, Special Indian Edition, Supernova Publishers and Distributers Pvt. Ltd., 2001
3. Boris Ford (ed). *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature, Vol. 2, The Age of Shakespeare*. Penguin Books Ltd, 1955.
4. Emile Legouis, *A Short History of English Literature* OUP, India, 2006.
5. Andrew Sanders, *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*, OUP, 2000.

Drama

Muriel Bradbrook, *Themes and Conventions in Elizabethan Tragedy*, CUP, Cambridge, 1936.

E.K Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols., OUP, Oxford, 1923.

John. D Cox, and, David Scott Kastan , (eds.) *A New History of Early English Drama*, New York, 1997.

Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, CUP, Cambridge, 3rd edn, 2004.

Hattaway, Michael, *Elizabethan Popular Theatre*, London, 1982.

Allardyce Nicoll, *Stuart Masques and the Renaissance Stage*, London, 1938.

Module - 2 ❐ Reading Poetry

Unit - 1 ❐ Thomas Wyatt: 'Farewell Love' Philip Sidney: 'Loving In Truth'

Structure

2.1.0. Introduction

In this unit we shall give you an idea of the development of the sonnet form in England during the Renaissance i.e. the reign of Queen Elizabeth. You need to remember that the sonnet was a relatively recent poetic form that was imported into England as a result of the Renaissance. The poems in this unit belong to this early category; hence they will provide you an understanding of how the form was gradually being domesticated in English literature. An in-depth analysis of the two poems, one each by Sir Thomas Wyatt and Sir Philip Sidney will introduce the learners to the conventions and conceits prevalent in the earliest traditions of sonnet-writing in

English literature. The themes of virtue, love, beauty and courtly decorum will be discussed and explored in detail.

2.1.1. The Sonnet Form

A sonnet is basically a fourteen line lyric which follows a particular rhyme scheme. It takes its name from the Italian 'sonnetto' which literally means 'little song'. In the Elizabethan Age, it was introduced to English literature by Thomas Wyatt, who is famous for his translations and adaptations of the great works of Francesca Petrarch, the Italian master of the sonnet. A Petrarachan sonnet is usually divided into an octave (containing eight lines) and a sestet (containing six lines) and following the rhyme scheme *abbaabba cdecde* or *abbaabba cdcdcd*. Wyatt was the first to initiate this verse form into English from Italy during the Renaissance. Between 1593 and 1600, there was a burst of writing in this particular genre.

2.1.2. The Elizabethan Conceit

A conceit is a fanciful idea, generally expressed through a decorative comparison or metaphor (a simile where the comparison is implied and not stated). The sonnet tradition endorsed the employment of elaborate conceits in Elizabethan poetry. The conventional sentiments of the poet-lover, as popularised by the classical poets like Petrarch and Dante, found perfection in the conceits rendered by the English sonneteers. The stereotypical ideals of courtly society usually portrayed the lover as a humble, subservient persona in awe of the pure, uncorrupted beloved, who was always placed on a pedestal to be worshipped. The poet-speaker would constantly try to immortalise the lady love's beauty by drawing extravagant analogies to describe her figure and charm. These conceits were often far-fetched and founded on impossible standards of external feminine beauty. E.g: Skin described 'as fair as snow', or lips 'as red as ruby' etc. The Platonic concept of love being an emotion which rises above physical attraction can also be traced in the devotion of the speaker.

2.1.3. Life and Works of Thomas Wyatt

Thomas Wyatt, the Elder was the son of Henry and Anne Wyatt, born in Allington Castle, Kent 1503. In 1516 he entered the University of Cambridge and was married to Elizabeth Brooke, the daughter of Lord Cobham. He was introduced to the court of King Henry VIII at a very young age and was sent to a number of diplomatic missions

to foreign lands like France and Rome. He received the knighthood in 1535, but later he was imprisoned in the Tower of London for unruly behaviour. After his release, he was sent to Spain as an ambassador. He was imprisoned a second time for suspected treachery, a charge of which he was later acquitted. He died in 1542 and none of his poems were published during his lifetime.

Wyatt is credited with having introduced the Italian sonnet form and the **terza rima** to English poetry. Ninety six of his poems were published in 'Songs and Sonnetts Written By the Ryght Honorable Lord Henry Howard, late Earle of Surrey, Thomas Wyatt the Elder and others' (*Tottel's Miscellany),* which were basically courtly verse written in imitation of Petrarch (e.g. 'I find no peace, and all my war is done', 'How oft have I, my dear and cruel foe'). Some of his popular poems include 'Lux, my fair Falcon', 'Forget not yet', and 'Whoso List to Hunt' (supposed to be dedicated to Anne Boleyn, the second wife of King Henry VIII).

2.1.4. TEXT of *Farewell Love*

This sonnet was published in *Tottel's Miscellany* in1557 with the title "A Renouncing of Love."

Farewell Love and all thy Laws for ever

Sir Thomas Wyatt

Farewell love and all thy laws forever;
Thy baited hooks shall tangle me no more.
Senec and Plato call me from thy lore
To perfect wealth, my wit for to endeavour.
In blind error when I did persever,
Thy sharp repulse, that pricketh aye so sore,
Hath taught me to set in trifles no store
And scape forth, since liberty is lever.
Therefore farewell; go trouble younger hearts
And in me claim no more authority.
With idle youth go use thy property
And thereon spend thy many brittle darts,
For hitherto though I have lost all my time,
Me lusteth no lenger rotten boughs to climb.

2.1.5. Notes and References (Glossary)

Farewell love: An example of personification, where the abstract emotion of love is granted human characteristics.

Thy: Archaic word for 'your'.

Laws: Rules and conventions.

Here we see that the speaker is disillusioned with the noble concept of love and discovers that romantic love has limitations.

Baited hooks: The metaphor or implicit comparison is derived from fishing. Just as fishermen attach bait (piece of food) to the fishing hook to catch fish, the speaker believes that young men are trapped in to falling in love. Hence love is deceptive.

Tangle: Snare, capture

Senec: Lucius Annaeus Seneca (c. 4 BC-AD 65) was a Roman philosopher, rhetorician, and dramatist. Wyatt was an admirer of the works of Seneca and even translated some of his writings. Seneca was a stoic thinker who established his theory of the rationality of the human mind, its virtue and ethics. The figure of speech used here is known as Allusion.

Plato: Plato (428–348 B.C.) was a Greek philosopher and poet. According to him, love as an emotion must be chaste, pure (almost divine) and non-sensuous or non-sexual in nature. The figure of speech used here is known as Allusion.

Lore: Wisdom or knowledge

Wealth: The mind's well-being

'In blind error when I did': The figure of speech used here is known as transferred epithet. The adjective 'blind' actually qualifies the speaker 'I' and not 'error'.

Persever: Persevere**;** keep trying

Repulse: Rejection, refusal

Pricketh: To sting (like a sharp-pointed needle or arrow)

'Hath taught me to set in trifles no store' : This is an example of inversion

Aye : all

Sore : Painful, injurious

Hath : has

Trifles: false stories told to fool or cheat someone

Store: value

Scape forth: venture forward, move on

Lever: preferable

Authority: Right

Idle youth: immature young people (they fall in love easily). The figure of speech synecdoche is employed here.

Property: good looks, charm

Thereon: next

Hitherto: from now onwards

Brittle darts: Fragile arrows. The God of Love, Cupid, according to Greek mythology is blind. He shoots arrows from his bow to make people fall in love with each other and thus love is often referred to as blind or misleading.

Lusteth: want

Lenger: archaic word for 'longer'

Rotten boughs to climb: Climbing rotten branches of trees. Proverbially, 'climbing boughs' is one of the heroic deeds done out of chivalry to prove one's love.

2.1.6. Discussion and Analysis

- **SYNOPSIS:**

The speaker rejects or bids farewell to love (or, the object of his love) and all its complicated rules forever. He personifies the emotion of love and asserts that love and its puzzling ways cannot entrap him anymore. He is rather going to follow the teachings of the great philosophers Seneca and Plato, who treated the concept of love rationally and logically. He believes, he will gain true knowledge and wisdom in this manner and be able to restore his mental well-being and wit. In the next lines, the speaker, obviously a rejected lover, addresses his beloved directly and declares how he had been mistaken in long suffering her resistance, which had been quite painful. This experience had taught him a valuable lesson. He will no longer attach value to such emotions and escape from the clutches of love, which will eventually give him freedom. The speaker equates love with pain, and declares that he would prefer to be free of its past memories.

In the sestet, the poet repeats his farewell to his beloved (whom we may accept as a lady, taking into account the conventional practices of Elizabethan love poetry) and adds that since his heart no longer belongs to her, she can perhaps go and fall in love with other young men. This line may also indicate the fact that love affects and beguiles young people easily. Her beauty and youth may attract other young men who are immature, just like he had once been. Again, the word 'property' may refer to Cupid's arrows. Cupid the God of love, according to Greek mythology is portrayed as a child who shoots a pair of golden arrows from his bow. Once these arrows pierce the hearts of their targets (one male and one female), the two people fall in love. Hence the affected lovers are not really the ones choosing their partners and are completely helpless to prevent this emotion. He compares the beloved's fickle looks (or love's ever-changing nature) to these arrows or darts, which prick to cause pain and are easily broken. Finally he rues the time that he has wasted in courting her and repents his efforts spent in winning her grace. He finally declares that he is past that age and wishes no longer to prove his love to her by accomplishing heroic deeds. The speaker refers to rotten branches in order to show how his love has died and how no new growth of their relationship is now possible.

- **CRITICAL EVALUATION:**

According to Harry Blamires "At his best Wyatt has an intensity of feeling, an unaffectedness of phrase, and a directness of tone which, contained within a pressurized rhythmic pattern, sweep the reader into intimate involvement with him. One is carried on the tide." [1]

Most of the poems by Wyatt are acutely gloomy and melancholic in tone. The stock element of a disillusioned lover, who is separated from or forsaken by an unkind mistress, is found again and again. The lover blames the lady for being unyielding and unfeeling, curses the past now that he is disillusioned and questions the nature of love that misleads the young so easily. However, unlike the Latin models, in this sonnet, the octet and sestet does not really provide a contrast in the emotions depicted and the entire sonnet is built upon a single argument.

- **MAJOR THEMES**

- **Logic vs. Emotion**: The poet tries to show the distinction between the two forms of love- one, the romantic love that young people express for one another and two, the spiritual love that philosophers like Plato and Seneca rationalised logically in

their works. The poet comes to the conclusion that in keeping himself separate from the pangs of disappointed love he will be able to uplift his mental powers.

- **Inconstancy of the beloved**: The poet had tried very hard and endeavoured for a long time to please the beloved and win her approval. But having failed in this, he feels bitter and ill-used. He thinks his lady love has toyed with his heart and now that he has let go of his fancy, she is free to conquer the hearts of other young men.

- **The Deceptive nature of Love**: Love as an emotion is personified in this poem as an illusory creature which entraps young immature people with its 'hooks'. The poet realises that love is hurtful, unfair, and deceiving. He had been blind and foolish in trying to attain it and now that he is heart-broken, he understands that he is too old and tired for such an experience anymore. Thus he bids farewell to love forever.

- **STRUCTURE AND FORM:** Rhyme scheme: *abbaabba cddcee.*It is a Petrarchan sonnet with a variation in the rhyme scheme of the couplet. G. Puttenham described the style adopted by the early Renaissance poets as having lofty conceits, lucid language and precise expressions. The sonnet, due to its condensed form, had to rely on the compactness of phrases, directness of address and a balanced metre.

- **STYLE:** It must be remembered that Wyatt gave the English sonnet a new level of craftsmanship. Through rigorous practice, he perfected the form and made way for the later poets. His sonnets are neither completely classical nor entirely romantic in tone. Rhetoric was given plenty of importance in this age. Poetry was meant for the upper classes and it was not just a matter of recreation. It instructed the noble minds while delighting the senses. A perfect combination of sentiment, imagery and logical precision was the main requisite of a successful sonnet. The sonneteer would draw images from nature and employ them in a coherent manner in order to express his logical argument. Wyatt reveals a typically Elizabethan individualism and love for rationality in his sonnets.

2.1.7. Summing Up

- A rejected lover addresses the abstract concept of love (or his former beloved).
- Rejection of love and complete disillusionment on the part of the speaker.
- Faith in philosophy and reason restored and a wish to return to the dictates of Seneca and Plato.
- Evoking the image of the cruel beloved who is beautiful but fickle in love.
- Love equated with blindness, misery and youthful fancy.
- Pessimistic tone.

2.1.8. Comprehension Exercises

Long Answer Type (20 marks)

1. Attempt a critical appreciation of the poem 'Farewell Love'.
2. Discuss the main theme of the poem 'Farewell Love' with special reference to the typical Elizabethan conventions employed.

Medium Length Type (12 marks)

3. Comment on the use of imagery in this sonnet.
4. Analyse the treatment of love in Wyatt's sonnet 'Farewell Love'.
5. Comment on the note of melancholy in this sonnet.

Short Answer type (6 marks)

6. Explain with reference to context the following lines:

   a) "For hitherto though I have lost all my time,

   Me lusteth no longer rotten boughs to climb."

   b) "Thy baited hooks shall tangle me no more.

   Senec and Plato call me from thy lore."

2.1.9. Activity Corner

Read the following poem and see whether it is similar to the poem given in your syllabus. With help from your counselor, compare/contract the two poems.

Sonnet LXXXVII: 'Farewell ! Thou art too dear for my possessing'

William Shakespeare

Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing,
And like enough thou knowst thy estimate.
The Charter of thy worth gives thee releasing;
My bonds in thee are all determinate.
For how do I hold thee but by thy granting,
And for that riches where is my deserving?
The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,
And so my patent back again is swerving.
Thy self thou gav'st, thy own worth then not knowing,
Or me, to whom thou gav'st is, else mistaking,
So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,
Comes home again, on better judgement making.
Thus have I had thee as a dream doth flatter:
In sleep a king, but waking no such matter.

2.1.10. Life and Works ðf Philip Sidney

Sir Philip Sidney, the eldest son of Sir Henry Sidney was born in 1554 to an aristocratic family and educated at Oxford University. He was an illustrious member of the Elizabethan court and took part in the military expedition against Spain. He lost his life in 1586, at the young age of 32 in the battle near the city of Zutphen. He was awarded the knighthood for his immense contribution to the Elizabethan court. He was a poet, scholar, soldier, diplomat, literary critic and statesman par excellence. His sequence of 108 love sonnets and 11songs titled ***Astrophel and Stella*** was published in 1591 after his death and was heavily influenced by the works of Ronsard and Petrarch's sonnets (that were dedicated to his lady love Laura). He wrote the lyrics for his beloved **Penelope Devereux**, daughter of the Earl of Essex, whom he was supposed to marry. However, their wedding never took place since his parents

objected to that union and Penelope went on to marry Lord Rich. Sidney married Frances Walsingham, daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham, in September 1583. Critics believe that it was around this time that these sonnets were composed and his wife never really objected to them. "Astrophel" is a combination of two Greek words meaning '**star-lover'** and "Stella" in Latin means '**star**'. The first 35 poems introduce Stella and concentrate on Astrophel's adoration for her; the next one addresses Stella directly and then the rest go on to praise her and win her affection. 'Stella oft sees the very face of woe', 'With how sad steps, O Moon', and 'Come sleep' are examples of some sonnets included in this compilation. Verses on various other themes by Sidney were published under the title 'Certain Sonnets' included in the 1598 edition of The Countess of Pembroke's ***Arcadia***. He wrote the prose piece **'A Defence of Poesy'** against Gosson's 'Schoole of Abuse', defending the position of poetry in the world of art.

2.1.11. Text of *Loving in Truth*

'Loving in Truth' ***(From Astrophel and Stella*****)**

Sir Philip Sidney

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,
That she, dear she, might take some pleasure of my pain,—
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain,—
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe;
Studying inventions fine her wits to entertain,
Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburn'd brain.
But words came halting forth, wanting invention's stay;
Invention, Nature's child, fled step-dame Study's blows;
And others' feet still seem'd but strangers in my way.
Thus great with child to speak and helpless in my throes,
Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite,
"Fool," said my Muse to me, "look in thy heart, and write."

2.1.12. Notes and References (Glossary)

Fain in love: eagerly longing for love; also a play on the word 'feigning', which means 'to pretend'. The lover has undertaken the task of duplicating his true emotions on paper in the form of verses.

Grace: favour ; the word' grace' also has a religious connotation. Since the beloved is put on a pedestal and worshipped by the lover in the tradition of Elizabethan courtly love, her 'grace' or 'mercy' has to be earned by him (i.e. the devotee).

Pity: Compassion, kindliness. The beloved is often portrayed as unfeeling, unyielding and cold. Hence the lover hopes that his hard work and labour (in writing the poem) might earn some compassion from the beloved.

Blackest face of woe: Use of personification; 'woe' i.e. anguish or, misery is portrayed as having a dark- coloured appearance.

Inventions: Poetic trends already established by other poets. A method of imitation commonly practised by Renaissance poets was called 'Inventio'. This referred to consulting manuals of classical rhetoric and lists of acceptable figures of speech to insert in their works.

Wits: Intellectual faculty

Entertain: Amuse or interest

Turning others' leaves: Turning the pages of books (compilations of poetry) written by great poets before him.

Fruitful: Productive, Rewarding

Showers: Rainfall. Here the metaphor refers to an inspiring agent.

Sunburnt brain: The poet compares his brain to a dry, arid plain which is thirsty for rain, i.e. fresh, new ideas.

Halting forth: Stumbling or stopping altogether

Wanting: Inadequate

Invention's Stay: Breaking the flow of creativity.

Step-dame study's blows: 'Study' is personified here as a 'stepmother'. The figurative child 'creativity' flees when beaten or forced by 'study' to produce art.

Others' Feet: the works of other poets; a play on 'metrical feet'.

Throes: a severe pang of pain

Great with child: pregnant; this metaphor is employed to compare the artist's production of ideas to the act of giving birth by a mother.

Truant: absentee, since the pen refuses to write.

Spite: Malice

Muse: Divine inspiration; according to Greek mythology the Muses were nine sisters, the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, who inspired the arts and sciences.

2.1.13. Discussion and Analysis

- **SYNOPSIS:** The sonnets included in Philip Sidney's 'Astrophel and Stella' are autobiographical in nature and express his intense personal emotions. Sidney's love for Penelope Devereux was unfulfilled in real life and just like his fictional lover, Astrophel, he was a silent gazer who worshipped his beloved from a distance. The first sonnet in this collection is titled 'Loving in Truth'. First and foremost it is a love poem where a lover's sincere feelings find tender expression. Secondly, it is an introspective poem which deals with a poet's dilemma of producing and perfecting his art. The poet-speaker wishes to draw the attention of his lady love and it is through his poetic composition that he wishes to impress her. He believes that his verse might be able to gain her favour and approval.

  The poem opens with a confession as the poet declares that his love is honest and true. But when he tries to show that through his poetry, he fails. In the next few lines he goes on to list his expectations. He hopes that his lady love would be pleased by seeing the painstaking effort he takes in composing the poem. Thus, she would oblige him further by reading his compositions and thereby gain the knowledge that he loves her dearly. Finally, she may take pity on the hopeful lover and eventually return his love. In order to entertain the lady love, the speaker knows that his verse must be superlative. Hence he searches for perfect words and phrases to relate his sad, suffering condition. Unfortunately, he lacks ideas. He then expects poetry written in books by other great poets to refresh and influence him just like fresh rain refreshes the sun-dried earth.

  The sestet reinforces the idea that words fail him and he finds it rather difficult to

compose verses naturally. He knows that 'creativity' or 'invention' is a natural process, pure and spontaneous. It is impossible to manufacture it through study, an artificial method. He refers to 'study' as a stepmother who cannot force the child 'invention' into submission. The words and expressions of other poets appear to be strangers to his personal thoughts. He gets frustrated and bites his pen in annoyance. He feels helpless and hates himself as all his efforts prove to be fruitless. In the last line to the poem, suddenly he finds an answer to his dilemma. His Muse, the inspiring agent, whispers to him to look inside his heart and then write. The advice is simple yet apt. Words relating the sincerest feelings can only come straight from the heart and not through external, logical devices.

- **CRITICAL EVALUATION:** Through this work, Sidney approaches the dominant poetic conventions of his time. In the sonnet – sequence 'Astrophel and Stella', the lover pleads with his mistress, begs for her reciprocal love, at times fails to resist the temptation of kissing her and thereby angers her. Stella leaves him towards the end, making room for meditative and contemplative verses. Sidney was deeply influenced by the styles of Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey, and carried on the legacy of the 14th century Italian poet Petrarch. Literary critics of the 19th century regarded this compilation as a groundbreaking picture of Renaissance court life, since it presented a rather bold declaration of love on the part of Sidney towards a woman married to another man. But in the 20th century, the focus shifted on the distinction between secular and religious aspects in the poems, as well as the physical and the psychological motivations of the speaker. The lover is neither satisfied in the end nor rejected completely.

  A.C. Hamilton writes, "As one 'loving in truth', the lover plans so to entertain his lady by his sonnets...The argument of the sonnet is that he may write not because he reads what other lovers have written but because he truly loves. The forcibleness of his passion is shown in the dynamic clash of verbs: 'loving... studying ... turning', rising to the intensity of 'Biting...beating', and ending with the simple, double imperative 'look...write'." [2]

- **MAJOR THEMES:**

✦ **Earthly lover and the idealised lady love:** True to the popular conventions of his time, Sidney's speaker Astrophel is the hopeless, humble, 'storm-tossed' lover, who worships his 'guiding star' Stella from a distance. The lady love is an unattainable figure,

who is all purity of heart and grace. The earthly lover must woo her tirelessly to win her consent. The 'dear she' is shy, chaste and virtuous whereas the lover is ever faithful. He charts the movement of her emotions through his verse. Pleasure may turn to knowledge of the poet's sincerity and that knowledge will evoke her sympathy. Finally he hopes that pity will transform to love.

- **Spontaneous art vs. Logical compositions:** The poet- speaker hints at the paradoxical nature of his artistic attempt, right from the onset of the sonnet. It is difficult to mould words which express spontaneous emotions into the brief sonnet form. Renaissance art laid much emphasis on precision of form and elegance of composition. The lover's feelings are genuine, yet when it comes to arranging them neatly for his beloved to read, he finds himself at a loss for words. The poet wishes to give the lady pleasure out of his creation, but himself feels the pain of composing his art. The reader can imagine that perhaps in the past the lover had tried to win her heart through verbal declarations of his love and having failed in that effort, now tries a different approach. The sonnet reveals the typical Renaissance attitude to love, which brings the head and heart together.

- **Renaissance poetry and classical imitation:** The poets during the Renaissance in England concerned themselves with ordering their passionate utterances within the framework of classical rhetoric. They studied the Italian and Latin masters like Dante and Petrarch, and imitated their poetic styles. Thus, the lover in the poem turns the pages of the books written by his predecessors and tries to draw inspiration from them. However, English poetry also saw the emergence of newer verse metres during this age, along with experimentation in the rhyme- scheme and use of well-crafted, original conceits. Hence, finally the poetic Muse correctly advises the poet to follow his own heart. Here we can almost read Sidney's own self-conscious attempt to claim his original technique and shake off the overwhelming influence of the classical masters.

- **STRUCTURE AND FORM:** Sidney introduces variations in the octave-sestet structure of the **Petrarchan form.** The rhyme scheme of the octave is ***abababab*** and that of the sestet is ***cdcdee.*** The ending couplet balances the main idea of the sonnet and provides a final resolution for the poet's problem.Each line consists of twelve syllables, hence are Alexandrines.

- **STYLE :** Though autobiographical, the sonnet reflects ingenuity through the use of well-phrased analogies i.e. conceits. The formality of construction, witty use of metaphors and bitter-sweet tone make the lyric both dramatic and elegant. The classical conventions

are maintained to reflect the mood of the lover, who is in turn optimistic and hopeless. The metrical regularity of his verses and sophistication of style adds to the sonnets appeal.

2.1.14. Summing Up

- It is a powerfully dramatic and original sonnet, which rises above its autobiographical elements.
- The poet is modest and self-conscious about his art. He does not hide his shortcomings.
- The lover relates his personal experience taking the reader into confidence. His love is both ennobling and despairing.
- Conceits are developed wittily and used with rhetorical ingenuity.
- The couplet resolves the poet's dilemma with the Muse asserting that true art does not need external stimulus. It springs from the inner core of the heart.

2.1.15. Comprehension Exercises

Long Answer Type : 20 marks

1) Analyse and comment on the characteristic of the Elizabethan sonnet with reference to the sonnet by Philip Sidney, in your syllabus.

2) Discuss the distinctive features of the sonnet as revealed in Sidney's 'Loving in Truth'.

3) How does Sidney combine traditional and individual elements in his sonnet 'Loving in Truth'?

Medium length : 12 marks

4) Discuss the nature of love as portrayed in 'Loving in Truth'.

5) Examine the imagery employed in 'Loving in Truth'.

Short Answer type : 6 marks

6) Attempt an analysis of the structure and style of the sonnet by Philip Sidney given in your syllabus.

7) Explain with reference to the context:

a) "Studying inventions fine her wits to entertain,
Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburn'd brain."

b) "Fool," said my Muse to me, "look in thy heart, and write."

2.1.16. Activity Corner:

Read the following poem and see whether it is similar to the poem given in your syllabus. With help from your counselor, compare/contract the two poems.

Amoretti LXXV : 'One Day I Wrote her Name'

Edmund Spenser

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,
But came the waves and washed it away:
Again I wrote it with a second hand,
But came the tide, and made my pains his prey.
"Vain man," said she, "that dost in vain assay,
A mortal thing so to immortalize;
For I myself shall like to this decay,
And eke my name be wiped out likewise."
"Not so," (quod I) "let baser things devise
To die in dust, but you shall live by fame:
My verse your vertues rare shall eternize,
And in the heavens write your glorious name:
Where, when as death shall all the world subdue,
Our love shall live, and later life renew."

2.1.17. Comprehensive Reading List

Shakespeare and Elizabethan Poetry: M.C. Bradbrook

Sir Thomas Wyatt and his background: Patricia Thomson

Elizabethan Poetry: Lyrical and Narrative: A Casebook. Ed. Gerald Hammond

Sir Philip Sidney: John Addington Symonds

Elizabethan Sonnets: Sidney Lee

A Short History of English Literature. Harry Blamires. London: Routlegde, 1974

Sir Philip Sidney: A Study of His Life and Works. A.C. Hamilton. C.U.P, 1977

Unit-2 ❐ William Shakespeare : Sonnets
‘Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day’ (18)
‘That time of year thou may’st in me behold’ (73)

Structure

2.2.0 Introduction

In Module 1 Unit 2 and in Module 2 Unit 1 you have been introduced to the rise of the sonnet as a significant poetic form in England of the Renaissance. The present unit seeks to acquaint you with what is considered the most mature and best expression of the English sonnet - the Shakespearean sonnet. You will be shown how the sonnet evolved both in form and content from the early practitioners in English who were mostly adapting Petrarchan themes in their efforts to give this new found literary type a sound footing in English. The spotlight will be on two particular poems that are chosen in your syllabus. You will be expected to understand Shakespeare’s contribution to the maturing of the sonnet form, and develop a fair idea of the kind of ‘sonneteering’ practised by him. In fact Shakespeare so popularised the sonnet as a poetic form that it is still known by his name to this day and celebrated across the world as a

fine example of love poetry. This 'love' however takes different and complex forms, so much so that there are still endless debates on it. This happens largely because of the very Shakespearean trademark of introducing the sudden *volta* (comes from Italian and literally means turn of thought). Effectively, this becomes an implicit questioning of the very form or content he is describing and using. As learners, you are therefore encouraged to analyse the sonnets closely, discover the adept use of all such poetic devices, and go through the activities suggested so that there is a comprehensive understanding.

2.2.1 : A Recap of the Elizabethan Sonnet Tradition

You have already learnt in the previous unit that a sonnet is a lyric poem consisting of a single stanza of fourteen iambic pentameter (a line having a total of ten syllables) lines linked by an intricate rhyme scheme. The Italian or Petrarchan sonnet named after the fourteenth century Italian poet Petrarch is usually divided into an Octave of eight lines and a Sestet of six lines. The rhyme scheme of the Octave was usually a-b-b-a-a-b-b-a and for the Sestet it was either c-d-e-c-d-e or c-d-c-c-d-c. Petrarch's sonnets as in the collection *Canzoniere* describes the idealized beloved desired by the poet/lover who elaborates her beauty and longs for her. The beloved in such poetic tradition is mostly difficult to win and it is perhaps this difficulty that further enhances the poet/speaker's attraction towards her. The medium of poetry becomes the elusive space of union that can only be dreamt of by the lover. The Sestet would usually bring a turn of thought to that narrated in the Octave. In that sense you might also say that the Petrarchan sonnet tradition looks upon homosexual love from a position of relative inequality between the lover and his beloved.

The Elizabethan sonnet introduced both formal and thematic changes in the sonnet. It was introduced by Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey in the early sixteenth century in England. Their sonnets were chiefly translations from Petrarch's Italian and Ronsard's French sonnets. The Earl of Surrey in fact gave this English form of the sonnet a rhyming metre and divided the poem into quatrains different from their original format. At first their translations circulated in manuscripts only. They were later published in Richard Tottel's *Songes and Sonnets* also known as Tottel's *Miscellany* in 1557.

While Wyatt and Surrey's sonnets were important for acquainting English poets with the form, it was Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* (1591) which really popularized the sonnet sequence in England and started the trend of sonneteering amongst poets of the

Elizabethan era. Some of the well-known English poets of the time who proved their mettle in the form are Edmund Spenser, Michael Drayton, Samuel Daniel, Fulke Greville, William Drummond of Hawthornden and, of course, Shakespeare among many others. For most of these poets, their sonnets were inspired by the Petrarchan tradition, describing the poet's love for a woman in idolized and idealized terms. The lady is seated on a pedestal too high to be reached and won.

Shakespeare introduces many changes as he plays upon the Petrarchan theme to write about the poet's love for a young man, a dark unconventional mistress and also a rival poet with whom the poet competes for the fair youth's attention. When he does describe the 'Dark Lady' of his sonnets the terms used make fun of the Petrarchan idealizations, bringing his readers face to face with reality and its multiple and complex emotions. Idealized love is instead reserved for the Fair Youth of his sonnets who he eulogizes, praises, desires but is unable to own or be united with permanently. These sonnets then become a space for reflection on various other themes such as death, mortality, politics, immortality wrought through verse, sexual desire and conventions that define beauty and gender. In comparing the early and later Elizabethan sonnet tradition, you can thus understand how the dramatic genius of Shakespeare affected in a positive way and brought about a maturing effect in poetry.

In the Shakespearean sonnet, the poem is rhythmically divided into three quatrains and a couplet, usually rhymed as a-b-a-b, c-d-c-d, e-f-e-f, g-g in iambic pentameter. Most of the sonnets published in the 1609 quarto are in this schema, except sonnets 99, 126 and 145. The unexpected *volta* usually appears in the couplet where a new perspective is added to the theme of the poem and is intrinsic to the charm of the Shakespearean sonnet.

Activity for the learner

Make a comparative study of the pre-Shakespearean and Shakespearean sonnets in your syllabus. You could focus on areas like Theme, Versification, Rhyme scheme, reversal or parallelism in the development of the thought process. Identify what we have called the 'volta' here. You may take help from your counselor in doing this.

2.2.2: Brief overview of Shakespeare's Sonnets

● **History**

Shakespeare's sonnets appeared in Quarto form in 1609 when it was published by Thomas Thorpe. It announced the sonnets to be "Never before imprinted" although sonnets 138 and 144 had been published previously in *The Passionate Pilgrim*. There is a great deal of debate on whether Thorpe published a stolen copy of the sonnets or not owing to the fact that he signed the Dedication which the poet usually signed. However the sonnets are arranged so methodically, it seems unlikely that Shakespeare had not wished them to be published. The first 126 sonnets are addressed to the 'Fair Youth' loved by the poet , sonnet 127-152 to the 'Dark Lady' desired by the poet, the last two sonnets a little set apart and disconnected from the sequence, sonnets 78-86 within the first sequence as a subset describing the Rival Poet with whom the poet of these sonnets competes for the Fair Youth's attention and the ending of the sequence with a long narrative poem called "A Lover's Complaint' written in seven line stanzas in rhyme royal (a-b-a-b-b-c-c).

The Dedication at the beginning of the sonnets has been scrutinised in detail to find clues regarding the identity of the dedicatee and hence the 'Fair Youth' and also for the circumstances of publication. You might wonder why that is necessary, but these details are taken as being important signifiers in analysing so complex and richly allusive a collection of poetry as the sonnets we are studying now.

The Dedication:

"TO.THE.ONLIE.BEGETTER.OF.
THESE.INSUING.SONNETS.
Mr.W.H. ALL.HAPPINESSE.
AND.THAT.ETERNITIE.
PROMISED.
BY.
OUR.EVER-LIVING.POET.
WISHETH.
THE.WELL-WISHING.
ADVENTURER.IN.
SETTING.
FORTH.

T.T."

'The Onlie Begetter' of the sonnets could refer to the inspiration behind the sonnets Mr. W.H. to whom happiness and eternity are wished by the poet. The word 'onlie' might be thus interpreted as 'sole' or 'peerless'.

There are many speculations regarding who Mr. W.H might be, the main contenders being William Herbert, the Third Earl of Pembroke (who was the dedicatee of Shakespeare's First Folio as well) or Henry Wriothesley, the Third Earl of Southampton , his initials reversed (the dedicatee of Shakespeare's poems *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece)*. However, it remains a puzzle why a Lord should be addressed as 'Mr.' by the publisher Thorpe. The Earl of Southampton remains a popular choice given his friendship and patronage of Shakespeare for many years and his handsome appearance correlating with the 'Fair Youth' described in these sonnets.

There is of course another theory as propounded by Bertrand Russell that W.H is a typing error for W.S or W.Sh or the poet's initials who is therefore the only 'begetter' or creator of these sonnets and is wished happiness and eternity by the 'Ever-Living-Poet' ,i.e. God who 'makes' or 'creates' us all.

The capital letters and periods following every word of the Dedication might be an attempt to make it resemble a Roman lapidary inscription in keeping with Shakespeare's ardent wish that the sonnets confer immortality to his feelings for the Youth and more than any monument shall be able to outlive the ravages of time. He insists in sonnet 55,

"…you shall shine more bright in these contents

Than unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish time"

A closer study of this particular sonnet reveals certain important themes Shakespeare reflects on in his collection. He seems to be making an effort towards endearing the young man to the importance of his sonnets in enshrining the youth's beauty and qualities of a lover and at the same time perhaps engaging in this exercise of writing the sonnet as a means of keeping or capturing a portion of the youth's memory for himself in the face of mortality and loss:

"So till the judgement that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes."

At the same time, it is to be noted how he introduces doubt in the verse written by him to immortalise the qualities of his beloved, in the image of 'lovers' eyes' which were always unreliable given the proverb 'Love is blind'. Hence while the rhyme is powerful as is the ambition of the poet, there is the fault of imperfection in the vision of those who

shall read the verse and be influenced by it.

We can see how Shakespeare introduces several trajectories of thought in the space of a verse, including imagery reminiscent of old, decrepit buildings, war, and the ravages of time and events even as he describes his loved one and his wish to secure immortality in some form for him.

● Thematic Patterns – Fair Youth, Dark Lady & Others

The collection of sonnets begins with the poet/speaker urging the youth to procreate and thereby leave a legacy of his beauty and fine qualities. In fact sonnets 1-17 are often grouped together as the 'Procreation Sonnets' owing to their repeated elaboration of the passage of time, its ravages to be wrought on the young man's physical beauty and the only means of continuation being in the form of children who carry forth their father's beauty and accord him a certain form of immortality and solace. He chides the young man he loves, thus:

"…if thou live remembered not to be,
Die single, and thine image dies with thee."(sonnet 3)
Or
"Thy unused beauty must be tombed with thee,
Which used, lives th'executor to be." (sonnet 4)

While the sonnets might appear to be repeating the same idea over and over, you might wish to delve into them to understand where their charm really lies. It is in the multiple ways of presenting the same idea that Shakespeare really stands out. Every sonnet in this section uses a different framework, different references and completely different images to persuade the youth to stop wasting his worth and beauty on himself and to procreate for the benefit of the world. He utilises the imagery of time passing by—the flowers wilting, the trees shedding leaves, summer giving way to winter and attempts to make the youth realize that his beauty which he is so proud of, is after all bound to time:

"Then of thy beauty do I question make,
That thou among the wastes of time must go."(sonnet 12)

From sonnet 18 a slight change in mood may be observed in the poet's treatment of impending mortality. In this oft quoted sonnet, the poet places greater hope in his verse as a means of protecting and enshrining his beloved. We shall be reading this sonnet in considerable detail a little later. The theme is continued in new terms in sonnet 19, as

the poet challenges 'Time' to devour and destroy everything in nature except his fair friend "O carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow" with the usual turn of thought in the last couplet where he declares that even if 'Time' does not listen to his orders, his verse shall suffice as vessel enough for his love to survive in:

"Yet do thy worst , old time, despite thy wrong,
My love shall in my verse ever live young."

In sonnet 37 we see the poet describing the young man's love and success and qualities as worthy recompense for all his losses. "..I in thy abundance am sufficed,/And by a part of all thy glory live :" This too is a theme oft repeated as in sonnet 30 where the poet takes stock of his past losses and failures, finding restoration in his dear friend. It is the memory of his love that soothes the poet in sonnet 29 , uplifting him to better thoughts, a state he would not forsake even to be a king :

"Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising,
From sullen earth sings hymns at heaven's gate."

Even as the young man wrongs his lover the poet, the latter advocates for the young man in sonnet 35, providing yet another shade to the love and bitter sweet relation that they appear to share or are projected to share by the poet/speaker of these sonnets. However in sonnet 41, we see the poet's pain at being cheated by both his beloved fair youth and his own mistress who appear to have sexual relations with each other breaking their pledge to the poet—she of her constancy and he of his bond of friendship. We see the poet's exercise in self consolation in the next sonnet (sonnet 42), where he tries to persuade himself that his mistress and beloved friend desire each other because they were both in love with him. However as in most of Shakespeare's sonnets the logic is self reflexive as the poet always casts doubt on his own rhetorical exercises of persuasion whether of the youth or himself :

"Both find each other , and I lose both twain,
And both for my sake lay on me this cross:"

It is interesting to note the poet's proposal that a separation between the two shall enable him to write better verse praising the young man. "That by this separation I may give /That due to thee that thou deserv'st alone" (sonnet 39) Separation also brings forth outstanding poetry as he describes days as nights when he is apart from his dear friend and nights as days when he sees the beloved in his dreams (sonnet 43).

The sonnets reflecting on the young man's wavering interest in his poetry and developing affections for a rival poet are in a cluster 78-86 where he expresses his deep devotion

to his Muse—the young man who is the sole inspiration and content of his verse. He argues for his art;

"In others' works thou dost but mend the style,
And arts with thy sweet graces graced be;
But thou art all my art…"(sonnet 78)

He even argues for the plainness of his poetry being a virtue since it best represents the qualities of the young man who needs no artificial rhetoric to be described as in the other's verses (sonnet 82). The intense rhetorical strategy Shakespeare employs to make the youth realize his worth in the plainness of his style is quite marvelous in sonnet 79, as he strains logic to assert that every device used by the rival poet to thrill the young man is no virtue of the rival poet, but instead the youth's own abilities and qualities that engender such poetry.

"Then thank him not for that which he doth say,

Since what he owes thee, thou thyself dost pay."

There has been much speculation regarding the identity of this rival poet. Many critics have suggested Christopher Marlowe or George Chapman or even an amalgamation of several competitors in the figure of the rival. If we note closely these sonnets continue the preoccupations of the previous sonnets regarding the value of the poet's versifying the young man's beauty, albeit in different contexts and using different rhetorical devices.

Right after , in sonnet 87, we see the poet engaging in a self depreciating discussion, relinquishing claims on his beloved, seeing himself as unworthy of his affections and positing that the youth was misplacing his attentions:

"Thus have I had thee as a dream doth flatter,

In sleep a king, but waking no such matter."

Another recurring theme in the sonnets is the poet's reflection on the deceptive nature of appearance and expectations aroused by one so fair. In sonnet 94, he asserts that one who has been gifted beauty ought to behave virtuously also, since viciousness from one so fair is more terrible than where one expects it:

"For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;

Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds."

Absence and separation become a common theme in the next few sonnets as the poet explores different ways of describing the pain of separation. The poetry born of this

separation is described by the poet as orphan children born in absence of the one that fathered them. Then again he starts berating his poetic Muse for abandoning his true subject of poetry, his love for the young man and his efforts at preserving his beloved in verse, warring against time and decay. "Give my love fame faster than time wastes life" he exhorts his Muse. At the same time there is also much debate on the style of writing required for one so fair as his beloved :"Because he needs no praise, wilt thou be dumb?" However, he keeps praising his own style of what he calls plain verse in describing his beloved. It may be noted that in each of these sonnets, the poet manages to describe all possible contours and emotions arising from his relationship with the young man and the verses become really an exercise in rhetoric and linguistic play as he repeats themes in various ways, stretching the possibilities of his art.

The ideal of love described in sonnet 116 seems difficult to attain, as his return to the young man is fraught with uncertainty and a sense of futility and confinement in sonnet 110. "..love is not love/Which alters when it alteration finds" says the poet . However this "ever-fixed mark" of love which is unshaken by tempests and is eternal is elusive and the very subject of desire in his poetry. The poet's relationship with the fair youth never conveys a sense that the love they share is constant. It seems rather the poet's effort to immortalize it and retain its freshness and vigour in the face of the 'tempests' and 'bending sickle's compass' that is constant. It is one of the most memorable sonnets in the collection perhaps for its desperate yet forlorn tone of wishing to believe in the quality of love experienced and shared.

The last sonnet in the section relating to the fair youth (126) ends with two blank lines in parenthesis in place of a couplet. He returns to his predominant theme of time, here personifying nature as holding back her darling youth from death but must ultimately repay her debt to time by handing over the young man no matter his beauty and nature's love for him. "Her audit, though delayed, answered must be,/And her quietus is to render thee." The empty bracketed lines at the end have been analyzed and critiqued in many ways. Some like Graziani see in them the shape of an empty hourglass, signifying that time has run out and thus verse too has ended. Lennard sees them as half moons suggestive of waxing and waning and hence the trajectory of time passing by. It may also be seen as a space of silence, the grave into which the "lovely Boy" of these sonnets must now reside after all his praises have been sung by the poet.

After this begins what is known as the sonnets dedicated to the 'Dark Lady'. She is called so owing to her unconventional appearance and as a contrast to the youth who was so 'fair'. Her dark eyes are the subject of the poet's adoration, as he sees them as 'mourners'

for women falsely made up. His mistress's being unpretentious is valuable to him after the deceptive fair appearance of his beloved youth perhaps. The poet's sexual desire for the dark lady is the predominant manner of his relating to her. His sonnets become spaces where he explores the lust that drives him and the effects of this physical craving on his emotions. In sonnet 129, he describes the madness that possesses one desiring the woman "Mad in pursuit, and in possession so," and the fallout of this desire being unhappiness. The anticipation of sexual union is joy, but after the physical act, there appears no fulfillment in the poet's view. "Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream." The frustration of the poet's relationship with the mistress finds expression in the early part of this section of sonnets. However he seems to love her too, as seen in the famous sonnet 130 where he plays advocate for his mistress' appearance, praising her in words of critique. At the same time, there is fondness for her earthiness perhaps. Notice for yourselves how very different (and a shade realistic too perhaps!) Shakespeare's attitude to homosexual love and description of the beloved can be, from those of the earlier sonnet traditions:

"I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress when she walks treads on the ground."

He values her despite her reeking breath, unpleasant voice, dun breasts and wire like hair, acknowledging her to be as rare as the women eulogized in love sonnets and described in superlative terms "belied with false compare". Here the poet introduces an important self reflexive discussion on the act of representation in verse, specially the Petrarchan mode of praising the object of love and affection. His comment can be seen as an extended theme throughout his sonnets where he always undercuts the praises he heaps on his beloved or his mistress. Representation is always tinged with an element of doubt in the art of rhetoric which creates fancy images whence none exists. In sonnet 138 he acknowledges the lies which forge his relationship with the dark lady. Despite him knowing her unfaithfulness and she his progressive age, they continue to 'lie' with each other in both senses of the term refusing to lose the companionship they share.

Sonnet 144 however tips the balance in favour of the young man, as he describes the youth as his good angel and the mistress as his bad angel. However , he does declare his love for both "Two loves I have, of comfort and despair," though he seems helpless as the youth and the mistress engage in a relationship with each other which he only suspects but can never know for sure. The sexuality of the mistress is constantly described as a threat to both the poet's emotional balance and the fidelity of the young man to the poet. In a lot of ways, the poet's relationship with the youth is thus privileged over that with the mistress, both being however

deeply embedded in his psyche and finding a place in his verses. The emotions surrounding the dark lady are more complex and steeped in guilt and distress in the absence of the young man but at the same time there is a certain comfort he finds in her that is never found in his relation with the young man described always in terms of pleading for affection and grace. The equality found in the dark lady sonnets is absent in the fair youth sequence. Of course we might read that as the poet's acquired stance as he plays with the Italian sonnet tradition that placed the beloved on a pedestal and then again subversion of that poetic mode as he makes fun of such rhetoric in the dark lady sequence.

After understanding the range of themes and ideas explored in his sonnet collection, let us now venture to read two of Shakespeare's sonnets in detail.

2.2.3: Text of Sonnet 18 'Shall I Compare Thee to A Summer's Day'

i. Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
ii. Thou art more lovely and more temperate.
iii. Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
iv. And summer's lease hath all too short a date.

v. Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
vi. And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
vii. And every fair from fair sometime declines,
viii. By chance, or nature's changing course, untrimmed;

ix. But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
x. Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
xi. Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
xii. When in eternal lines to Time thou grow'st.

xiii. So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
xiv. So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

(The line numberings and the spacing have been inserted to help you understand the form – content patterning of the Shakespearean sonnet. The first 3 sections each form a quatrain where you will find parallel ideas being expressed in different words and thought; the last 2 form the couplet that is the most striking feature. The subsequent sections will help you in establishing the vital links between these divisions of the poem.)

2.2.4a: Analysis of The Poem

i. The poet searches for an appropriate object or scene of comparison with the loveliness of the young man and wonders if the beauty and joy surrounding the image of a summer's day in England might be the best. Summer is a season of bloom and joy for a cold country when nature comes alive with beauty and freshness.

ii. temperate : well tempered or moderated, steering a middle course between extremes and therefore perfect and more lovable than a summer's day which might still have imperfections in it.

iii. Rough winds….May: the image of spring blossoms destroyed by the ravages of nature hints at early death or young love blighted by circumstances.

iv. summer's lease….date: the season summer has a short tenancy in nature's schema of seasons and has to give way to other seasons of depletion and decay…as autumn and winter. Notice Shakespeare's use of vocabulary. The word 'lease' as you know, is mostly used in legal terminology to imply a contract made over a span of time. Here the idea is that summer as a season has its own predetermined span of time in the annual cycle of seasons.

v. too hot the eye of heaven : the sun. Identify the figure of speech used here!

vi. conceiving of the sun as a beautiful male (Phoebus Apollo) and reflecting on the fact that the sun too is subject to the vagaries of nature-on some days shining brightly and on others dimmed by the weather perhaps.

vii. Every beautiful object or person eventually becomes less beautiful. The first 'fair' refers to the beautiful and the second 'fair' to beauty that is lost by the beautiful. The word 'declines' continues the allusion to the sun which may be pictured as setting.

viii. decay, change and decline may be caused by accident, the cyclical course of nature, deprived of its trimmings and adornment. There might be an allusion to menstruation in 'nature's changing course' connecting with a double meaning in the previous line—positing women as 'fair' whose variability shall now be contrasted with the constancy of the youth.

ix-x. the beauty of the young man is compared to a summer season that shall not be subject to nature's cycles of change and he shall not lose his 'fairness' or beauty since it shall be enshrined in these lines of verse.

xi. death is personified and placed in conflict with the youth's beauty, however he shall not be able to boast about his victory over the young man's beauty and youth . The darkness of death is pictured as his 'shade' as in the Psalm 23.4 'the valley of the shadow of death'

xii. the young man shall 'grow' through these 'eternal' lines written by the poet in readers' minds as a concept or an ideal of beauty and love. 'lines' has also been associated with the threads of life spun by the Fates. Thus it imprints the importance of these verses in ascertaining the youth's fate.

xiii-xiv. As long as life exists on this earth, the verse shall exist as a living monument to the young man and endow him with life long after his physical body is snuffed out by Death.

this: this sonnet or these sonnets. Thus the movement in the poem is from the beauty of the young man to the effectiveness of poetry as art in preserving such beauty.

Activity for the Learner

This idea of preserving human attributes like beauty (as in this poem) is something that has repeatedly been toyed with in literature. Do you think art as a representation of life can really do this in a perfect manner? With help from your counselor, read John Keats' 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', and write on the relationship between Art and Life with these two poems in mind.

2.2.4b. Critical Appreciation of the Poem

In this much loved sonnet by Shakespeare, the poet searches for an apt description for his beloved fair youth. A 'summer's day' might be an ideal comparison for the freshness and beauty of the beloved, particularly in Petrarchan style, but for Shakespeare who is celebrated for his innovative turn of thought, this imagery is not sufficient for the one he loves. In a cold country, a summer's day brings happiness and joy. However, for the poet, his beloved is more beautiful and temperate than such a moderate summer's day. The weather may have imperfections, but not his beloved.

The precious buds of May which are about to bloom are often shaken off the branches by rough winds. The much awaited summer season also arrives with its 'lease' fixed from before. Thus what is a strictly legal terminology becomes used in an extremely poetic sense, in a manner that might almost be considered metaphysical in intent! Here, the poet uses two

images suggesting the temporal quality of all beautiful things in nature, wishing to contrast them with his perceived immutable beauty of the youth. However, it is important to note that the poet includes his own critique in his lines. If all precious things in nature are subject to degeneration, how can the poet's beloved be saved from such transformation and change? It prepares the ground for affirming the significance of the poet's words in immortalising the youth.

The poet then continues extending his analogy, describing the variation in the way the sun is perceived and its effect on the weather experienced by us. Sometimes, the sun, described as 'the eye of heaven' shines with great intensity and at other times, its glorious golden hue is concealed by clouds. Hence, its beauty is inconstant and largely dependent on other aspects of the weather in creating the perfectly moderate and temperate summer's day. He concludes thereby that everything that is beautiful declines in its beauty at some time or the other, shorn of its beauty and adornments either by chance or owing to the vagaries of nature. It is often thought that the poet is alluding to menstruation in 'nature's changing course', referring to the double meanings of the word 'fair' used in the previous line, further suggesting the inconstant nature of women's beauty and their love as compared to the constancy of the poet's affections for the young man.

The poet tries to convince his beloved that his 'eternal summer' shall not fade with time as the poet will enshrine the young man's beauty in verse. Note the use of the phrase 'eternal summer' which by itself appears to be an oxymoron, impossible by virtue of the description of summer enunciated by the poet in the previous lines. This impossible ideal is however made possible by the poet's feelings for his beloved and the quality of his poetry.

Death and decay devour all things, but shall not be able to snuff out the fair youth's freshness and beauty. Death is personified as one who brags about his conquests. In this case however, Death's shadow cannot loom over the poet's beloved, as he shall keep living eternally in these verses by the poet.

In the ending couplet that gives this sonnet its own unique flavor, Shakespeare reinforces his vision that his sonnets shall live as long as men live and breathe and see, playing a role more powerful than Death in being able to grant life to his beloved's beauty and youth forever.

Note how the poet extends the subject of his poetry from describing his beloved's beauty to extolling the virtues of his own poetry. See also that every analogy falls short for describing the fair youth's charm. At the same time, he highlights the ephemeral nature of

that charm and contrasts the same with the immortal quality of his love and his ability to capture the young man's beauty in his lines.

2.2.5: Text of Sonnet 73

i. That time of year thou mayst in me behold
ii. When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
iii. Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
iv. Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

v. In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
vi. As after sunset fadeth in the west;
vii. Which by and by black night doth take away,
viii. Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.

ix. In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
x. That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
xi. As the deathbed whereon it must expire,
xii. Consumed with that which it was nourished by.

xiii. This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
xiv. To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

2.2.5a : Analysis of the Poem

i-ii. You might see in me the image of seasonal decay and degeneration. The poet's reversal of the order of decay is striking as one expects the diminishing of leaves to be from 'a few' to 'none' but receives the opposite in line ii. It might be a poetic device to focus our attention on both stages of seasonal decay—the leafless trees of midwinter and the partly stripped trees of autumn. It might also be a visual analogy for the poet William Shakespeare who was nearly bald.

iii. The boughs of the tree shiver in the cold or in anticipation of the cold winter as also the life of the poet which shivers in its dying moments.

iv. evokes visual recollection of abbeys and chancels left desolate after Henry VIII's dissolution of monasteries. The branches of the trees, bereft of the birds which sweet

songs in summer appear like 'bare ruined choirs' to the poet

v-vi. the speaker/poet represents himself as the 'twilight' or afterglow of the day of summer, as night approaches and the sun sets both visually and metaphorically

vii. the night appears to take away the sunlight as nature and passing time take away the poet's years of beauty and youth

viii. Death's second self: Sleep. Also night; seals up: closes up or sews up ; rest is both desired as also the picture of death, the eternal rest. Sleep is a shadow of death, bringing rest and relief in the night.

ix. fire : life

x. The life coursing through his veins is like the last dying embers of the fire that represents his life force/energy spent in the course of his life time.

xi-xii. human life must be extinguished by the same temporal process which sustains it and brings it to maturity. Time nourishes human life and brings forth its blooms but at the same time also brings death and decay with every passing moment. The analogy of the fire sustained and consumed by its embers is continued here.

xiii. the perception of this process of decay strengthens the love the young man feels for the poet, or so the poet believes. It also suggests a tone of hope that his dying might make the youth love him more or even that the young man's love is strong because he loves the poet despite his decay and decline.

2.2.5b. Critical Appreciation of the Poem

In this sonnet, the poet creates an extended analogy to make his beloved aware of the passage of time and its effect on the poet as he approaches death. Thereby, he wishes to secure the fair youth's love and attention for himself, hoping that the realization of less time left with the poet might bring the young man closer to him. Quite clearly the object of the poem is the same as the previous sonnet, but the treatment is quite different.

He begins by suggesting the similarity between him and the seasons of autumn and winter when the trees are nearly or altogether bereft of leaves. It's interesting to note the sequence in which he describes the quantity of leaves on the boughs. From yellowing, decaying leaves to none on the boughs to a few hanging on still, the poet succeeds in making us, the readers, or his intended reader the young man, pause on the significance of his imagery by introducing the unconventional. The image of the boughs shaking in the cold air also

suggest the poet shivering in anticipation of death and attempts to impress the young man with a feeling of imminent loss. True to the way Shakespeare often includes socio-political events and discussions within philosophical musings, the image of bare boughs, bereft of birds appear like 'bare ruined choirs' to the poet, suggesting absence and triggering recollection of chancels and abbeys left empty and desolate after Henry VIII's dissolution of monasteries. Of course, the immediate aim is to describe how every scene of fullness and beauty is subject to change and transformation.

In the next four lines, the poet explores another analogy, describing himself in terms of 'twilight', the time of day just before night falls. He personifies night as one who takes away sunlight just as time takes away the poet's life and the youth's beauty. 'Death's second self' refers to sleep, as well as night which seals up or 'sews up' the day. Sleep is pictured as the shadow of death, bringing relief, but not snuffing out life altogether. Thus, the poet alludes to the possibility of impending death but stops short of suggesting complete cessation of life.

Shakespeare moves on to the next connected image of a fire that is rendered ash, and compares himself to the glowing embers of a dying fire, suggesting that just as a fire is consumed by the very substance that nourishes it, his life too is spent and consumed by the passage of time that was essential for its growth. Thus death is implicit in the process of life itself.

The poet hopes that his images shall make the young man realize the fragility of life, beauty and existence and spur him to cherish the temporal but intense love the poet has for him. He hopes that the possibility of death shall make the young man's love for him stronger, knowing that he would be separated from the poet very soon. On the other hand, the poet also hopes that the fair youth shall love him despite his advancing years, alerted to the empheral nature of his own beauty and youth by this sonnet.

2.2.6: Themes of Sonnets 18 & 73

In both the above sonnets we can see the themes discussed in the introduction played out in detail. Both the sonnets feature in the section devoted to the fair youth and describe the poet's concern with the passage of time and the possibility of capturing the essence of the young man in the form of these sonnets dedicated to him. Yet the finality of thought and emotion arrived at in the two poems is entirely different in its effect. Let us see for ourselves why and how this is so.

In sonnet 18, the poet places emphasis on describing the young man's beauty. However the praise for his youth and attractive qualities is tempered by the knowledge that the cycle of nature and the relentless passage of time shall not allow the beloved to remain as he is now, comparable to the most temperate day of summer when the buds bloom in their beauty. The rough winds and the changes apparent even in as constant a marker as the sun in the breadth of a single day threaten the blooms and signal the fears in the speaker's heart. He bewails that unfortunately everything that is beautiful is subject to this process of change and decline whether by chance or the course of time. All the adornments that nature brings are also shorn off by the processes of time and decay.

However, this sonnet becomes a kind of vessel for self praise for the poet as he extols the virtues of his verse which appear to be the only means of survival for the young man and the best way he can achieve immortality. The poet astutely declares that his verse shall, in fact, lead to the image of his beloved growing in beauty perhaps in the form of so many sonnets dedicated to his praise and the process of creation that Shakespeare describes in his sonnets.

Sonnet 73 on the other hand focuses the young man's attention on the poet/speaker who projects himself as the opposite of the youth he described in sonnet 18. The process of decay and decline which threatens the youth in sonnet 18 is apparent in the figure of the poet in sonnet 73 and may also be construed as a reminder to the young man that time shall wait for none and devour the youth as well one day. It might also be seen as a plea for love and affection before the poet's life is extinguished by nature. He describes himself in images of night closing in and bare boughs of trees where the last yellow leaves perhaps hang to receive the youth's attention. The glowing embers of a fire dying out is a striking image he continues for the span of four lines, standing in for a description both of his life , his passion for the poet and perhaps also his poetic craft. The creative force nourished by life is also destructive as it consumes his energies. There is hope in the poet that the circumstance shall bring forth the youth's love for him or strengthen the existing love since the youth must leave him before long. Of course as with all of Shakespeare's sonnets, each line and declaration, especially the couplet becomes suspect in its apparent meaning as more meanings emerge with continued reading. There might be a suggestion that the youth would be leaving the poet anyway for other charms as discussed in detail in other sonnets and a sense of loss and decline experienced by the poet as a result of the loss of his beloved. Then again, there is also the incipient suggestion that the youth too shall have to leave owing to his own decay in the hands of nature and time.

2.2.7: Structure and Style

Sonnet 18 is structurally formatted into three quatrains rhymed a-b-a-b, c-d-c-d, e-f-e-f and a couplet rhymed g-g following the quatrains. As discussed in the Introduction, the Shakespearean sonnet takes its stylistic format from the Earl of Surrey's variations introduced to the Italian form of the sonnet divided into an Octave and a Sestet. It is to be noted that the quatrains and the couplet are not separated spatially. Rather it is the rhyme scheme which divides the sections into units of thought. However these units are connected with each other and not wholly separated. Rather, we might say that each quatrain introduces a fresh manner of re-iterating the central theme of the poem. While the first quatrain introduces imagery of the summer season as a comparison for the poet's beloved, the second elaborates and the third focuses on the youth and passage of Time. The couplet reinforces the argument of the quatrains and extends its scope.

Sonnet 73 employs a similar rhyme scheme and structural device as sonnet 18. Here the second and third quatrains provide more metaphors for the idea introduced in the first quatrain where he describes his decay and degeneration over time correlating it with the season of autumn. The couplet is a turn of argument where he employs the sympathy gathered over the quatrains to persuade the beloved to love him all the more or praise the steadfastness of his existing love for the poet. Both sonnets are written in iambic pentameter.

2.2.8 : Summing Up

In the introduction to Shakespeare's sonnets we have discussed his style of writing and themes in great detail. It is interesting to read these two sonnets in view of the entire corpus and see a microcosm of most of the themes expressed in these selected poems. It is also significant since, by Shakespeare's own admission, the sonnets repeat ideas but present them in new ways, displaying the skill of the sonneteer who claims to be able to defy the passage of time with his art and the flame of his love for the young man. Many shades of love are explored in all their nuances—whether betrayal, separation, reunion. However in all the sonnets we might critically examine the notion if the waves and crests of emotion created by the poet are not ultimately done for the sake of showcasing his art? While Shakespeare's sonnets are read autobiographically, they might also be read as an intelligent sonneteer's use of events moulded for the sake of his art, which ultimately forms the centerpiece of his verses. Through the narration of love, it is his sonnets that become immortalized in the history of verse writing!

2.2.9 : Comprehension Exercises

Long Answer Types : 20 marks

1. How is Shakespeare's idea of love portrayed in his sonnets? Discuss with reference to the sonnets in your syllabus.
2. How does Shakespeare visualise Time in his sonnets and how does it relate to his concept of writing verse?
3. What is your understanding of the relationship between the poet and his beloved as you read Shakespeare's sonnets?
4. Do you think Shakespeare's sonnets may only be read autobiographically? Give reasons in support of your view.

Medium Length Answers : 12 marks

1. Critically discuss the image of seasonal cycles in the sonnets in your syllabus.
2. Critically analyze the closing couplet of sonnet 73 with respect to your understanding of the collection of sonnets as a whole.
3. "So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,/So long lives this, and this gives life to thee." Discuss these lines with respect to Shakespeare's valuation of his own art in the sonnets written by him.

Short Answer Types : 6 marks

1. "And every fair from fair sometime declines," —What does the poet mean? Explain with reference to context.
2. "But thy eternal summer shall not fade,"—How can the poet prevent the ravages of time? Explain with reference to context.
3. "Death's second self, that seals up all in rest" —Discuss the poet's description and presentation of the theme of death in the sonnet.

2.2.10 Suggested Reading

Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. (Arden Shakespeare, Third series, 1997)

Vendler, Helen. *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (United States of America: Harvard University Press, 1999)

Jones, Peter ed. *Shakespeare: The Sonnets*. (New York; Palgrave, 2007)

Module 2 Unit-3

Section A-John Donne : 'The Good Morrow'
Section B-George Herbert : 'Virture'
Section C-John Milton : 'On His blindness'

Section A-John Donne : 'The Good Morrow'

Structure

2.3A.0 Introduction and Scope

- In this section we shall critically examine a poem, *The Good Morrow,* by one of the major poets of the English Renaissance; John Donne, who, like his contemporary Shakespeare, worked upon the traditions of love poetry in his age to create a body of verse that has its distinctive style and appeal.
- We shall, in the process, take a brief look at the **Metaphysical school of poetry** that Donne has been associated with.
- We also learn about the **aubade, a** special kind of love poem that is represented by the poem selected for study.

2.3A.1 Donne And Metaphysical Poetry

- John Donne: The Man and his Works

John Donne (1572-1631) is, even today, one of the most widely-read English poets of the seventeenth century. He was a writer of both secular and religious literature. He was originally a Roman Catholic, but subsequently became an Anglican priest. Later he was appointed Dean of St Paul's Cathedral in London, and became famous for his sermons, which along with other religious works were published in his lifetime.

However, our focus is on Donne's poetry: particularly his **amatory** verse (or love poetry). Even so, it must be mentioned that his verse covered a variety of forms, styles and subjects: he wrote elegies, satires, epigrams, devotional sonnets and more. Most of his poetry was published after his death, though during his lifetime his contemporaries could read and admire his works in circulation, as was then the practice, in manuscript form.

- **Donne and Metaphysical Poetry**

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (i.e. during the English Renaissance), prevailing social and religious conventions were being challenged in an intellectual atmosphere that favoured scientific and rational approaches. Donne's verse may be seen as a striking literary form of such questioning, as he develops poetic subjects such as love and religion in unconventional ways. You will be really surprised, on reading the poetry of Donne and his group, to see how fast the language of love did evolve in English poetry. Your point of comparison will obviously be with the early Elizabethan tradition of writing love poetry.

A term often used to describe Donne's poetry is '**metaphysical**'. As you understand, the term literally means 'relating to things that cannot be conceived within the range of the physical, or the tangible and the material'. First used in this connection by John Dryden to criticize Donne for his excessive use of philosophy in poetry, the term later was used to categorize a certain 'school' or group of mainly seventeenth-century English poets, including Donne as well as George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, Henry Vaughan, Richard Crashaw and Abraham Cowley.

What such poets had in common was verse that typically was **intellectua**l, treated love or religious experience psychologically rather than emotionally, unlike the poetry of their (mainly) Elizabethan contemporaries. Even so, there is no lack of **passion** in the poems of the metaphysical school; but passion is combined with **reason** or **wit.** If that sounds

paradoxical, these poets did have a fondness for **paradox**. Other characteristics would include **variety** and **flexibility** of metre and rhythm; use of direct and **colloquial speech** patterns; and most notably, the use of startling images or **conceits:** elaborate comparisons that bring together very dissimilar objects. Above all, we can credit the Metaphysicals for introducing the element of love in poetry as a composite experience – meaning thereby, the amalgamation of the mind and the body in equal proportions, without either unnecessarily glorifying the one or shying away from the other. As mature readers, you will be expected to understand and appreciate the manifold nuances of heterosexual love as a concrete and composite experience of human life.

John Donne's 'The Good Morrow 'is a good example of verse exhibiting the features mentioned above, which made the poet's work distinctive. Here is the text of the complete poem, as found in *The Norton Anthology of Poetry,* Third Edition (1983), p 205. The poem was originally published in Donne's *Songs and Sonnets* in 1633. The words/phrases in bold are explained in the section that follows.

2.3A.2 Text of The Good Morrow

I wonder, **by my troth**, what thou and I
Did, till we loved? Were we not **weaned** till then?
But **sucked on country pleasures**, childishly?
Or **snorted** we in the **Seven Sleepers'** den?
'Twas so; **but** this, all pleasures **fancies** be.
If ever any **beauty** I did see,

Which I desired, and got, 'twas but a **dream** of thee.
And now **good-morrow** to our **waking souls**,
Which watch not one another out of fear;
For love, all love of other sights controls,
And makes **one little room an everywhere**.
Let **sea-discoverers** to new worlds have gone,
Let **maps** to other, worlds on worlds have shown,
Let us possess one world, **each hath one, and is one**.

My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears,
And true plain **hearts** do in the faces **rest**;
Where can we find two better **hemispheres**,
Without **sharp north**, without **declining west**?
Whatever dies, was **not mixed equally**;
If our two loves be one, or, thou and I
Love so alike, that none do **slacken**, none can die.

2.3A.3 Glossary and Annotations

Stanza 1

by my troth: literally, "in faith" or "to tell the truth". This example of colloquial English, with which the poem begins, is a deliberately "unpoetic" technique, which can startle readers.

weaned: taken away from (something, here a state of childhood). A growing child is weaned when it no longer needs mother's milk as nourishment.

sucked on : tasted, or experienced

country pleasures: inferior delights or enjoyment

snorted: snored or slept

Seven Sleepers' den: an **allusion** to a Christian legend about a cave in Ephesus where seven young Christians, during oppression under Roman emperor Decius in the third century, lay asleep for almost two centuries. The idea is that the poem's lovers, before finding each other, were just as deeply unaware of the world as the young sleepers in the legend.

but: except for

fancies: notions imaginary, rather than real

beauty: beautiful woman.

dream: a foreshadowing or early indicator

Stanza 2

good morrow: a salutation or greeting, see section on poem's title

waking souls: a clear indication that people are properly awake or alive only when then find true love. The lovers here are "waking" or rising to a new and higher consciousness.

one little room an everywhere: the room where the lovers find themselves is as good as an "everywhere" or an entire world having all they need: i.e. each other.

sea-discoverers…maps: a reference to the different discoveries and scientific theories that were changing the existing ideas about the world during the time of the Renaissance.

each hath one, and is one: the lovers are content in their own, self-contained world. Each of them "is" part of that world, and they both "possess" the world since they have each other.

Stanza 3

hearts…rest: the lovers gaze into each others' eyes with such intensity that each seems able to look into the depths of the other's heart.

hemispheres: here the eyes are compared to half-globes, a comparison both apt and far-fetched; hence a conceit.

sharp north… the bitingly cold north wind

declining west : associated with sunset and fading of light

not mixed equally: an **allusion** to the belief that human illness and death resulted from an imbalance in the elements making up the body.

slacken: weaken

2.3A.4 Theme and Title

The main theme of the poem is that people are awake, aware and properly alive only when they find true and meaningful love; and the title, as well as the poem's leading metaphor, indicates this idea. The power of true love, as the poet goes on to assert, can make the lovers not just alive, but immortal.

Good Morrow, meaning good morning, is a salutation or way of greeting someone. The title indicates that the poem in question concerns an early-morning meeting: between the poet-narrator and his beloved after a night of love, as we go on to learn. The composition, thus, is what might be called an **aubade**, a dawn song (or poem). This indication is strengthened by the mention of waking lovers as the first stanza continues, and then clinched by the beginning of the second stanza.

2.3A.5 Critical understanding of 'The Good Morrow'

The lover wakes up beside his lady in this poem, and marvels about their love. He wonders what they did all these years of their lives, until they were in love and had seen through its consummation! Were they obsessed with some trivial pleasures of life, rather childishly? Now that they are in mature love, the completeness of the experience makes them realize that any prior fooling around was simply an overture to this, a feebler version of the tangible life that they are living now. All these years they were like the prisoners in the "Seven Sleepers' den", where their souls were imprisoned in a long slumber. If ever the lover had come across any beautiful woman, it was just the dream of his lady with whom he is waking up to real life now.

The lover feels that now that they are in love, they are awake and alive to the true sense of the term. So they should wish good morning to their awakened souls. Now they are waking and rising to a higher consciousness. The small room where the lovers find themselves locked, represents the entire world. The lovers are satisfied in their autonomous world. Each one of them "is" a chunk of this world, and they "possess" this domain since they possess each other. By talking about the sea-discoverers and maps, perhaps the lover is referring to the newer discoveries of the Renaissance period. But the lover and the lady are content with the autonomous and erotocentric space that they have created for themselves. As such they have nothing to do with the discoveries and new worlds. The composite nature of their soulful love makes it self-sufficient; and the lovebirds no longer need the rest of the world.

If we put it another way, the lover and the beloved are each one a hemi-sphere and when united in true love, they shape the world as an organic whole; the sphere being the symbol of perfection. Just as the two hemispheres are twins or mirror-images of each other, the lovers are complementary to each other, and their love is so composed and stable that it would never perish. Through their eyes, they are able to peep into the hearts of each other. The lovers' eyes are paralleled to half-globes, an evaluation which is rather far-fetched. This metaphysical conceit adds charm to the entire expression. Donne borrows from the medieval science of alchemy and uses the allusion to the acceptance that mortal diseases and death result from a discrepancy in the elements creating the human body. But since the lover and the lady are united in their soul and body, nothing can weaken them anymore. Love has made them immortal.

Donne's poem speaks of the alternation of his moods, the range of his experiences, his technical originality and of course about his poetic methods. All this makes 'The Good Morrow' an immortal love poem indeed.

2.3A.6 Structure and Style

The poem is written as an **aubade** or morning poem, typically concerning lovers about to part; a convention that Donne uses elsewhere (as in *The Sun Rising*) and plays with here. Donne also gives a strikingly individualistic treatment to a conventional idea, that lovers sharing genuine love realize the true value of life. Individualism is noticeable also in the robust intimacy of the poet's language, where words like "sucked" and "snorted" can startle; in the way the poet makes free use of religious legends, popular beliefs and scientific theories in his declarations of love; and above all, in his use of the metaphysical conceit; as when he likens ignorant lovers to unweaned babies, or eyeballs to geographical globes.

Donne creates a distinctive stanzaic structure as well: three seven-line stanzas using three rhymes; where the first six lines are generally in iambic pentameter, while the seventh is a foot longer, bringing each sectional movement to an emphatic and logical close.

2.3A.7 Summing Up

Here are a few points concerning what this section has covered. Included is one observation that is NOT true. Strike out the incorrect one, and you will be left with a concise summing-up. (Check your choice against the key provided.)

- John Donne has been linked with the Metaphysical school of poetry.
- Donne, no less than Shakespeare, experimented with the traditions of love poetry prevalent in his time.
- Donne's poem *The Good Morrow* is remarkable for its striking and individualistic treatment of theme and structure.
- *The Good Morrow* is a good example of what may be called a conventional love sonnet.
- *The Good Morrow* may be related to the aubade, or early-morning love poem/ song.

2.3A.8 Comprehension Exercises

1. Broad Answer Types (20 marks)

a) Attempt a critical analysis of John Donne's 'The Good Morrow'.

b) Examine the qualities that let 'The Good Morrow' be categorized as a metaphysical poem.

c) Consider 'The Good Morrow' as a poem that differs from the conventional love poetry of Donne's time.

2. Middle-length : 12 marks

a) Examine a few references by Donne to new discoveries/ideas of his time.

b) Write a note on Donne's use of the metaphysical conceit.

c) How does the title of Donne's poem indicate its theme?

3. Short-answer type : 6 marks

a) Explain with reference to the context:

Whatever dies, was not mixed equally;

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

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

b) Write a short note on the aubade

c) Identify and define 2 different rhetorical figures in the poem, and explain them.

2.3A.9 Suggested Reading

M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 7th Ed. Thomson Heinle, 1999.

David Daiches, *A Critical History of English Literature,* 2nd Ed. In four volumes. Vol II. New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1969. 360-368.

Helen Gardner (ed). *The Metaphysical Poets.* New York: Penguin, 1960.

Barry Spurr, *Studying Poetry.* Melbourne: Macmillan, 1997. 100-108

Helen C White, *The Metaphysical Poets: A Study in Religious Experience*. New York: Collier Books, 1966. 73-94

Additionally, here is an internet link to a discussion of Donne's verse and the conventions of love poetry popular in his time:

http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/169175/John-Donne/1885/Poetry

2.3A.10 Further Activity

The speaker in Donne's poem is evidently a man. Identify the lines that, in your opinion, establish that the speaker is male. Now ask yourself, what if the speaker, or poet, were a woman? Would the sentiments in the poem have been differently stated, and if so, what might have been the differences?

From there you might consider looking for love poems written by women, or featuring a speaker who is a woman. Two women writers whose love poems feature female speakers are Christina Rossetti and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Make a list of a few such poems by them, and add more names to this list of women writing love poetry.

*Odd one out in the Summing Up Section:

"*The Good Morrow* is a good example of what may be called a **conventional** love **sonnet**." Donne's poem is not a sonnet, and is hardly conventional.

Section - B ❐ George Herbert : 'Virtue'

Structure

2.3B.10 Introduction and Scope

This section seeks

- to provide an idea about the life and works of the seventeenth-century devotional poet George Herbert;
- to relate him to what has been called the Metaphysical School of Poetry, and to examine his celebrated poem '**Virtue'**
- to acquire an understanding of the religious strand of Metaphysical poetry

2.3B.1 George Herbert, The Religious Metaphysical

George Herbert (1593-1633) was a Christian priest and poet; not surprisingly, perhaps, almost all his verse is what may be called **devotional** or **religious** in nature. Despite that, he remains one of the most widely-read poets of the seventeenth century, along with his contemporary John Donne, whose poetry has been discussed in the earlier sub-section. The two poets even share certain stylistic characteristics, though Donne, unlike Herbert, contributed significantly to secular as well as religious verse.

✦ Herbert's Works

Herbert's fame as a poet rests chiefly on the 1633 anthology ***The Temple***, published shortly after his death and containing all the verses that were to become popular. These include *Easter Wings*, *The Windows*, *The Collar*, *The Pulley* and *Virtue*, which is the poem that you will be studying in detail here.

Herbert's writing, as well as that of the other poets linked to the **Metaphysical school**, has much in common with the verse of John Donne. Sudden beginnings, a conversational tone and a direct form of address in a Herbert poem may remind a reader of Donne, as may the use of a logical building up of argument. Other qualities are distinctively Herbert's; his use of more commonplace, concrete images taken from nature; his frequent engaging of dialogue with God, his putting together of sayings that sound almost proverbial; and his distinctive, sometimes startling, poetic experiments. Herbert constantly used unusual stanzaic structures, such as found in *Easter Wings*, where the lines on the page take the shape of the wings discussed in the poem. Sometimes, however, the same qualities that distinguish Herbert also come in the way of a reader's understanding: as when almost every idea is expressed by means of images, which might threaten to blur the focus on the original idea.

To help you gain a better understanding of the above-mentioned qualities of Herbert's verse, a close reading of his poem ***Virtue*** is provided. The text has been taken from *The Norton Anthology of Poetry,* Third Edition (1983), p 260. The words/phrases in bold are explained in the section that follows the poem.

2.3B.2 Text of Virtue

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The **bridal** of the earth and sky:
The dew shall weep thy **fall** to-night;
For thou **must die.**

Sweet rose, whose **hue**, **angry and brave**,
Bids the rash gazer **wipe his eye**:
Thy root is ever **in its grave**,
And thou **must die.**

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where **sweets compacted** lie;
My music shows ye have your **closes**,
And all **must die.**

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like **seasoned** timber, never **gives**;
But though the whole **world turn to coal**,
Then chiefly lives.

2.3B.3 Glossary And Annotations

Stanza 1

Sweet: This adjective is used in each stanza, but the sense of this word changes with every use. To generalize, it may be said that in the first three stanzas, the sweetness of the day, rose and spring, respectively, is a quality related to the senses, and one that must fade or pass; whereas the sweetness in the last stanza is a spiritual quality, which will last. Incidentally, while addressing the first three "sweet" objects, the poet uses a figure of speech called **apostrophe**.

bridal: the word here is used as a noun, meaning union or marriage. The new day's brightness makes visible everything on earth and in heaven, and in that sense brings the two together, as a marriage does. This is an example of a **metaphysical conceit**.

fall: the passing or dying of the day.

… must die: these words are repeated at the end of the first three stanzas, and act as a refrain linking the first three stanzas, and balancing them against the last, whose concluding words suggest a contrasting action; "chiefly lives".

Stanza 2

hue: colour or shade

angry: suggests redness of blood as well as fury

brave; fearless; here, perhaps, also fearsome

wipe his eye: the response here is a sign of weakness or retreat. The red of the rose is such a fiery shade that it seems to dazzle the rash or careless gazer, bringing tears that need to be wiped.

in its grave: a root grows underground, and in that sense lies buried, or in its grave

Stanza 3

sweets compacted: perfumes concentrated; an **inversion** or figure of speech where the normal order of words is reversed.

closes: Plural of the noun 'close'. In musical terms, a close is a concluding section of music, and this **analogy** or comparison leads to the realization that even spring must end or "die".

Stanza 4

seasoned timber: wood that has been dried to make it harder and stronger. The phrase is part of a **simile** comparing the soul to timber.

gives: yields or surrenders.

turn to coal: a clear reference to the Christian religious belief that on the day of God's Last Judgement, He will cause destruction by fire as a punishment for evil.

2.3B.4 Theme and Title

Herbert's poetry communicates his deeply religious view of the world. He typically uses Christian themes and places a Christian world-view against the background of the world at large. In the process, his poems sometimes emphasise the contrast between the religious and the secular sets of values, with his own preference clearly being for the religious.

'Virtue' may be seen as a poem concerning, in a sense, the futility of life's attractions when compared to the bliss of life after death. More specifically, it is

a Christian believer's exploration of the beautiful but impermanent attractions of the world, and of the more satisfying and permanent pleasures of a Christian afterlife. This idea is communicated through a series of images.

The noun 'virtue' (in Herbert's time the word was spelt 'vertue', which is a variant spelling you might find in some editions of the poem) is a quality of moral excellence. Related to the word **virtu** that has been mentioned in an earlier discussion on the Renaissance, 'virtue' originally indicated a combination of supposedly 'manly' qualities, such as courage and goodness. Herbert here uses the word in a more theological or religious sense, to refer to spiritual goodness.

Interestingly, the title does not seem to be applicable to much of the poem, till we realize that Herbert is actually attempting to define virtue by first explaining what it is not. This is a technique used to build up many arguments, and exhibited in a lot of Metaphysical poetry.

2.3B.5 Critical understanding of 'Virtue'

As you have already read and understood, John Donne had major and permanent influence on this younger Metaphysical poet, George Herbert. Herbert's imagery, like Donne's, works through the mind rather than the senses and his poems are logically structured.

George Herbert articulated his spiritual views and persuasions through poetry. In his poem 'Virtue' he uses poetic diction, dominant images, and startling allegories for instituting the leitmotif - life is petite, transitory, but our souls will persist forever. This poem, 'Virtue', speaks of the beauty and virtue of creation which often overpowers us with wonder and admiration because it is an echo of the supremacy of the Creator. George Herbert underlines the mystical reality that life is beautiful. However, notwithstanding its beauty, the creation will come to a flaming termination which will prompt us to look at the infinity of the universe.

"Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright," is a line that takes us silently to do a self-introspection and compare our lives to a perfect spring afternoon where everything is noble. The poet creates the magnificent association between a bright day and the virtuous soul. The day is something tranquil and brilliant; thus the poet associates it with the marriage between a man and a woman - "The bridal of the earth and sky". Then our attention is shifted to the spiritual truth that even this all will go away with time. Herbert uses personification to guide us towards a more passionate situation by saying, "The dew shall weep thy fall to-night" , since the day must convert to night, which again is a metaphor for death. Then there is the appraisal of a lovely rose and a virtuous soul, the comparisons aptly made. The rose is "angry and brave", and a noble bystander must rub his eyes in admiration and bewilderment. Anyway, Herbert pens that the root of the flower is in its grave and it will have to perish someday.

Lastly, Herbert carries us to the spell of spring which comprises both bountiful days and beautiful roses. Spring embodies time and everything comes in between. It is likened to "A box where sweets compacted lie". The whole world might come to an end, but only a

"sweet and virtuous soul, like a seasoned timber" is immortal.
Diction, Imagery, and Figurative Language are powerfully used in Herbert's "Virtue".

2.3B.6 Structure and Style

In '**Virtue'** Herbert creates a taut and balanced lyrical poem of four quatrains, or four-line stanzaic units, with lines that rhyme alternately, ABAB. For each stanza, the first three lines are generally in iambic tetrameter, while the last line is in iambic dimeter. Each of the first three stanzas begins with an image of something "sweet" in nature, and develops it till the last line, which operates like a refrain or chorus that balances the sweetness against the unpleasant fact that it must fade or die. The first and last lines of each stanza, then, create a contrast and a tension. There is also another kind of tension within each image: life cannot ignore the threat of death. This is perhaps best seen in the image of the rose, whose "root is ever in its grave".

This pattern of point and counterpoint within each stanza occurs on a larger scale when the entire fourth stanza is placed in contrast to the earlier three; by presenting the image of something differently "sweet": the immortal, virtuous human soul. The difference is indicated by the way the fourth stanza begins: the word "only" is a signifier of difference, apart from the fact that it breaks the earlier pattern of stanzas starting with "sweet". There is something "sweet" here as well – the soul, but its position within the line suggests that its nature is different from those of the other three. Then again, the last word of the fourth stanza is "lives"; in contrast to the "die" that ends previous stanzas.

These and other contrasts characterize this poem and create an almost breathlessly poised sense of balance. There are some arrestingly rich images used here, created with apparent simplicity of language and an abundance of rhetorical figures (some of which are discussed in the glossary). These too, contribute to the tension in the poem: between the seemingly simple words and the not-so-simple concepts that they embody. It is not easy, for example, to explain the comparison between a day and a "bridal", or between spring and a box filled with intense aromas.

2.3B.7 Summing Up

Here are a few points concerning what this section has covered. Included is one observation that is NOT true. Strike out the incorrect one, and you will be left with a concise summing-up. (Check your choice against the key provided.)

You have learnt…

- that like his contemporary Donne, Herbert wrote a great deal of secular as well as religious poetry
- that Herbert's poetry has Metaphysical characteristics, to which he adds some distinctive personal qualities
- that much of Herbert's verse appears to exhibit a simplicity which is actually deceptive
- that ***Virtue*** is an intricately patterned lyric which contrasts "sweet" but impermanent natural phenomena with the immortal and "virtuous" soul.
- that this basic contrast is sustained by a number of other contrasts in the poem.

2.3B.8 Comprehension Exercises

1. *Essay type*: [20 marks]

a) Attempt a critical analysis of George Herbert's *Virtue*.

b) Examine George Herbert's *Virtue* as a specimen of devotional poetry.

c) What elements in *Virtue* can, in your opinion, be called 'metaphysical'?

2. *Middle-length [12 marks]*

a) Write a note on the title of Herbert's *Virtue* and explain how it contributes to a greater understanding of the poem.

b) Identify the rhythm and metre of the poem, and show how Herbert uses structure to indicate/reinforce his theme.

c) Consider how any two of the natural phenomena mentioned earlier in the poem are balanced against the moral quality of "virtue" in the last stanza.

3. *Short-answer type [6 marks]*

a) Explain, with reference to the context:

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,

Like **seasoned** timber, never **gives** ;

b) Identify three different figures of speech in the poem, and explain any two of them.

c) Explain how Herbert has used the word "sweet" in different senses in the course of his poem.

2.3B.9 Suggested Reading

The texts shall remain the same as in 2.3A.9. in addition, should you want to look up the internet for material on the poem/poet in question, here is a link you might try out:

http://www.ccel.org/ccel/herbert/temple/Vertue.html

2.3B.10 Further Activity

One of the noteworthy features of Herbert's *Virtue* is that the structure so brilliantly serves to convey the sense. Herbert, in fact, has written a few poems which provide even better examples of this. You have been told about *Easter Wings* earlier. Herbert's *The Altar* may also be mentioned here. In that poem the words are arranged in the very shape of an altar. Such works are examples of **concrete poetry**, which creates an impact upon the reader that is primarily visual, depending greatly on the arrangement of the words on the page. You might search the internet or literary dictionaries for other examples of concrete poetry in English. The Welsh poet Dylan Thomas is only one of many authors who have experimented with such poetry, using geometrical shapes and patterns.

***Odd one out in the Summing Up Section:**

- "that like his contemporary Donne, Herbert wrote a great deal of secular as well as religious poetry." Actually Herbert wrote almost exclusively religious poetry.

Section - C ❐ John Milton : 'On His Blindness'

Structure

2.3C.0 Introduction and Scope

This section seeks

- to introduce you to John Milton, one of the greatest English poets to be influenced by both the Renaissance and the Reformation in England
- to focus on his achievements as a sonneteer handling one of the most popular verse forms to emerge out of the Renaissance
- to study in detail his celebrated sonnet '**On His Blindness**'

2.3C.1 John Milton and The Sonnet

John Milton (1608-1674) is routinely referred to as the poet ranked second only to Shakespeare in the history of English literature. It is, however, inadequate to think of him as just a poet. Milton was in fact one of the age's greatest writers of prose as well as verse, and a celebrated public figure. He is perhaps the English writer who best represents the varied influences of both the Renaissance and the Reformation. He deliberately attempted to fuse, in his work, the artistry of classical times and the moral

spirit of his own age, perhaps most noticeably in ***Paradise Lost***, but almost always in some measure.

Much of his work is a reflection of his life and times; and one autobiographical element that recurs in his works is blindness: from a 1654 letter to a friend observing how his eyesight had grown worse over a decade; to lines comparing himself to Tiresias and other blind sages in ***Paradise Lost***; or his selection of the blind Samson as the hero of ***Samson Agonistes***. Blindness also provided the inspiration for one of his memorable **sonnets**, which we will study here.

- Milton and the Sonnet

In Milton's time the **sonnet**, that fourteen-line lyrical poem with limited rhymes and sectional divisions, had established itself as an English variant of an originally Italian verse form. Milton was a notable practitioner of this verse form, and made important contributions to its development in England.

- ✦ Milton wrote some thirty sonnets in English and in Italian, though rarely on love or feminine beauty, which were common subjects for sonneteers. His English sonnets are about particular occasions, or deeply personal responses to people and events.
- In structure as well as form, Milton's sonnets are frequently path-breaking. He reintroduces the tighter Italian rhyme scheme of ABBAABBA for the first part of his poems, using only two rhymes instead of the more usual (in England) four.
- Even in the latter part of the sonnet, Milton experiments with various structural possibilities. In his Italian sonnets he uses a concluding couplet in the English style; in his English sonnets he typically uses three rhymes, in varying patterns, suggestive of the Italian model.
- However, he does not invariably use the octave-sestet division that such a rhyme scheme might suggest. In fact, in some sonnets he does not pause at the end of the eighth line, but carries the sense over, into the ninth. In this respect he resembles the Italian Giovanni Della Casa, who used run-on lines to break the rigid pattern popularised by Petrarch.

Let us see how these characteristics occur in his famous sonnet 'On His Blindness', where he attempts to come to terms with a physical disability that might prevent him from achieving great things as a writer. The depth and artistry of the poem itself perhaps should prove that Milton's fears were baseless; though at the time of its composition

Milton had not yet published 'Paradise Lost' (the national epic he had always intended to write), and thus might have felt that he had yet to reach the creative standards he had set for himself. Milton was a deeply religious writer, and we see here how uses a Christian content to breathe new life into a classical form typically associated with conventional declarations of love.

Here is the text of the complete poem, as found in *The Norton Anthology of Poetry,* Third Edition (1983) page 293. The words/phrases in bold are explained in the section that follows the poem.

2.3C.2 Text of on his Blindness

When I consider how **my light is spent**
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that **one talent** which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and **present**
My true account, lest he returning **chide**,
"Doth God **exact day-labour, light denied**?"
I **fondly** ask; But **Patience** to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
Bear his **mild yoke**, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly. **Thousands at his bidding speed**
And **post** o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

2.3C.3 Glossary and Annotations

my light is spent : my sight or vision is lost. Milton turned completely blind by 1652, and this is one of the frequently suggested dates for the poem's composition, given the immediacy of the poem's tone.

Ere: Before

half my days: According to the Bible, in Psalm xc.10, the average human life-span was between 70 and 80 years. But by most critics' estimates Milton would have been more than

40 when he wrote the poem. Some feel he had in mind the hundred years mentioned in Isaiah lxv.20; or the fact that his own father lived to be 84; or even the duration of his working life.

one talent: A Biblical **allusion** to the parable in Matthew 25:14-30, where a servant buries a talent given to him by his master, instead of using it profitably; and is punished. The word "talent", originally a unit of weight for precious metals, in the Bible (New Testament) indicates a unit of currency. Milton, of course, extends the meaning to include the later sense of "special ability", possibly referring to his poetic potential.

Present/ My true account: provide a detailed explanation of what was owed, a situation recalling the parable in Matthew18:23 onwards. God, who gives people special abilities, might require them to account for how these have been used.

chide: scold or rebuke

exact: forcefully demand or require

day-labour, light denied: In John ix.4**,** people are urged to work during the day, while there is light to see by. The poet, being blind, lacks "light" and wonders whether God will still expect from him the kind of work he might have produced if he had sight.

fondly: foolishly

Patience: Patience is **personified** here as someone full of endurance or toleration, a quality recommended for believers in Revelation14:12.

mild yoke: Light load, a combination of opposite meanings and hence an **oxymoron.** The phrase recalls Matthew xi.30 where Jesus claims that he will never test a believer with more than he can bear.

Thousands at his bidding speed: In Zechariah 1:10, great numbers of angels on horseback ride across the earth according to God's instructions

post: a verb, here meaning "ride or travel quickly", usually on horseback

They also serve who only stand and wait: Traditionally, it was held that "they" represented the highest orders of angels who, according to medieval (Catholic) belief, never leave God's side, and communicate His messages to lower orders of angels. Later critics believe that Milton, a strict Puritan, was unlikely to use Catholic concepts, and feel that "they" could refer to holy people willing to serve God, or soldiers of God, or even weak believers. "Wait" here implies a passive willingness to serve God. The entire last line provides an example of the rhetorical figure **epigram.**

2.3C.4 Theme and Title

The sonnet is a deeply personal and equally deeply religious presentation of a spiritual crisis brought about by a sense of unfulfilled promise; and a kind of resolution of that crisis. The speaker's untimely blindness prevents him from achieving what he wants to, and glorifying God; which not only distresses him but also creates a hint of resentment against a God who first takes away sight and then might blame the afflicted for his lack of achievement. By the end of the poem, however, there is a sense of acceptance of the situation, and a suggestion that God may be glorified in different ways.

Different anthologies provide different titles for this sonnet. The commonly-used ***On His Blindness*** was not in fact supplied or suggested by Milton himself, but by Bishop Thomas Newton, an eighteenth-century editor of Milton's works. Some editions have Sonnet XVI as a title, since this was the number given to the sonnet in a collection published by Milton in 1673. But here Milton left out some sonnets, including those numbered XV-XVII in a surviving manuscript. Based on this, many editors consider the poem on blindness to be Sonnet XIX (or XVI plus three). Others refer to the sonnet by its first line.

2.3C.5 Critical Understanding of 'On His Blindness'

The poem appears to be a record of a spiritual conflict and its resolution. It is presented in the form of a dialogue between the poet/speaker (evidently a great believer in God) and his conscience. A person who has lost his vision seems at first to wonder whether God, who has allowed him to suffer thus, will still expect him to achieve whatever he might have if he had not gone blind, or will hold him accountable for what he has failed to do. This is roughly the idea suggested in the first part of the poem, where the speaker dwells on how "my light is spent" far too soon, before "half my days" are done. The world now seems to him to be "dark…and wide". God has blessed him with a rare "talent" – great creative potential– which needs to be utilized, for, if he were to "hide" or waste it, he might expect to be severely punished. However, since he has turned blind, he is unable to give full expression to his creative vision, which therefore is "(l)odged with me useless". He had fully intended to use his divinely-gifted literary abilities in the service of God: "to serve therewith my Maker" by creating works that would glorify Him.. Now his blindness prevents him from doing so. In a moment of spiritual weakness, he seems to express unhappiness with God, and compares his own condition with that of someone expected to perform a

day's work, even though no daylight is available to work by. But as he does so, he seems to realize the folly of questioning God's ways, as the word "fondly", meaning "unwisely", makes clear.

At this point, the better and nobler part of his nature steps in, personified as Patience, representing the quality of passive and trusting acceptance. Patience reminds him that "God doth not need/ Either man's work or his own gifts". God is served best by people who readily accept whatever He has given them, whether blessing or burden: "who best/ Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best". God will never give a man any burden too difficult to bear. Man is too insignificant for his efforts to actually have any impact on God's grand plans, and in any case God has numerous orders of angels to carry out His work. In such a situation, as the poem's last line emphasizes, true service to God may be offered not just through active achievement, but also through a passive willingness to accept God's will: "They also serve who only stand and wait."

Interestingly, earlier criticism has tended to consider that Milton is referring to his own blindness and literary achievement (something not specifically mentioned in the poem). However, more recent scholars suggest that the poem is a fictionalized, rather than autobiographical, exploration of loss of poetic "vision" or inspiration. Perhaps you know that Milton's *Sonnet XXII* ("Cyriack, this three years' day these eyes…") also mentions his blindness.

2.3C.6 Structure and Style

What makes Milton's choice of the sonnet here an inspired one is principally his artistry in using the two-part structure of the Italian sonnet form to convey the two moods of this poem: one of anxiety, the other of consolation and acceptance. Thus, structure and sense reinforce each other. Milton, however, does not follow the conventions of the Italian sonnet in every detail.

Refer to what has been said about the sonnet form here and elsewhere in your reading material to determine the following:

- Does Milton use the rhyme scheme ABBAABBA the first eight lines?
- Where does the volta or turn of thought occur?
- How many rhymes does he use in the last six lines?
- Does he conclude the sonnet with a couplet?

- What is the predominant metrical pattern of the lines?

  [Check your answers against those in the box at the end of this section.]

This is a richly allusive poem, bringing in many references to Biblical passages and teachings, some of which have been mentioned in the glossary and annotations provided. It is also a poem rich in figures of speech, and some of these, too, have been explained earlier. The figurative language is one way of communicating ideas in a poem dealing with abstractions and religious concepts.

2.3C.7 Summing Up

Here are a few points concerning what this unit has covered. Included is one observation that is NOT true. Strike out the incorrect one, and you will be left with a concise summing-up. (Check your choice against the key provided.)

You have learnt that…

- Milton was influenced by ideals of the Renaissance as well as the Reformation.
- Milton contributed to the development of the sonnet in England
- Milton was in his twenties when he became blind.
- Milton's sonnet on his blindness uses the two-part structure common to the Italian sonnet form.
- The poem's Christian content breathes new life into a conventional literary form.

2.3C.8 Comprehension Exercises

1. *Essay type*: [20 marks]

a) Examine how, in 'On His Blindness', Milton uses the sonnet form to develop a progression from anxiety to acceptance/reassurance.

b) What kind of word-picture does Milton paint of the dedicated artist figure, eager to use his divinely gifted potential, but hampered by his loss of vision?

c) Milton has been said to be both a deeply religious writer and a great artist. Show how this estimate is proven true by 'On His Blindness'.

2. *Middle-length [12 marks]*

a) Explain a couple of the Biblical references in the poem.

b) What causes the speaker in Milton's poem to ask if God might "exact day-labour, light denied"?

c) Discuss, with close textual reference, how Patience consoles the blind poet in 'On His Blindness'.

3. *Short-answer type [6 marks]*

a) Explain, with reference to the context:

When I consider how my light is spent Ere half my days...

b) "…They also serve who only stand and wait." Who, in your opinion, might "they" include? Whom are "they" contrasted with?

c) Identify three different figures of speech in the poem, and explain any two of them.

2.3C.9 Suggested Reading

Kathryn Bevis, *John Milton: A Beginner's Guide*. London. Hodder & Stoughton, 2003.

Carey, John (ed). *Milton: Complete Shorter Poems*. Second Edition**.** London. Longman, 1997.

David Daiches, *A Critical History of English Literature,* 2nd Ed. In four volumes. Vol II. New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1969. 390-457

Roy Flannagan, *John Milton: A Short Introduction.* London: Blackwell Publishing, 2002.

Nicholas Mcdowell and Nigel Smith (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Milton.* London, OUP, 2009.

2.3C.10 Further Activity

Milton wa\s one of the poets who revitalized the sonnet tradition, both in terms of content and structure, and took it beyond its original preoccupation with the theme of love, to deal with politics, religion and general reflections. After Milton, the poetic ideals of the Restoration and Augustan ages did not encourage sonneteering, but from the Romantic era onwards, the sonnet was a poetic form that challenged the vision and abilities of generations of poets,

including Wordsworth, Keats, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Gerard Manley Hopkins and W.H. Auden.

Why not examine the progress of the sonnet in succeeding ages? You will understand how the above-mentioned poets and others added variety and complexity to a form whose brief span might seem to resist, or restrict, experimentation.

Here is an internet link you might find useful:

http://www.gbv.de/dms/goettingen/318641097.pdf

*Answers to questions on the poem's structure:

- Yes
- Midway into the eighth line.
- Three; the lines rhyme CDECDE
- No
- The lines are generally in iambic pentameter, as is conventional for an English sonnet

*Odd one out in the Summing Up Section:

- "Milton was in his twenties when he became blind." Actually he is believed to have been around 40, if not more, when this happened.

Module - 3 : Unit - 1

FRANCIS BACON – 'Of Studies' 'Of Gardens'

Structure

3.1.0 : Introduction

In Module 1 Unit 2 you have already learnt that there was, along with drama and poetry, a sizeable corpus of prose literature as well in the Elizabethan period. The development of various kinds of prose narratives brought in a new element in post-Renaissance England. In this Unit which is the first of the Module on Elizabethan prose, you will be given a brief insight into the development of the 'Essay' as a genre, how it gained popularity in contemporary England, and a glimpse into the essays of the multi-faceted Renaissance man, Francis Bacon. The focus will be on the essays chosen in your syllabus with reference to which, we shall try to understand Bacon's particular style of expression in this format.

3.1.1: Rise of The 'Essay' as a Literary Form

The word "essay" originates from the French word "essayer" which in turn derives from the Latin word "exagere" which means 'to weigh' or 'to sift'. The French Renaissance statesman and author Michel de Montaigne (1533 – 1592) is considered the father of the essay since it was he who introduced the trend of using a personal voice in his writing in the sixteenth century. It was a radical move since, before the publication of his *Essais* in two volumes between 1580-88, all writing had been governed by the purely formal approach. By introducing the conversational approach to writing short pieces called *Essais*, Montaigne was providing a format to be experimented upon and modified by writers across generations from then on.

Burges Johnson in *Essaying the Essay* (1970) analyses that Bacon "borrowed this word essay from Montaigne, turn[ed] it into English and use[d] it as a title for some short prose experiments of his own". Bacon, of course was more formal than Montaigne in his style of address. However the personal element remained intrinsic to the choice of topics and their treatment and analyses. Overall Bacon made the essay into a definite form adapted to his purposes of exposition of important subjects filling up the gap in learning which he discusses in *The Advancement of Learning*, essayed in so many forms.

Alan Sinfield and Lindsay Smith in *Textual Practice* (1998) discuss the origins of the essay in the cultural revolution of the Renaissance since the arts became more centred on the human self and enquiry in the topical context of the human being's perfection and possibilities. Literature and, therefore, the essay too becomes an important site of such exploration as seen in the *Essayes* of Bacon.

3.1.2: Francis Bacon – A Brief Insight

Sir Francis Bacon (1561 – 1626) was a man of many talents and modes of expression. He is renowned for not only his scientific method of enquiry but also his philosophical treatises and his essays in the world of literature. He excelled as a statesman, philosopher, scientist and jurist. Many shadows fell on his public career in Parliament as he took part in the conviction of his patron, the Earl of Essex. His rise to fame in court was possible only after James I's accession in 1603. Consequently, he was knighted and given the position of the Baron of Verulam, the Viscount of St Albans and later rose from Solicitor General to Attorney General to Lord Keeper and finally Lord Chancellor of England.

Bacon is however most remembered for popularising his inductive method of scientific enquiry as outlined in his *Novum Organum* which required a planned procedure for investigating all natural things. His empirical methods have often been credited with encouraging experiment and invention, propelling the dawn of the industrial age and forming the rhetorical and theoretical backdrop of modern science. His proposition was that the fulfillment of scientific knowledge lay in its practical application. While Bacon's literary productions are few compared to his philosophical and scientific works, it is his pragmatic vision that shines through the Essays which you shall be studying in this unit. It is essential to form an idea of his corpus of work and his life to locate his essays in the matrix of his ideas and engagements.

The first edition of the *Essays: Religious Meditations, Places of Persuasion and Dissuasion* appeared in 1597 written in varying styles covering topics pertaining to both public and private life. However the coherence and organization of content in the essays improved with the second edition in 1612 with 38 essays in it. Further improvement and enlarged scope is seen in the 1625 edition which was published under a new title *Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall.*

Bacon considered these essays to be "as a recreation of my other studies" apparently placing greater importance on his other writings such as *The Advancement of Learning* (1605) written in two books which surveys the entire field of learning and seeks to correct the defects and deficiencies in the same through the Instauration Magna of learning.

However Bacon's Essays have been admired and praised by his contemporaries who credited him with having invented the form of the 'essay'. Henry Hallam describes the *Essayes* thus: "They are deeper and more discriminating than any earlier or almost any later work in the English language" Of course, Bacon borrowed much from Montaigne and other writers, whose content and style influenced his work.

3.1.3 : Bacon - The Essayist

The essays possibly have their origin in Bacon's common place book. The common place book was where the educated Renaissance man wrote down his own collection of words/ phrases/aphorisms from all that he read or heard as a ready reference for future conversations and /or essays wherein it was possible to explore and enjoy the rhetorical pleasure of rewriting these ideas so collected under the aegis of different topics . In the particular collection of phrases and aphorisms in the common place book we learn much about the

keeper of the book and his interests and opinions.

In Montaigne we see the direct induction of the essay from the common place book as his essays are often strings of quotations on a given subject. While Bacon's common place book shows his pleasure in rhetoric, in his case it is obviously also a storehouse for his interactions in court and parliament since it collects phrases/sayings both for and against a particular topic.

You have already read about the three editions of Bacon's *Essays* in the previous subsection. Note that the change in his style and confidence in writing was also a result of greater circulation and more importance given to the writings themselves. The 1597 edition was intended but for a few friends in private circulation. As the genre of the essay became more popular and Bacon's reputation as a scientist grew as well, he revised and expanded his scope for the 1612 and then the 1625 version displaying impeccable mastery over the language and the form of the essay.

Bacon's style was compressed and aphoristic, chosen to best analyze the subject matter. In an age familiar with complex and superficial or ornamental stylistic devices he turns to accurate and chastened thought expressed in definitive words. The abstract finds expression in the commonest objects seen and experienced rather than through imaginative and allusive expression. The judicial balancing of pros and cons in his essays also highlights his scientific temper and bent of enquiry. It is to be noted that the aphorisms he used would have been common for other educated men and the pleasure of reading his essays would lie in recognizing the same as well as appreciating the reorganization of those aphorisms and their utilization in essaying a topic.

The Renaissance had a special love for the pithy epigram or *sententia* (Latin, meaning literally feeling or opinion, a maxim, proverb, aphorism , a brief expression of conventional wisdom). Hence the writer who would have best imbibed the past traditions and was able to express the same in his own way, echoing the known in forms unknown was the one who was appreciated as 'original'—different from the Romantic conception of original and spontaneous writing. Bacon successfully and creatively blends Cicero, Aristotle, Tacitus, Plutarch among others, more concerned with the argument he creates with their sayings and the associations surrounding their phrases than in ascribing the source of his phrases/ aphorisms.

In the Preface to *Maxims of Law*, Bacon says, "…the delivery of knowledge in distinct and disjointed aphorisms doth leave the wit of man more free to turn and toss and to make use of that which is so delivered to more several purposes and applications." This aphorism

itself may be understood with reference to his discussion on the methods of delivering knowledge in *The Advancement of Learning*. He discusses the two different ways of expression – the 'magistral' and the 'probative'. The former delivers knowledge in a full and systematic way giving an impression of finality demanding that the reader accepts the knowledge as it is. It uses the medium of 'methods' as style of expression—formal and elaborate. On the other hand the probative style of writing encourages the readers to examine all the propositions and to add to them. The style of writing employed is, thus, through aphorisms since they become the vehicle of enquiry and become the starting point of intellectual journeys that deliberate on the given topic. We, of course, understand Bacon's partiality for the latter style or medium of imparting knowledge in keeping with his scientific temperament and principles of investigation. There are two sides of every topic chosen for exposition by Bacon and never any finality in the conclusion. At the same time he takes into consideration all past discussions on the topic as well. In his adopted style of writing he discards the elaborate style of Cicero favoured in his day and takes Seneca for master. Hence Cicero's long periods get substituted by brief, witty aphorisms. Unlike Montaigne, Bacon also compresses several different ideas in the span of one essay rather than elaborating on a single idea alone.

In addition to Montaigne Machiavelli is a major influence on Bacon in discussions revolving around ethics and government as well as on Bacon's cynical yet pragmatic style of expression and reflection. In contrast to Montaigne, the essays are impersonal pieces. However Bacon's personality emerges through the very aphorisms culled by him and the opinions formulated through the essays rather than the topics chosen by him for the same. It is true that we see him quite preoccupied with the material, often seeing relationships as steps in the ladder of success and also placing greater emphasis on success/failure rather than judging action in terms of good/bad. However that does not mean that Bacon is insensitive to moral values. He shows respect and admiration for values but at the same time chooses the pragmatic approach to success seeing the noble ends of such advancement as more important than the means. He deliberates upon the effects of actions and their ethical implications, such as in 'of cunning' and 'of honour and reputation'. He shows ample awareness of the grace of arts and the graces of conduct and many of his essays also plumb philosophical questions and are highly meditative like 'of truth', 'of death' and 'of beauty' to name a few.

Bacon also expertly bridges the gap between the Renaissance ideals of the 'Active' and 'Contemplative' lives and the controversy surrounding the choice of either. In his scientific programme he was concerned with the application of theory to everyday life.

His essays too can be seen as an effort towards strengthening his readers' sense of enquiry and reflection so as to impact their everyday lives and enrich them with past wisdom formulated in new ways to suit the needs of the present day in matters private and public.

3.1.4 Text of 'Of Studies'

STUDIES serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight, is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment, and disposition of business. For expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best, from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humor of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need proyning, by study; and studies themselves, do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books, else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit: and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know, that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtile; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend. Abeunt studia in mores. Nay, there is no stond or impediment in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies; like as diseases of

the body, may have appropriate exercises. Bowling is good for the stone and reins; shooting for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for the head; and the like. So if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again. If his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the Schoolmen; for they are cymini sectores. If he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study 197 the lawyers' cases. So every defect of the mind, may have a special receipt.

3.1.5 : Detailed Annotation

'serve for delight'—provide pleasure

'for ornament'—for enhancing the beauty of conversation

'for ability'—for increasing efficiency in work related interactions

'privateness and retiring'—in seclusion and at times of leisure

'discourse'—conversation or discussions…in the art of oration

'judgement and disposition of business'—in discretion, making choices and conducting affairs of public life

'expert men'—men of experience

'judge of particulars'—form the correct opinion regarding individual details of a matter

'general counsels '—advice regarding the matter as a whole

'plots and marshalling of affairs'—planning and arrangement of all matters

'those that are learned'—learned through studies

'sloth'—laziness/indolence

'affectation'—showing off

'humour'—whim

'proyning'—trimming/pruning

'direction'—guidance

'too much at large'—too vague and generalized

'bounded in by experience'—controlled and given specificity through practical experience

'Crafty'—clever in a deceptive or dishonest way

'contemn'—deride as useless

'they teach not their own use'—the knowledge in books do not describe the manner in which such learning may be applied

'that is a wisdom'—the wisdom of practical application of knowledge

'without them'—outside the realm of books

'above them'—superior to studies

'observation'—experience of life…observing people/situations/events

'not to contradict and confute'—not with the aim of opposing another or proving someone false

'nor to believe and take for granted'—not to accept all knowledge found in books unquestioningly

'but to weigh and consider'—contents of the book should be read with intelligence, examined and judged thoughtfully before absorbing the same

'to be tasted' —read in parts/sampled

''to be swallowed'—read hastily, not with great attention

'to be chewed and digested'—read thoroughly and assimilated

'curiously'—carefully

'diligence'—consistent effort to accomplish task undertaken

'by deputy'—through another person

'arguments'—subjects

'distilled books'—books of which summaries have been made

'like common distilled waters, flashy things'—he compares synopsis of books to distilled water which is tasteless and provides no pleasure, having only momentary utility

'a full man'—a man with a developed mind and fulfilled countenance

'a ready man'—a quick and alert man with ready responses to everything

'an exact man'—a man who is precise and correct in every detail

'cunning'—skill/cleverness

'subtile'—subtle…mathematics leading to refinement of the intellect to be able to discern the slightest and finest differences or similarities

'nature philosophy deep'—natural sciences lend depth to the mind

'moral grave'—moral values lend gravity to the student

'logic and rhetoric able to contend'—by reasoning and persuasion able to debate and argue well

'Abeunt studia in mores'—Studies permeate one's character and moulds it

'stond'—obstacles, hindrance

'wit'—mind/intellect

'wrought out by fit studies'—removed or cured by suitable studies

'reins'—kidneys

'So'—similarly

'wit be wandering'—unable to concentrate, distracted

'demonstrations'—proving or solving mathematical problems

'never so little'—even a little

'schoolmen'—philosophers

'cymini sectores'—hair-splitters. . .i.e. they make distinctions which are so fine and subtle as would not be noticed by others

'to call up'—to recall

'receipt'—cure/remedy

3.1.6: Analysing 'Of Studies'

In this essay Bacon details the different kinds of 'studies' possible, their uses and their possibilities. He suggests that 'studies' is a multifaceted experience that finds fulfilment through its application in practical life.

At first he maintains that studies serve their purpose in giving pleasure when it is pursued in private and in the leisure of one's home. Then it finds use in decorating one's speech and conversation by displaying knowledge gained. Studies also increase one's efficiency in practical transactions by increasing a person's ability and acumen in making judgements and helping his business related work. He further adds that while experts can provide us with the particulars of a matter, advice regarding the matter as a whole is best given by learned men. In this Bacon suggests the importance of being learned and the ways in which studies impacts both a person's life and those around him.

However, he is quick to add that spending all of one's time in studies is a sign of sloth and

criticizes one who makes use of his studies for ornament as he is a show off and one who only makes judgements by dint of his studies as a whimsical and eccentric person without grounding in experience. Here we see Bacon's insistence on a practical and balanced approach to studies wherein he wisely says that studies provide too much of generalized information, which finds specificity only when the knowledge derived from experience provides the grooves or contours within which the learning might find better exposition. Bacon also uses an analogy at this juncture where he compares natural abilities to the natural growth of plants which need tending and pruning to look best and in order to flourish. Studies prune and shape the natural talents in a person and experience perfects these honed traits in him. How may studies therefore be used in perfecting a person's character? The essay by Bacon goes on to analyze and expound on this point in detail.

He says that studies do not teach one to deal with actual situations as this art comes only through observation and experience. Thus, cunning men consider studies useless, not understanding their value; simple men admire studies without knowing how to apply learning ; wise men know how to perfectly blend the spheres of studies and experience knowing the value of both in one's personal development and social skills.

Bacon then advises the student on the manner of reading. The aim is not to oppose the text and prove it false, nor to completely believe everything written, nor simply to extract ornament for conversation but to carefully examine and judge the contents of the book before absorbing them. Thus the student has to learn the art of discrimination and wise action even while studying or reading anything. He details that certain books are only to be read in parts , or in the analogy of eating that he uses—to be tasted. Other books are to be read completely but not with particular care, i.e. they are to be 'swallowed'. Still others are to be read with great attention and diligence and absorbed wholly and are as he explains, to be 'chewed and digested'. Bacon also concedes that certain books may be read through somebody else when they contain less important matter and commoner arguments such that their summaries suffice for us to learn what is in them. However he also states that such 'distilled books' have no pleasure in the drinking thereof like distilled water, bearing only functional quality without the pleasure of learning, judgement or consideration required in books of worth as described earlier.

The skills gained by different activities are referred to by Bacon here. Thus while conversation and interactions make a man alert and quick with his repartees and reactions, writing makes a man precise in his expression. Compared to these skills, reading makes a man wholly developed according to Bacon. However it is important to note that the other

two skills are related to the learning derived from reading. Hence Bacon through his aphorism "Reading maketh a full man ; conference a ready man ; and writing an exact man" basically conveys once again the distilled essence of his opinion on studies and experience discussed above.

He also discusses the possibility of one who is not perfected in these experiences and skills of reading, writing and conversing. He even had advice for this imperfect situation where the person writing less needs good memory, if he converses less he needs to be quick witted by nature to make up for the lack of experience and one who reads too little needs to be very clever to appear to know what he does not.

Now he discusses the different effects of studies on people's intellect. When men study history they gain wisdom as they learn from the events of the past, poetry makes a man imaginative and creative, hence witty. Mathematics helps develop a man of refined intellect capable of making subtle distinctions. Natural philosophy adds depth to his character and ability of interrogation and reflection on the world around him. Moral studies lend him gravity and dignity and logic and rhetoric give a man ability to debate and argue with excellence. Hence studies deeply influence a man's character and abilities. That is why he had said that "Reading maketh a full man"

Any imperfection in the intellect can be corrected or cured by choosing the correct subject of study. Here too Bacon uses the analogy of diseases in the body that may be cured by the correct exercises. He gives several examples of maladies like kidney stones, disease of the lungs, stomach ailments, head disorders which may find relief in bowling, shooting, walking and riding respectively. Similarly, if a man is distracted easily, mathematics brings him concentration since if his mind wanders even a little, he has to restart his mathematical exercise. When a man is unable to make fine distinctions, philosophy cures him by its method of finding distinctions almost invisible to the ordinary eye. Finally, if a man is unable to recall arguments and ideas to prove his point, he is advised to study lawyer's cases which shall teach him both to remember as well as apply his knowledge to his arguments. Hence every defect in the mind may be cured and every individual perfected through studies. Even in this analogy, it might be noted that the value of each kind of study lies in its application in the person's everyday life.

Thus Bacon expertly leads his essay towards finding the perfect amalgamation between the seemingly separate world of life and books. Studies become the base on which experience is built and at the same time, experience renders studies useful and also guides the process of study. One without the other is useless. Both are required in the perfect functioning of the individual in his worldly affairs.

3.1.7: Text of ‘Of Gardens’

G0D Almighty first planted a garden. And indeed it is the purest of human pleasures. It is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man; without which, buildings and palaces are but gross handiworks; and a man shall ever see, that when ages grow to civility and elegancy, men come to build stately sooner than to garden finely; as if gardening were the greater perfection. I do hold it, in the royal ordering of gardens, there ought to be gardens, for all the months in the year; in which severally things of beauty may be then in season. For December, and January, and the latter part of November, you must take such things as are green all winter: holly; ivy; bays; juniper; cypress-trees; yew; pine-apple-trees; fir-trees; rosemary; lavender; periwinkle, the white, the purple, and the blue; germander; flags; orangetrees; lemon-trees; and myrtles, if they be stoved; and sweet marjoram, warm set. There followeth, for the latter part of January and February, the mezereon-tree, which then blossoms; crocus vernus, both the yellow and the grey; primroses, anemones; the early tulippa; hyacinthus orientalis; chamairis; fritellaria. For March, there come violets, specially the single blue, which are the earliest; the yellow daffodil; the daisy; the almond-tree in blossom; the peach-tree in blossom; the cornelian-tree in blossom; sweet-briar. In April follow the double white violet; the wallflower; the stock-gilliflower; the cowslip; flowerdelices, and lilies of all natures; rosemary-flowers; the tulippa; the double peony; the pale daffodil; the French honeysuckle; the cherry-tree in blossom; the damson and plum-trees in blossom; the white thorn in leaf; the lilac-tree. In May and June come pinks of all sorts, specially the blushpink; roses of all kinds, except the musk, which comes later; honeysuckles; strawberries; bugloss; columbine; the French marigold, flos Africanus; cherry-tree in fruit; ribes; figs in fruit; rasps; vineflowers; lavender in flowers; the sweet satyrian, with the white flower; herba muscaria; lilium convallium; the apple-tree in blossom. In July come gilliflowers of all varieties; musk-roses; the lime-tree in blossom; early pears and plums in fruit; jennetings, codlins. In August come plums of all sorts in fruit; pears; apricocks; berberries; filberds; musk-melons; monks-hoods, of all colors. In September come grapes; apples; poppies of all colors; peaches; melocotones; nectarines; cornelians; wardens; quinces. In October and the beginning of November come services; medlars; bullaces; roses cut or removed to come late; hollyhocks; and such like. These particulars are for the climate of London; but my meaning

is perceived, that you may have ver perpetuum, as the place affords.

And because the breath of flowers is far sweeter in the air (where it comes and goes like the warbling of music) than in the hand, therefore nothing is more fit for that delight, than to know what be the flowers and plants that do best perfume the air. Roses, damask and red, are fast flowers of their smells; so that you may walk by a whole row of them, and find nothing of their sweetness; yea though it be in a morning's dew. Bays likewise yield no smell as they grow. Rosemary little; nor sweet marjoram. That which above all others yields the sweetest smell in the air is the violet, specially the white double violet, which comes twice a year; about the middle of April, and about Bartholomew-tide. Next to that is the musk-rose. Then the strawberry-leaves dying, which yield a most excellent cordial smell. Then the flower of vines; it is a little dust, like the dust of a bent, which grows upon the cluster in the first coming forth. Then sweet-briar. Then wall-flowers, which are very delightful to be set under a parlor or lower chamber window. Then pinks and gilliflowers, especially the matted pink and clove gilliflower. Then the flowers of the lime-tree. Then the honeysuckles, so they be somewhat afar off. Of beanflowers I speak not, because they are field flowers. But those which perfume the air most delightfully, not passed by as the rest, but being trodden upon and crushed, are three; that is, burnet, wildthyme, and watermints. Therefore you are to set whole alleys of them, to have the pleasure when you walk or tread.

For gardens (speaking of those which are indeed princelike, as we have done of buildings), the contents ought not well to be under thirty acres of ground; and to be divided into three parts; a green in the entrance; a heath or desert in the going forth; and the main garden in the midst; besides alleys on both sides. And I like well that four acres of ground be assigned to the green; six to the heath; four and four to either side; and twelve to the main garden. The green hath two pleasures: the one, because nothing is more pleasant to the eye than green grass kept finely shorn; the other, because it will give you a fair alley in the midst, by which you may go in front upon a stately hedge, which is to enclose the garden. But because the alley will be long, and, in great heat of the year or day, you ought not to buy the shade in the garden, by going in the sun through the green, therefore you are, of either side the green, to plant a covert alley upon carpenter's work, about twelve foot in height, by which you may go in shade into the garden. As for the making of knots or figures, with divers colored earths, that they may lie under the windows of the house on that side which the garden stands, they be but toys; you may see as good

sights, many times, in tarts. The garden is best to be square, encompassed on all the four sides with a stately arched hedge. The arches to be upon pillars of carpenter's work, of some ten foot high, and six foot broad; and the spaces between of the same dimension with the breadth of the arch. Over the arches let there be an entire hedge of some four foot high, framed also upon carpenter's work; and upon the upper hedge, over every arch, a little turret, with a belly, enough to receive a cage of birds: and over every space between the arches some other little figure, with broad plates of round colored glass gilt, for the sun to play upon. But this hedge I intend to be raised upon a bank, not steep, but gently slope, of some six foot, set all with flowers. Also I understand, that this square of the garden, should not be the whole breadth of the ground, but to leave on either side, ground enough for diversity of side alleys; unto which the two covert alleys of the green, may deliver you. But there must be no alleys with hedges, at either end of this great enclosure; not at the hither end, for letting your prospect upon this fair hedge from the green; nor at the further end, for letting your prospect from the hedge, through the arches upon the heath.

For the ordering of the ground, within the great hedge, I leave it to variety of device; advising nevertheless, that whatsoever form you cast it into, first, it be not too busy, or full of work. Wherein I, for my part, do not like images cut out in juniper or other garden stuff; they be for children. Little low hedges, round, like welts, with some pretty pyramids, I like well; and in some places, fair columns upon frames of carpenter's work. I would also have the alleys, spacious and fair. You may have closer alleys, upon the side grounds, but none in the main garden. I wish also, in the very middle, a fair mount, with three ascents, and alleys, enough for four to walk abreast; which I would have to be perfect circles, without any bulwarks or embossments; and the whole mount to be thirty foot high; and some fine banqueting-house, with some chimneys neatly cast, and without too much glass.

For fountains, they are a great beauty and refreshment; but pools mar all, and make the garden unwholesome, and full of flies and frogs. Fountains I intend to be of two natures: the one that sprinkleth or spouteth water; the other a fair receipt of water, of some thirty or forty foot square, but without fish, or slime, or mud. For the first, the ornaments of images gilt, or of marble, which are in use, do well: but the main matter is so to convey the water, as it never stay, either in the bowls or in the cistern; that the water be never by rest discolored, green or red or the like; or gather any mossiness or putrefaction. Besides that,

it is to be cleansed every day by the hand. Also some steps up to it, and some fine pavement about it, doth well. As for the other kind of fountain, which we may call a bathing pool, it may admit much curiosity and beauty; wherewith we will not trouble ourselves: as, that the bottom be finely paved, and with images; the sides likewise; and withal embellished with colored glass, and such things of lustre; encompassed also with fine rails of low statuas. But the main point is the same which we mentioned in the former kind of fountain; which is, that the water be in perpetual motion, fed by a water higher than the pool, and delivered into it by fair spouts, and then discharged away under ground, by some equality of bores, that it stay little. And for fine devices, of arching water without spilling, and making it rise in several forms (of feathers, drinking glasses, canopies, and the like), they be pretty things to look on, but nothing to health and sweetness.

For the heath, which was the third part of our plot, I wish it to be framed, as much as may be, to a natural wildness. Trees I would have none in it, but some thickets made only of sweet-briar and honeysuckle, and some wild vine amongst; and the ground set with violets, strawberries, and primroses. For these are sweet, and prosper in the shade. And these to be in the heath, here and there, not in any order. I like also little heaps, in the nature of mole-hills (such as are in wild heaths), to be set, some with wild thyme; some with pinks; some with germander, that gives a good flower to the eye; some with periwinkle; some with violets; some with strawberries; some with cowslips; some with daisies; some with red roses; some with lilium convallium; some with sweet-williams red; some with bear's-foot: and the like low flowers, being withal sweet and sightly. Part of which heaps, are to be with standards of little bushes pricked upon their top, and part without. The standards to be roses; juniper; holly; berberries (but here and there, because of the smell of their blossoms); red currants; gooseberries; rosemary; bays; sweetbriar; and such like. But these standards to be kept with cutting, that they grow not out of course.

For the side grounds, you are to fill them with variety of alleys, private, to give a full shade, some of them, wheresoever the sun be. You are to frame some of them, likewise, for shelter, that when the wind blows sharp you may walk as in a gallery. And those alleys must be likewise hedged at both ends, to keep out the wind; and these closer alleys must be ever finely gravelled, and no grass, because of going wet. In many of these alleys, likewise, you are to set fruit-trees of all sorts; as well upon the walls, as in ranges. And this would

be generally observed, that the borders wherein you plant your fruit-trees, be fair and large, and low, and not steep; and set with fine flowers, but thin and sparingly, lest they deceive the trees. At the end of both the side grounds, I would have a mount of some pretty height, leaving the wall of the enclosure breast high, to look abroad into the fields.

For the main garden, I do not deny, but there should be some fair alleys ranged on both sides, with fruit-trees; and some pretty tufts of fruit-trees, and arbors with seats, set in some decent order; but these to be by no means set too thick; but to leave the main garden so as it be not close, but the air open and free. For as for shade, I would have you rest upon the alleys of the side grounds, there to walk, if you be disposed, in the heat of the year or day; but to make account, that the main garden is for the more temperate parts of the year; and in the heat of summer, for the morning and the evening, or overcast days.

For aviaries, I like them not, except they be of that largeness as they may be turfed, and have living plants and bushes set in them; that the birds may have more scope, and natural nesting, and that no foulness appear in the floor of the aviary. So I have made a platform of a princely garden, partly by precept, partly by drawing, not a model, but some general lines of it; and in this I have spared for no cost. But it is nothing for great princes, that for the most part taking advice with workmen, with no less cost set their things together; and sometimes add statuas and such things for state and magnificence, but nothing to the true pleasure of a garden.

3.1.8 : Detailed Annotation

'a Garden'—a reference to the Garden of Eden

'purest'—highest/noblest

'gross'—coarse

'build stately'—construct grand and magnificent buildings

'garden finely'—lay out beautiful gardens

'hold it'—think

'royal ordering of gardens'—in the grand scheme of laying out gardens

'severally'—separately/ in each of them

‘stoved’—kept warm

‘warm set’—planted in a warm and sheltered place

‘Lilies of all natures’—lilies of all kinds

‘my meaning is perceived’—what I wanted to say is clear to the reader

‘Ver pepetum’—perpetual spring

‘breath’—perfume

‘warbling of music’—rise and fall of sweet music

‘in the hand’—when flowers are plucked

‘fast flowers’—their perfumes are tightly concealed/ retained

‘in a morning’s dew’—when the flowers are wet with dew and fill the air with fragrance

‘about Bartholomew tide’—near about the 24th of August , Saint Bartholomew’s day

‘a bent’—a grass

‘first coming forth’—beginning of the season

‘set whole alleys of them’—plant on both sides of the pathway

‘contents’—area of the garden

‘a green in the entrance’—a grassy plot

‘to buy’—to reach

‘covert alley’—covered /sheltered

‘Carpenter’s work’—wooden poles

‘knots or figures’—garden beds designed in fanciful shapes

‘toys’-trifles

‘tarts’—pastries

‘for the sun to play upon’—so that a dazzling effect may be produced by th reflection

‘diversity of side alleys’—different types of side walks

‘deliver you’—lead you

‘too busy’—elaborate

‘full of work’—intricate and overcrowded

‘welts’—edges or borders

‘closer alleys’—narrower and more sheltered alleys

‘mount’—piece of raised ground

‘three ascents’—three flights of steps

‘bulwarks’—boundary walls

‘unwholesome’—unhealthy

‘spouteth’—ejects

‘receipt’—receives

‘rest’—stagnation

‘curiosity’-ingenuity

‘rails of low statuas’—railings with low statues engraved

‘equality of bores’—tubes or pipes of equal diameter

‘nothing to health and sweetness’—contribute nothing towards improving one’s health and temperament and/or external beauty

‘framed’—shaped

‘natural wildness’—as though of unregulated or unplanned growth

‘Part of which heaps’—some of the heaps

‘standards’—like flags pricked(planted)

‘walk as in a gallery’—walk protected from the wind as its a well covered path

‘gravelled’—gravel is a mixture of coarse sand and powdered stone

‘lest they deceive the trees’—so that they do not starve the trees by taking away their nourishment

‘arbours’—bowers

‘so as it be not close’—so that it is not congested

‘health of the year or day’—i.e. when the weather is hot and unpleasant—either in summer or in the noon

‘more temperate parts of the year’—periods when the weather is more pleasant

‘turfed’—overgrown with grass

‘a platform of a princely garden’—a design or sketch on which a magnificent garden may be built

‘taking advice with’—consulting

‘statuas’—statues/figurines

‘state and magnificence’—grandeur and splendor

3.1.9: Analysing 'Of Gardens'

In the earlier essay we had seen Bacon's attention to detailing different facets of the activity or contents of study. However that detailing is nothing compared to his efforts in his essay 'Of Gardens' where he preoccupies himself with describing the finer details of how the perfect garden of his imagination, the princely garden must look. It displays his knowledge of flowers, their qualities as well as a fine aesthetic sense of quantity and arrangement to create the perfect garden.

He starts with a reference to the Garden of Eden probably as a signifier as the best possible garden that can ever be planted or created. He therefore calls it the 'purest' of human pleasures, seeing it as one of the nobler forms of refreshment for human beings. The art of creating a garden, according to Bacon, requires greater talent and sophistication than constructing a building. Hence Bacon sets the tone for his act of creating the perfect garden through directions in the essay which recommend the activities as worthy of the time of both the reader and the writer.

Bacon insists that in the laying out of a garden on a grand scale such as a royal garden, it should be so planned that there are blooms for every time of the year. This would create great variety providing pleasure to the individual spending time in the garden. He then goes on to detail the possible flowering plants that may be selected as representative of every month of the year. His range of knowledge about flowers and seasons is quite staggering and this part of the essay might make for tedious reading for someone not much interested in the names of so many flowers. He clarifies that this set of examples are meant only for the climate of London thereby indicating that his knowledge extends beyond what is expressed and hopes that he has been able to clarify his aim, which is to keep this garden in a state of perpetual spring.

He continues to describe all the sweetest smelling flowers, conjecturing that the fragrance of flowers in better enjoyed when it spreads in the air than when it is plucked. He differentiates between flowers like roses and damask which withhold their perfume till you deeply inhale their scent and the white double violet or the musk rose which fills the air with its sweetness. There are also flowers like the wild thyme and watermints which perfume the air when they are crushed and trod upon. He offers this information to the avid gardener so that he may be able to plan the planting of flowers in his garden in order to give the greatest pleasure to the visitor walking through the alleys.

The portions of the garden as it should be in Bacon's vision are then described. The total

area should not be below thirty acres according to him. There are three main spaces that he enunciates: the grassy plot that is to be the entrance, a heath or desert in the middle and finally the main garden. He suggests that the green at the entrance is important because it is pleasing to the eye and it prepares the way for the main garden by creating a fair alley till the hedge of the enclosed garden. Therein he realizes that the alley to the garden is significant and hence advises that it should be a covered alley so that it is a comfortable walk for the visitor. He also states that gardens are best if the garden beds are square , not approving of the fancy shapes of beds often made for viewing pleasure under the windows of the house where the garden stands. He provides many details of ways in which the alley might be made most pleasurable and beautiful.

Then he lends attention to decorating the main great hedge which shall enclose the garden. He advises that it be not too elaborate or overcrowded with design since he thinks of such ornamentation as best appreciated by children alone. He also envisages a mount in the middle with ascending steps where some fine dining spaces with chimneys might be located to add to the pleasures of the garden.

Bacon describes the possible kinds of fountains that may adorn such a garden seeing that they create great beauty unlike pools which make the garden unhealthy because of their stagnant water. Hence he argues that fountains which keep the water in perpetual motion are better suited for the purposes of a garden since it does not fester flies and frogs. Of course even this fountain has to be cleaned regularly to prevent any discolouration of the water.

The heath which comprised the intermediate space between the green and the garden, is proposed by Bacon as one of natural wildness having the appearance of unregulated growth. He suggests that thickets of sweet briar and honeysuckle serve best here, when placed in a random order. He again gives us a list of flowering plants to serve as heaps and flowers to serve as flag like standards on those heaps. Overall the intended effect seems to be to create a contrast between the randomness of the heath and the order in the garden.

The sidewalks are imagined in detail as providing shelter from the sharp wind and the heat of the day and of summer too. Fruit trees might create these alleys with gravelled pathways. That his knowledge of gardening is not simply learnt from books can be understood from the minor aspects of his descriptions. For example when he writes about the planting of fruit trees in the alley, he suggests that the borders be large and fine flowers planted sparingly so that they do not starve the trees by absorbing all the

nourishment. These little remarks make the essay more than simply a dictionary of flower names. Bacon further concedes that the central garden is most suitable for enjoyment in temperate weather both in terms of the day and the year. Hence the alleys and sidewalks with their arbour seats become important spaces providing relief to the visitor in hot or windy weather. He states that he does not like aviaries much since they might dirty the floor of the garden. Aviaries might be best if they are overgrown with grass and there is scope for the birds to fly about, so large is the area allotted for them.

Bacon concludes by recognizing that his plan of the perfect garden has been made without keeping any constraints of cost in mind since he envisages this to be a garden for a prince. Usually princes consult workmen in creating their gardens without any attention to the costs thereof and decorate it with many statues and figurines as well. However Bacon claims that those statues do not contribute to the true pleasure of a garden. Therefore he obliquely seems to state that his envisioned garden provides the noblest and highest pleasure of the garden which he had spoken of in the introduction to this essay. He also concedes that his is more of a collation of suggestions on general principles than a model to be followed. It may be noted that through the essay, he is able to take on the persona of both the creator of the garden as well as a visitor on its premises. He approaches the structure from all points of view, thinking of all possible pleasures to be derived from it. We might also like to read this essay with the earlier one and see him displaying all the qualities of a well studied man honed by experience. While many of the facts may be derived from the common place book kept by him, and the pleasure in writing this essay lies in collating the same, it becomes an essay when it organizes information with the skills derived from experience and a genuine appreciation of gardens and their beauty, else it would have been an unrealistic account. Also we should note the use of terms like ‘I wished’ or ‘I like’ suggesting the personal element in this essay where he gives free reign to his imagination of how he would create a garden without any monetary constraints. The essay then becomes a creative and fulfilling exercise for the writer. For the reader, it is a guide and a wealth of information on ways of fashioning a garden which refreshes and pleases.

3.1.10: Bacon’s Essays - Structure and Style

For obvious reasons, we shall in this section, talk about the structure and style of Bacon’s Essays with particular reference to the two texts taken above. For matching this with the general trend of his essays, you may refer to the Introduction above where Bacon’s style

of writing has been discussed in detail. With specific reference to the two selected essays, we may note that his style of writing is crisp and Senecan avoiding excessive ornamentation simply for the sake of display. His style is in keeping with his content, because in both the essays we see him disliking ostentatious display for its own sake. In 'Of Studies' , he disapproves of study simply for adorning one's speech and in 'Of Gardens' he expresses dislike for excessive ornamentation of the hedges, preferring clean, neat arrangements seeing decorative flower bed patterns as trifles. Hence his writing too reflects this neatness and we always see him as being aware of the direction his argument is taking.

The structure of the essays reveals a mind which naturally finds cohesion and organization in expression. The thoughts are never scattered or disjointed but form a composite whole, where all the parts of the essay lead to the conclusion. The introductory thought finds balance and restatement in the conclusion. The essays are very well wrought together from his own private collections of words, phrases and aphorisms. However, it is not limited by that and shows an original mind capable of directing his thoughts and opinions towards cogent conclusions.

3.1.11: Summing Up

The essays discussed above show us Bacon's style of interrogating subjects chosen for analysis in his preferred probative manner of delivering knowledge. However at the same time, we might like to consider the finesse of argument through which he convinces the reader as well. While the aphorisms in 'Of studies' certainly encourage the mind to turn it about and think of examples related to one's own reading , it also keeps explaining the aphorisms in order to impress the point quite deeply. In 'Of gardens', the reference to different kinds of flowers and the qualities they possess becomes a medium for finally convincing the reader of the choice of the same in the manner favoured by the writer. Hence does the writing not tilt towards the 'magistral' too? Perhaps we might see his essays as grappling between the two modes of dissemination of knowledge even as they become yet another avenue for this scientific temper to find expression and exposition. Both the essays reveal a mind that debates every possibility before arriving at a conclusion as well as one which knows how to organize information and rhetoric in order to lead to the conclusion he favours. We can imagine the delight of the Renaissance reader in discovering the Bacon's 'method' and unique, crisp style of expression not requiring ornamentation for providing pleasure to the reader.

3.1.12: Comprehension Exercises

Francis Bacon. *Bacon's Essays* .Los Angeles: Indo-European Publishing, 2010

Sukanta Chaudhuri. *Infirm Glory*. New Delhi: Paul Press, 2006.

G.B Mohan Thampi (ed.), *Reflections*. Noida: Dorling Kindersley India, 2012.

3.1.13 : Suggested Reading

Essay Type Questions : (20 Marks)

1. Discuss Francis Bacon's style of enquiry and dissemination with respect to the essays in your syllabus.

2. Examine the development of the form of the essay with special reference to Francis Bacon and his essays.

3. Are Bacon's essays personal utterances? Reflect with reference to the essays studied by you.

Medium Length Answers : (12 Marks)

1. What are the possible influences on Bacon's writing? Discuss.
2. How far do Bacon's philosophical and scientific writings influence the style and content of his essays?
3. "GOD Almighty first planted a garden. And indeed it is the purest of human pleasures. It is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man" —Examine the significance of this opening line. Why do you think Bacon utilizes this proposition as a starting point of his essay?
4. "Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man."— Explain with reference to context.

Short Questions : (6 Marks)

1. Explain with reference to the context the following line:

   "Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them;".

2. Comment on the significance of the observation "For fountains, they are a great beauty and refreshment; but pools mar all, and make the garden unwholesome, and full of flies and frogs".

Unit - 2 ❐ *Sermon on the Mount* from the *Bible*, New Testament, Gospel of St. Matthew, Chapters 5, 6 &7

Structure

3.2.0 : Introduction

The *Bible*, you will be interested to know, is not just the religious text for the Christians. It has since time immemorial, been a great treasure house of literature in the form of myths, stories and parables, and of course instrumental in shaping a culture. As students of English literature, the *Bible* is thus important for you not so much as a religious text as it is to be seen as a kind of source book in a literary-cultural sense. One question that should come to your mind before you proceed with this Unit is, why if post-Renaissance England saw a huge rise of secular literature of all forms, did the *Bible* as a text assume such importance? We are sure that in your further acquaintance with English literature, this will become an interesting area of interrogation. For now, the present Unit will focus on select portions of the Bible as text, as also give you an overview of the spate of *Bible* translations into English in contemporary England.

3.2.1: History of Bible Writing (Translation) in English

The *King James Version* of the *Bible,* as you must be aware of by now, was also known as the ***Authorised Version***. It is the third English translation of the *Holy Bible,* the first having been the ***Great Bible*** commissioned in the reign of King Henry the VIII, and the second having been the ***Bishop's Bible*** in 1568. In 1525 William Tyndale, a contemporary of Martin Luther began a translation of the New Testament. He worked on this translation over the next decade, revising it considerably and even beginning on his translation of the Old Testament. Tyndale's translation was the first *printed* Bible in English and despite its limitations it has remained the basic, though unacknowledged model for subsequent translations of the times.

The *Great Bible,* so called because of its size, was the first *authorised* edition of the English *Bible* having been commissioned by Henry the VIII to be read aloud in church. Prepared by Myles Coverdale under the direction of Lord Thomas Cromwell, Secretary to King Henry the VIII this version drew on the Tyndale *Bible* eliminating the parts seen to be objectionable, using with slight adaptation the New Testament and translating the parts of the Old Testament that William Tyndale had left incomplete. It was published in 1539 and ordained for use in churches. A second edition, with a preface by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer and usually known as *Cranmer's Bible* was published in 1540.

The *Bishop's Bible* was brought out at the instance of the Church of England which felt that the *Great Bible* was deficient in several aspects and hence a more comprehensive and authentic translation was required. Published in 1658 it was considerably revised in 1672 and this revised version of the *Bishop's Bible* was adopted as the fundamental source for the Authorised King James Version which was begun in 1604 and completed by 1611. It was printed by Robert Barker, the King's Printer.

King James I of England guided the Anglican and Puritan clerics on the adoption of a balanced theological approach maintaining, among other things, the belief in the Episcopal1 nature of the Church of England and an 'ordained clergy', that is, the sacramental character of the holy order that vests authority onto a bishop, priest or deacon. Most importantly the *King James Bible* is a work that sought to capture in English the meanings of the content in the original languages in which the *Bible* had been composed, namely the Hebrew of the Old Testament, the Greek of the New Testament, and Aramaic wherever it was used. The name *King James Bible* however, was not used till 1797 when Charles Butler used it in his work *Horae Biblicae.* Referring to the Authorized Version of the *Bible* George Sampson in his *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature* maintains "The greatest of

all translations is the English Bible. It is even more than that: it is the greatest of English books, the first of English classics, the source of the greatest influence on English character and speech".

The Latin *Vulgate*2, translated from the Hebrew and Aramaic by Jerome between the years 382 and 405 CE remained the standard version of the Holy Book for Catholics for over 1500 years. It differs slightly from the *King James Version* in that it includes the Apocrypha3. Until 1450 when Gutenberg first printed the *Vulgate* copies of the same were rare and hard to get by. It was in the 14th and 15th centuries that the *Bible* was translated into the modern languages in the face of Episcopal resistance.

3.2.2: Brief Discussion on The Four Gospels of The New Testament

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John written in the first century AD from the fiftieth year onwards, were of several gospels accepted in the New Testament and are hence, considered to be the canonical gospels. These are four narratives which deal with the birth, life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The word 'gospel' means "good news" accounts or narratives. Regarding the genre of the gospels the consensus among scholars is that they belong to a type of ancient biography.

There are no detailed records of the life and teachings of Jesus. Paul's letters and the gospels are the earliest material available, and the primary sources for our knowledge of Jesus. However, as the meaning of the word 'gospel' and the first word in Mark's narrative implies these accounts are not objective reports but the propagation of certain beliefs which the writers wished to convince their readers of. Luke in 1:4 articulates it thus: "That you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed." As these gospels were written at different times and under varying circumstances they naturally differ in terms of details. The first three as they traditionally appear in the Christian Scriptures are Matthew, Mark and Luke and they have considerable material in common. Each of the four gospels differs in point of detail and in embodying the account in a unique mould.

"Each of these writings was very early associated with the name of a disciple of Jesus or with someone closely connected with the apostles. The first and fourth gospels (as they are placed in the New Testament) give no internal indication of authorship but have been associated from the early days of the church's life with two disciples of Jesus: Matthew and John. Analogously, the second and third gospels have been accepted as the work of companions of the apostles: Mark, who is associated with Peter (1 Pet. 5:13), and Luke, who is mentioned as a coworker in letters attributed to Paul (Philem. 24; 2 Tim. 4:11)."4

3.2.3: Summary of The Gospel of St. Matthew

While it cannot be conclusively proved that the apostle Matthew is the author of this Book it is generally assumed by Biblical scholars to be so. As recorded in the Bible, Matthew, also called Levi at times, used to collect taxes and one day when Jesus asked him to follow him, he did so. Mark 2:4-5 records how Matthew held a banquet in his house to which he had invited his tax-collector friends thereby advancing the theory that it was indeed the apostle who was the author.

The main message in this Book is that Jesus of Nazareth was the true king of the Jews, the Messiah whose coming had been prophesied by the prophets of the Old Testament and who would institute the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. The expression "Kingdom of Heaven" has been used over 30 times in this Gospel, thus proving the centrality of its significance to the larger pattern of thought and teachings to be found here.

Mainly intended for a Jewish readership, the Gospel of Matthew strives to emphasize the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. In its exploration of issues related to Judaism it constitutes an appropriate transition from the Old to the New Testament. The book is divided into seven segments with an introduction describing Jesus' miraculous birth and the beginning of his ministry and an end dealing with the Last Supper, Jesus' trial and crucifixion and resurrection and the middle portion being occupied by five structurally parallel sections each dwelling on the miracles and actions performed by Jesus and ending with a long sermon preached by him. The mingling of narrative and discourse thus achieved is unusual and generally not found in the other gospels.

3.2.4: Text of The *Sermon on The Mount*

Matthew 5-7 (King James Version)

✦ Chapter: 5

1 *And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:*

2 *And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,*

3 *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

4 *Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*

5 *Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.*

6 *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*

7 *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*

8 *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*

9 *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*

10 *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

11 *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.*

12 *Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*

13 *Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*

14 *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*

15 *Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*

16 *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

17 *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

18 *For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*

19 *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

20 *For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

21 *Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and*

whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgement:

22 *But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgement: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*

23 *Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;*

24 *Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*

25 *Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.*

26 *Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.*

27 *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:*

28 *But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

29 *And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*

30 *And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.*

31 *It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:*

32 *But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.*

33 *Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:*

34 *But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:*

35 *Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.*

36 *Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.*

37 *But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.*

38 *Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:*

39 *But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.*

40 *And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.*

41 *And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.*

42 *Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.*

43 *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.*

44 *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*

45 *That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

46 *For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?*

47 *And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?*

48 *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

- ***Chapter : 6***

1 *Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.*

2 *Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee,*

as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

3 *But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:*

4 *That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.*

5 *And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*

6 *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*

7 *But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.*

8 *Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.*

9 *After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.*

10 *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

11 *Give us this day our daily bread.*

12 *And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.*

13 *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

14 *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:*

15 *But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

16 *Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*

17 *But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;*

18 *That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.*

19 *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:*

20 *But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:*

21 *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

22 *The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.*

23 *But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!*

24 *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

25 *Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?*

26 *Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?*

27 *Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?*

28 *And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:*

29 *And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*

30 *Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?*

31 *Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?*

32 *(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*

33 *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

34 *Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

- *Chapter : 7*

1 *Judge not, that ye be not judged.*

2 *For with what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*

3 *And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?*

4 *Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?*

5 *Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.*

6 *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.*

7 *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:*

8 *For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

9 *Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?*

10 *Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?*

11 *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*

12 *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*

13 *Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:*

14 *Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

15 *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*

16 *Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?*

17 *Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.*

18 *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.*

19 *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*

20 *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*

21 *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

22 *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*

23 *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

24 *Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:*

25 *And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.*

26 *And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:*

27 *And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.*

28 *And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:*

29 *For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*

3.2.5: The Five Specific Discourses By Jesus In The Gospel Of Matthew

After going through the text we shall now move on to a consideration of the five specific discourses by Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew. These are the Sermon on the Mount; the Missionary Discourse; the Parabolic Discourse; the Discourse on the Church and the Discourse on End Times. Each of these discourses has a shorter parallel in the Gospel of Mark or Luke.

The first discourse in the Gospel of Matthew is called the Sermon on the Mount. This was delivered in Galilee relatively early in Jesus' ministry of preaching after his baptism by John the Baptist. Containing the Beatitudes5, the Lord's Prayer along with several famous teachings this section is generally regarded as bearing the central tenets of Christian discipleship, and is one of the best-known parts of the New Testament. The second discourse contains the directions to the twelve apostles as Jesus advises them on how to travel from city to city, carry no belongings and to preach only to Israelites. The third discourse (13: 1 – 53) presents a number of parallels to the Kingdom of Heaven, and includes the parables of the Sowers, the Tares, the Mustard Seed and the Leaven, the Hidden Treasure, the Pearl and the Drawing in of the Net. The fourth discourse anticipates the growth of a community of followers led by the apostles. Emphasizing the values of humility and self-sacrifice this section deals with the vesting of authority in Peter who consequently came to be regarded as the 'Rock' on which Christ built his Church. The fifth discourse found in Matthew 24 and called the Olivet Discourse (as it was delivered on the Mount of Olives) ponders the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, the end of the world and the Second Coming of Christ. However, scholarly opinion is divided on the contents of this discourse, and it is difficult to arrive at any specific conclusions.

3.2.6: Themes of the *Sermon on the Mount*

We shall now address the themes in the prescribed text. The Beatitudes (Matt 5: 3 – 11) essentially describe the character of the people expected to inhabit the Kingdom of Heaven. Though familiar in an Old Testament context the Beatitudes in Matthew assume the pithy and proverbial cast of teachings which in their crystallization of some of the

highest spiritual ideals have also acquired the popularity of sayings. They focus on a new set of moral values such as humility, peace, compassion and love instead of force and retributive justice. Discussing the blessings that will attend people if they are characterized by certain traits Jesus, in the Beatitudes enumerates nine states of being, namely spiritual poverty, mourning, meekness, hunger and thirst for righteousness, mercy, purity, peace-making, the bearing of persecution for the sake of righteousness, and suffering all manner of torture and false allegations for the sake of Jesus. The blessings are respectively described as the kingdom of heaven, comfort, the inheritance of the earth, fulfillment, mercy, vision of God, being made the children of God, and again, the kingdom of heaven thereby returning to the first reward and completing the cycle of blessings.

Immediately after the Beatitudes in Matt 5:3 – 16 two metaphors are used by Christ to describe his disciples. First, he compares them to the 'salt of the earth' and then to the 'light of the world'. In the first instance the disciples are likened to a basic mineral derived from nature which is valuable for its taste; the saltiness that seasons food. Without its saltiness salt would be of no value. Similarly, the disciples are understood to be simple, essential, close to the earth and exemplifying values which are of great importance to human lives. Coming immediately after the Beatitudes as it does this metaphor drives home the point that the apostles were expected to attain all the attributes mentioned in the preceding section.

In the second instance the disciples have been compared to the light of the world, that is, they are the source of spiritual illumination to ordinary humanity. Jesus explains that within the home the lit candle is put in a candle stand that it may impart its light to all who are present in the house. Jesus exhorts that they should not hide their light under a bushel but show forth their good works that all may see the same and glorify God. A single line in verses 14 to 16 mentions the concept of the city atop a hill which cannot be hid. In the context of illumination and visibility 'the city on a hill' refers to the visible body of Christ or the New Jerusalem, the ideal community of believers possessed of all the spiritual virtues set forth in the Beatitudes, and setting an example to others. In John 8:12 Jesus applies the 'light of the world' epithet to himself.

In Matt 17 – 20 is found Jesus' attitude to the law. He makes it clear that he has come to fulfil and not to destroy the teachings of the Old Testament. He upholds the sanctity of the commandments. However, his focus on their application is different as is clear from his attitude to anger, adultery, divorce, oaths, love for one's enemies and a great many other notions taken up in the succeeding chapters. Jesus' focus is not on the outward conventions

but on the inner spirit of people. He says in verses 21 to 26 that offerings are not acceptable to God unless one comes to the altar with a pure mind having resolved all discord with other beings.

Verses 27 to 30 deal with Jesus' attitude to adultery. He invokes the Old Testament commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" and goes beyond this ban by holding guilty the man who has even thought of a woman in lustful terms. His teachings on divorce in the next two verses express his belief in the view that God does not accept divorce and hence re-marriage, in the eyes of God is adulterous. In Palestinian Jewish law a man was permitted to have more than one wife. However, a re-marriage on the part of a woman would make her adulterous even if she had been given the legal document of divorce by her first husband.

In verses 33 to 37 Jesus preaches his radical view on oaths. Again he refers to the law as formulated in the Old Testament (which forbids a person to swear by himself but allows him to "perform unto the Lord (his) oaths") and advises his followers not to swear by anything at all, neither by heaven nor by the earth; not by Jerusalem and not by one's own head as everything belongs to God. One's word should be enough and anything more than that comes from evil.

Verses 38 to 48 contain one of the most significant of Jesus' teachings, namely one's attitude to one's enemies. In the first part he overturns the Old Testament lesson of an eye for an eye and in its stead advocates the turning of the other cheek if one is slapped on one thereby propagating a new gospel of goodwill, peace, and forgiveness. In the second part of this teaching, 43 to 48 Jesus explains how such tolerance will distinguish the true Christian from others. He maintains that it is easy to love one's relatives, friends and those who love one, and it is in human nature to reciprocate emotional warmth but to aspire to the perfection of one's Father in heaven one has to love and bless one's enemies.

In Chapter 6 Jesus teaches about almsgiving, prayer, fasting, treasure in heaven, God and Mammon and care and anxiety. Regarding almsgiving he warns the giver of exhibiting his giving saying the left hand must not know of the right hand's doings. However, God who sees in secret will reward the giver openly. Regarding prayer, too, he says one must commune privately with God and not in full view of others, and to not make vain repetitions while praying. Jesus ends his discourse on prayer by teaching his disciples how to pray to the Father and in the process articulates the Lord's Prayer which is one of the central prayers in the Christian faith and church.

In verses 19 to 21 Jesus distinguishes between the treasure in heaven and that on earth. He says while material possessions are eaten by moths, corroded by rust and stolen by thieves God's favour earned by good thoughts and works is the spiritual salvation or heavenly treasure which remains forever. In the next two verses Jesus speaks about the light of the body which is the eye. In verse 24 he says, "No man can serve two masters" going on to elaborate one cannot serve God and Mammon at the same time. Mammon being the personification of worldly greed and acquisitiveness it is clear that in order to serve God one has to detach oneself from the temptations of material possessions.

From verses 25 to 34 Jesus holds forth on care and anxiety. Through simple reasoning and rhetorical pressure he asks his disciples why they need concern themselves with the fulfillment of their physical needs such as hunger or thirst, or the clothing of their bodies. He holds that the birds do not grow or gather but God feeds them even as the lilies of the field do not toil or spin but are bedecked in nature's finery. He reasons with his listeners that if God cares so much for the birds and flowers how much more must he care for human beings. Since God knows of man's needs he will provide for him in due course and hence, human beings need not be anxious about their present or future needs but trust God and concentrate on acquiring the values associated with the kingdom of heaven.

In Matthew chapter 7 Jesus continues with his *Sermon* driving home his points through metaphors and parables. In verses 1 to 6 he focuses on a common human trait, that of judging others. He says before rectifying one's own flaws it is hypocritical to point out the faults of others. He also talks about giving to one what one is capable of appreciating and honouring, and not to cast "pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet" and turn against the giver. Here, as in other instances Jesus asks his followers to develop a sense of balance in their moral outlook. Even as they are instructed not to judge others they are advised to be discerning and not waste valuables before the undeserving.

In verses 7 to 12 Jesus teaches his followers to seek spiritual salvation and ask God to show the way that they may find the same. The analogy that he uses here is that if one's son asks for bread one does not give him a stone to appease his hunger. Therefore, if mankind being evil can behave in so loving a manner how much more will God give his children whom he loves? He ends this teaching with the call to serve others in the very ways that one would like himself to be served.

In verses 13 and 14 Jesus uses the metaphors of the gate and the path to distinguish between the broad path and the wide gate which lead to destruction and the straight gate

and the narrow way which lead to life. The path of righteousness which is difficult to tread and which calls for sacrifices brings its user to spiritual salvation while the broad path which accommodates many worldly experiences leads to the wide and, therefore, easily accessible gates of hell.

In verses 15 to 20 Jesus warns his followers of "false prophets" likening them to wolves who appear in the clothing of sheep. He teaches his disciples to distinguish the true from the false by examining the produce they yield. He says a tree is known by its fruit. Just as a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit so also a corrupt tree cannot bear good fruit. Hence, corrupt trees are cut down and used as firewood being of no true use.

Moving on to man's recognition by God Jesus says that merely taking the name of the Lord repeatedly by one does not guarantee his entry into heaven. Entry into the kingdom of God is achieved by one who has lived his life according to the will of the heavenly Father and not by those who have just professed his name. God will deny any knowledge of them when they plead for recognition.

In verses 24 to 28 Jesus dwells on the reception of the teachings that he had just delivered by once again resorting to a parable. He says that the follower who pays heed to his words and lives his life accordingly will be like the man who builds his house on a rock. His house being on a firm foundation will be able to withstand the rains, floods and winds whereas the person who does not value his teachings will be like the man who builds his house on the sand which will fall in times of inclement weather and natural disaster. Interestingly, at this point the people listening to Jesus were astonished by and commented on the authority with which he spoke contrasting him with the scribes.

3.2.7: Structure and Style of The *Sermon on The Mount*

(With special emphasis on language)

Having addressed the themes let us now turn our attention to the structure and style of the *Sermon on the Mount*. One school of thought from St. Augustine in the 5th century to Michael Goulder in the 20th century has tended to regard the Beatitudes as the core element around which the constituents of the Sermon are organized. Others have argued that it is the Lord's Prayer which is the central feature while yet others have pointed to the chiastic6 arrangement of the Sermon. Some modern scholars read the Sermon as a set of theological themes.

The *Sermon on the Mount* may be compared to the *Sermon on the Plain* in the Gospel of Luke (6:17 – 49) which interestingly features around the same time in Luke's narrative. Opinion

is divided as to whether it is the same sermon or another one as Jesus often preached similar themes across different venues.

It is interesting to see how the original Hebrew and Greek words have been translated into English. Sometimes, the nuances in the meaning of the original word enrich the English word investing it with shades of association. In the last verse of Matthew Chapter 5 the English word 'perfect' has been translated from the Greek word *telios* which not only means perfection but also implies a spatial and temporal framework aimed at an end, goal or destination towards which the disciples may proceed.

The translation of the mentioned text having been undertaken during a period of rapid linguistic change the translators often avoided the use of contemporary grammar and idiom settling instead for the slightly more archaic terms such as 'verily', 'it came to pass' and "in no wise" for the benefit of the readers. The pronouns *thou/thee* and *you* are consistently used as singular and plural respectively though by this time *you* was being seen as singular in general English usage, specially when addressing a social superior. The possessive of the third person pronoun for things, *its* which made its appearance in the last years of the 16th century is not seen, as a rule, the older *his* being the preferred choice, as for example in Matt. 5:13, **13**Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?

The use of *-eth* for the third person singular present form of the verb, as in Matt. 5:15 – "**5**Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house" was favoured by the translators over the newer (e)s which was already in use as may be seen in the plays of William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe. Further, the word *which* was used for the relative pronoun for persons instead of *who* or *whom,* as for instance, in Matt. 5:10 - **1"**Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

The anaphoric cast of the Beatitudes, each verse beginning with the words "blessed are…" induce a repetitive rhythm which makes for greater recall while their deductive arrangement holding out consolation and promise in the latter half of the verse makes for a compact, bipartite pattern giving the verses the pithiness of sayings. Such bipartite and specially tripartite structures were favoured by the contemporary writer Francis Bacon who has left ample evidence of such usage in his *Essays*.

Rhetorical questions inform the style seeking to drive home with logical intent the ideas expressed. Chapter 5 verses 46 and 47; Chapter 6 verses 25, 26, 27, 28, 30 and 31; and Chapter 7 verses 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 16, and 22 provide examples of rhetorical questions which

often follow in close succession thereby creating a sense of urgency.

Metaphors used liberally in the Gospels are usually part of the parables that Jesus uses to teach his followers. The salt of the earth, the light of the world, the wide and the narrow gates, the good and corrupted trees, the false prophets in sheep's clothing, and the two foundations (of rock and sand) found in the discussed chapters are among some of the best known metaphors which open allegorical lines of declaration or distinction, as the case may be. The images, belonging to the everyday world are used to great moral and literary effect.

Many of the phrases of the Authorized Version of the *Bible* have become an organic part of the English language in so natural and spontaneous a way over the centuries that their Biblical origin is scarcely remembered. The phrases "an eye for an eye", "turn the other cheek", "a thorn in the flesh", "lick the dust', "broken reed", "root of all evil", "a law unto themselves" to quote a few examples, have a proverbial quality about them.

3.2.8 : Summing Up

To sum up the prose of the Authorized Version of the *Bible* provides an excellent specimen of the English language of the late 16th and early 17th centuries when it was struggling to come into its own. The language was evolving at a rapid rate contending with foreign influences, absorbing new words and expressions into its vocabulary and generally striving towards the 'modernity' that distinguished it from its medieval and earlier ancestry.

It is important for you to remember that first, the prose of the Authorised Version was the outcome of translation and not original composition. The translation was made from 1st century Greek to early 17th century English at a time when the latter language was developing through its internal tensions and adjustments as well as under the forces of new concepts, cultures and civilizations. Second, bearing in mind the compulsions of translation, the English vernacular in which the *Bible* was officially ushered in showed many of the features of its age. One of the notable changes in late 16th century English prose was the decline of the elaborate Ciceronian sentence in favour of the Senecan aphoristic one. This shift seen in the Elizabethan love for the epigram or sententia is conspicuous in the *Bible* with many of its expressions having acquired the status of proverbs, as has been pointed out already.

Let us conclude with Sanders' observation, "Although the Authorized Version proclaimed

itself to be 'Appointed to be read in Churches' no formal authorization was ever given to it. Its consistent dignity of expression, its memorable cadences, its felicitous, if limited choice of vocabulary, and its general intelligibility meant, however, that it effectively displaced its rivals within the space of a generation…For some three and a half centuries it has formed a vital link between the divided English and Scottish Churches and the linguistically distinct English and Scottish nations…No modern version has approached its richness and resonance".7

3.2.9 : Notes and Glossary

1. Episcopal: of, or relating to a bishop, or bishops in a group
2. Vulgate: It is a 4th century Latin translation of the *Bible* by St. Jerome who was commissioned by Pope Damascus I in 382 to make a revision of the old Latin translations. By the 13th century this translation had come to be called the *versio vulgata*, that is, the 'commonly used translation'.
3. Apocrypha: Biblical apocrypha denotes the collection of ancient books, found in some editions of the *Bible* between the Old and New Testaments, or as an appendix after the New Testament. Because of their doubtful sanction these books have not been accepted among the canonical books of the *Bible*.
4. Kee, Howard Clark, Meyers, Eric. M, Rogerson, John and Saldarini, Anthony, *The Cambridge Companion to the Bible*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p 447.
5. Beatitudes: These are the set of teachings/blessings by Jesus that begin, "Blessed are…", and appear in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The word 'beatitude' comes from the Latin word *beatitudo* which means 'happy', 'fortunate' or 'blissful'.
6. chiastic: Literary devices used to emphasize, parallel or contrast concepts and ideas.
7. Sanders, Andrew, *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*, Oxford University Press, 2005, p 195

3.2.10: Comprehension Exercises

Essay-Type Questions : (20 Marks)

1. Discuss how the *King James Version* of the *Bible* came to be written.
2. Suggest what the themes of the *Sermon on the Mount* indicate of Jesus' outlook on life.

3. Comment on the structure and style of the *Sermon on the Mount*.
4. Point out the linguistic elements in the *Sermon on the Mount* which prove the lasting influence of the *King James Version* of the *Bible* on English prose.
5. Discuss the literary style of the *Sermon on the Mount* as reflective of contemporary English prose.

Medium Length Answers : *(12 Marks)*

1. Write a note on the four Gospels in the *New Testament*.
2. Comment briefly on the five specific discourses delivered by Jesus in the Gospel according to Matthew.
3. Discuss the use of any five symbols in the *Sermon on the Mount*.
4. Give an account of the Beatitudes as found in the prescribed text and comment on their significance.
5. Name the important prayer found in the *Sermon on the Mount* and provide a summary of the same.

Short Answers : (6 Marks)

1. Who was William Tyndale and what was his achievement?
2. Write a brief note on the *Great Bible*.
3. Mention any two parables used by Jesus in the *Sermon* and discuss their significance.
4. Point out the translators' preference for traditional grammar in place of the contemporary usages.
5. Mention any five sayings in the English language which have been derived from the *Authorized Version of the Bible*.

3.2.11: Suggested Reading

Howard Clark Kee, Eric M Meyers, John Rogerson et all *The Cambridge Companion to the Bible*, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

www.biblegateway.com/passage/search

en.wikipedia.org/…/Sermon on the Mount

www.gcl.org/bible/matthew5

Unit : 3 ❐ Philip Sidney : *Apology for Poetry* (Extract)

Structure

3.3.0 : Introduction

In Module 2 Unit 1 you have read about Sidney as a poet, and in Module 1 you have definitely come across references to him as a multi-faceted literary personality in post-Renaissance England. In this Unit you will get to know the same person as a theorist of literature in general and of poetry in particular. As you read through this chapter, do keep in mind that *Apology for Poetry* is the first ever significant work of literary criticism in English per se; classical theories that pre-date Sidney are but translations into English! So we shall try to give you a picture of the literary scenario in contemporary England that necessitated the writing of such a treatise; the influences on Sidney and his own innovative thoughts that have gone into the writing of this; and of course its impact on later practitioners. Needless to say, the Unit will also provide you a full fledged analysis of the text itself. As a learner, you are advised to attain clarity in comprehending the entire perspective, for that will be your touchstone in all subsequent understandings of literary criticism and theory, which are as seminal as your reading of literary texts.

3.3.1: Why The *Apology For Poetry ?*

The first question that should strike you in studying this Unit is why, in the first place, should a poet- theorist write something like an 'Apology'! An 'Apology', as you find it in the title of Sidney's treatise, would mean something like a defence (William Ponsonby's edition in fact has the title *The Defence of Poesie*) or an argument where the author posits his

grounds for justifying the importance of poetry. And poetry once again, right from the classical times, would not strictly mean the genre as we understand it today; it would also include theatrical compositions in the poetic mode. Old or Middle English literature did not definitely have the artistic maturity to contemplate any theory of literature; and the early English critics of the Renaissance were more of educators trying to shape both the lexicon and the readerly taste for modern vernacular literature, rather than think about literary criticism or any theorisation as such on whatever existed or was being written.

It follows thus that English literature at this point of time was being shaped largely by translations from classical texts and continental influences that were being translated into vernacular in post Renaissance England, and getting printed with great vigour. The zest for translation and advancements in technology with the efforts of the first English printer, William Caxton, thus laid open for the reading public a vast body of continental literature. While literature has directly benefited from this exchange; it must be noted that Renaissance English criticism was basically toying with the Platonic idea of the banishment of poets from his ideal republic, in a rather puerile manner, leaving out much more of what was said by the classical master(s).

We need to remember that Plato's objection to poetry was based mainly on three grounds – educational, philosophical and moral; that is, none of it had anything to do with artistic or aesthetic appreciation. While much of Plato's formulations in the *Republic* have been challenged by his own disciple Aristotle, we would do good to remember that the ground realities of 4th century B.C Greece and 16th century England would be as different from each other as chalk and cheese! Plato for one, was a philosopher who was prescribing norms for the making of an ideal republic; so if subsequent generations including Elizabethan England were taking his words out of context and trying to censure literature in an age of emerging secular values, it was indeed short-sightedness. It is in this light that we need to read and evaluate the work of Philip Sidney which, like contemporary Italian critics like Minturno and Castelvetro, was a kind of counterblast to what Saintsbury describes as 'the Puritan-Platonic impeachments of poetry' in his *Loci Critici*.

It makes sense to mention at this point that Sidney, unlike many others, did not just rest at refuting Plato, who was basically a philosopher. Rather, he widened the ambits of contemporary understanding of Plato by placing his observations in proper perspective in his *Apologie* (this was Sidney'soriginal spelling, and poetry was spelt Poetrie) . He could do this ably enough perhaps because he was a practising poet himself, and in fact the first

of the long line of poet-critics/theorists that English literature was to see in subsequent ages. It is believed that Sidney wrote this treatise around 1580, the immediate provocation being to posit a fitting reply to Stephen Gosson's *The School of Abuse* (1579) which was dedicated to Sidney. It was first published only in 1595, after Sidney's death in 1586, in two editions. The one by Ponsonby, believed to be the earlier of the two, was called *The Defence of Poesy*; the other by Olney, *An Apologie for Poetry*. We follow the latter edition here.

Activity for the learner with help from your Counsellor

Make a point-wise chart of classical theorists and their major tenets. Follow it up with how Renaissance theorists were re-reading and re-interpreting them. This will be vital to your understanding of Elizabethan literature in all its forms. You could refer to the following e-resources for preliminary help in getting the basic concepts clear:
http://wikieducator.org/Literary_Criticism ; www.**youtube**.com/watch?v=Q7K59sHKCTM*;* www.**youtube**.com/watch?v=7jGViJIxCyo

3.3.2: Influences on Sidney

We have been talking of Plato and other classical theorists for some time now. How exactly did such thinkers impact Sidney? Or, to put it the other way round, how does Sidney adapt their theories to his present context?

- **Plato and Sidney:** According to Plato's theory of mimesis (imitation), the arts deal with illusion and are a copy of the idea of an original, derived through an illusion. Thus, representation in art is twice removed from reality. As a moralist, Plato (428 BC – 348 BC, Greece) disapproves of poetry because it is immoral, as a philosopher he disapproves of it because it is based on falsehood. He is of the view that philosophy is better than poetry because the philosopher deals with ideas / truths, whereas the poet deals with what appears to him / illusion. He believed that truth of philosophy was more important than the pleasure of poetry. He argued that most of it should be banned from the ideal society that he was trying to espouse. Plato thus differentiates between 'useful' and 'imitative' art – the bed made by the carpenter is a copy of the original idea of a bed and thus useful, though one step removed from the original idea; the painter's bed is a copy of the carpenter's and hence twice removed! Hence the banishment. For Plato, this model could be applied to poetry in the same way, for

both painting and poetry would be categorised as imitative arts. All the same, it must also be kept in mind that for him, poetry was not just any form of art, but a 'divinely inspired madness'! Also interesting in this context is Vincent B. Leitch's observation in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (Norton, 2001: 324) that in Plato's age it was presumed "that poets know all crafts, all human affairs".

Quite early in *Apology*, written in a very different Renaissance literary scenario in the context of debates of an aesthetic nature on the object and purpose of poetry; Sidney states that while the 'inside' and 'strength' of Plato's work is philosophy; its 'skin' and 'beauty depended most on poetry'. Very fittingly, Sidney couples Philosophy and History – the earliest branches of knowledge, and asserts, with concrete examples that:

"…neither philosopher nor historiographer could at the first have entered into the gates of popular judgements, if they had not taken a great passport of poetry …"

The master-stroke in this context comes in the *Apology* when Sidney, referring to Plato's *Ion*, says that when the classical theorist's words were properly understood in their right light, they would be seen to make a case for and not against poetry! We reproduce for your reading, the lines from Plato that Sidney has in mind. Read them and you will at once realise how carefully the Elizabethan must have read his predecessor before he could make the case for himself:

> For all good poets, epic as well as lyric, compose their beautiful poems not by art, but because they are inspired and possessed … For the poet is a light and winged and holy thing, and there is no invention in him until he has been inspired and is out of his senses, and reason is no longer in him: no man, while he retains that faculty, has the oracular gift of poetry.

Clearly, he talks here of poetry as an inspired creation, in keeping with the ancient Roman notion of poet as ***vates*** (diviner, foreseer or prophet), or the Greek word 'poet' which comes of the word ***poiein*** (to make). This is hardly the same as poets being liars and poetry being a bunch of lies – the oft quoted myopic understanding of Plato's words when they are taken at face value. Sidney's work encompasses the whole range of literary creativity from the classics to the Romantics, as you will see in the lines that follow.

- **Aristotle and Sidney:** Though a disciple of Plato, yet Aristotle (384 BC – 322 BC, Greece) comes across as much more logical and rational in his understanding of the

nature and function of Tragedy. He methodically explains mimesis as the wellspring of tragedy, and shows that such imitation of real life actions takes its cue from nature and is therefore semblematic of a higher level of reality. Sidney accepts in principle Aristotle's definition of poetry as mimesis, which he deduces as 'a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth – to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture …'. He of course goes on to talk of the purpose of poesy as being 'to teach and delight'; something that shows the direct influence of Horace than of Aristotle. But we shall come to that later.

Sidney also abides by the Aristotelian formula of using artistic imitation to transform horrifying elements into poetically delightful presentations. Even his distinction between poetry and history clearly has its basis in Aristotle. Poetry, to Sidney, is 'more philosophical' and 'more studiously serious' than history.

However, like most Renaissance critics who drew more upon Horace than on Aristotle, Sidney is markedly more didactic. To this effect, he almost modifies the Aristotelian idea of imitation when he says 'Her (Nature's) world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden.' While Aristotle only harped upon the Unity of Action as being the most important in Tragedy, Sidney, under the influence of contemporary critics, is also insistent upon the other two Unities – those of Time and Place. It is in keeping with the spirit of his age once again that Sidney prefers epic over tragedy, the former is superior in his opinion. However, the two are at one in believing that verse is not essential to poetry.

- **Horace and Sidney:** Among Renaissance poets and critics in general and on Sidney in particular, Horace (65 BC – 8 BC, Rome) has been the most pervasive influence, mostly because they were more familiar with Latin than with Greek. It is thus natural that *Apology* bears distinct traces of the Horatian influence in critical temper, manner and even tone. As mentioned earlier, Sidney enhances the Aristotelian idea of mimesis to stress the twin functions of poetry – 'to teach and delight', aspects that perfectly square with the Horatian parameters of edification and gratification as the purpose of poetry in his Ars Poetica (Horace, 19 BC). A little later in the *Apologie*, the same phrase is repeated in an inverted order when Sidney writes:

  "But it is that feigning notable images of virtues, vices, or what else, with that ***delightful teaching***, which must be the right describing note to know a poet by." (Italics mine)

  Sidney, you must remember, is remarkably less didactic than many other Elizabethan

critics, so this explains his privileging delight over teaching. In any case, the duality between the two elements has always haunted classical rhetoricians and Horace it was who first struck the right balance in this regard.

Sidney's reference to the antiquity and universality of poetry is also directly drawn from Horace's picture of the early poet as legislator and *vates*; an inspired teacher. The Horatian principle of beginning a work in *medias res* (right in the middle of the heightened action) instead of in *ab ovo* (from the beginning), also informs Sidney's methods. Earlier actions that shall connect to the main drift may later be incorporated by the cinematic technique of flashback, to ensure the establishment of causal connections.

Sidney's use of the word 'decency' absolutely corresponds with the Horatian element of 'decorum' that is a central idea in *Ars Poetica*. Following Horace, Sidney voices his strong dissent to the mingling of tragedy and comedy and shows his contempt for tragic-comedy which he calls 'mongrel' in nature! English literary criticism would have to wait for the more mature understanding of a Dryden to allow space for acceptance of this new genre.

- **The Italian Renaissance:** Among a host of Italian literary critics who influenced the Elizabethans in general, the influence of Minturno (1500 – 74 AD), Scaliger (1484 – 1558 AD) and Castelvetro (1505 – 71 AD) seems to be the most profound on Sidney. In passages of the *Apologie* where he describes poetry as the intellectual 'first nurse of nations'; defends poetry with reference to its antiquity and cultivation among people of all nations; or holds the poet a better teacher than philosophers and historians by the feigning of notable images of virtues and vices, Sidney shows a direct debt to Minturno. The element of 'admiration' as an emotion in Sidney's conception of tragedy is utterly un-Aristotelian and is taken from Minturno's *De Poeta*. In the Orient BlackSwan publication of *An Apology For Poetry*, the editor Visvanath Chatterjee rightly observes that 'Sidney was also influenced by Minturno when he wrote his *Arcadia*'.

  From Scaliger's *Poetics*, Sidney might have derived his mediated knowledge of Aristotle. The reason for such an assumption is his close affinity to Scaliger when describing the poet as a 'maker', or even in his discussion of the theory of 'imitation'. However, in privileging English as a language that 'giveth us great occasion, being indeed capable of any excellent exercising of it', he shows independence from the Italian theorist as well; for Scaliger would never have dreamt of attaching any

importance to vernaculars.

While Sidney discards Castelvetro's principle of pleasure as the sole end of poetry, he is at one with the Italian theorist in looking at verse as 'but an ornament and no cause to poetry'. Again, Castelvetro it was who stressed on the Unities of Time and Place.

- Stephen Gosson's *School of Abuse*: Literary purists might argue over the propriety of including this text by Sidney's contemporary, published in the autumn of 1579, in the category of influences behind Apologie. But it is widely believed that this was the immediate provocation – an attack on poets and players, dedicated unauthorisedly to Sidney, that led to the penning of the defence that we are now studying. Gosson, a dramatist and a man of the theatre, suddenly turned to a serious view of the evil impact of all that was shown on stage, and wrote strongly against it all. His attack was directed not just against drama, but all kinds of imaginative writing and even music! The motivation behind dedicating his invective 'to the right noble Gentleman, Master Philip Sidney, Eqsuier' is unclear, but there are obvious reasons – both textual and beyond, to conclude that his work did arouse the indignation of Sidney. It is not without reason that in the 1868 reprint of Gosson's text, Arber writes in the introduction: 'It is highly probable, if not absolutely demonstrable, that to Gosson's *School of Abuse* we are indebted for Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie*.'

3.3.3: Brief Summary of *Apology For Poetry*

Before we come to the text of the selected portion of *Apology* that has been laid down in your syllabus, it is necessary to provide in a nutshell a summary of the main issues that Sidney takes up in this section of the treatise. It is expected that your counsellor will assist you in relating the points enumerated here with the original text.

The central question here relates to the value and purpose of poetry. How does it compare to other human endeavours in the arts, sciences, and crafts? In particular, how is poetry "better" than philosophy or history? How do the various types of poetry accomplish the goal of delighting and instructing?

- Sidney begins by saying that he has 'just cause to make a pitiful defence of poor poetry' that has been debased from its rightful position and in this, even names of philosophers have been used with much lack of insight. The chagrin he shows is

perhaps directed at Gosson's unwarranted remarks, though nowhere in the text does he make any explicit mention of it.

- He attributes to poetry the distinction of being the mother of all knowledge – 'the first light-giver to ignorance, and first nurse' that gradually prepares one to 'feed afterwards of tougher knowledges'. He establishes this fact by referring to classical texts as also to contemporary Italian and English writers.
- Sidney goes on to say that both philosophy and history borrow their metier from poetry. In all nations far and near, it is poets who have always had an abiding influence.
- The Latin words *vates* (seer) and *carmina* (from which the modern 'charm' is derived) reveal the intimate connection that exists between poetic ability and prophetic insight. As proof, he cites the oracles of Delphi and prophecies of Sybil that were delivered in verse; just as the holy David's Psalms are a divine poem. Even the Greeks viewed a poet as a maker, the word 'poet' being derived from *poiein*, which means 'to make'. The English too have followed the same lines.
- While all other human arts are subordinate to nature in that they are bound to follow the paths that nature has laid down for each discipline, poetry alone is empowered to transcend nature – for the poet is 'lifted up with the vigour of his own invention'. Poetry thus transforms all things to loveliness; she transmutes the brazen world of nature into a golden one!
- This is not to say that a poet deviates from truth or plausibility and builds castles in the air; he is in reality the idealist of nature. The poet bases his creation on imitation of the essential, he works upon an idea and therefore his creation transcends particulars and creates paradigms of the universal. He can do this because it is divinely ordained that the poet's creativity is the highest human faculty.
- Almost striking a synergy between Aristotle and Horace, Sidney defines Poesy as 'an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in his word mimesis, that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth – to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture – with this end, to teach and delight'.

The syllabised portion of *Apology* ends here. A brief mention follows of some of the key issues in the rest of the treatise. These are not exactly necessary from your examination point of view, nonetheless it is expected that you will go through these to formulate a complete understanding of the text.

- **Sidney categorises poetry into three kinds – Religious, Philosophical and Historical**

✦ There may be further subdivisions on the basis of form and structure– Heroic, Lyric, Tragic, Comic, Satiric, Iambic, Elegiac, Pastoral and so on. In none of these is verse anything more than an 'ornament'; it is never a 'cause to poetry'. Sidney obviously includes all sorts of writing within the realm of the poetic, in this respect enlarging the scope of what can be called poetry, "verse being but an ornament and no cause to poetry." He posits that many great poets "have never versified", and that some people who have written in verse can't be called poets. This goes back presumably to the aim of poetry, and not the form, as the important matter. One important point he makes is that poetry is the prime example of what separates common utterances from craft, in which "each syllable of each word by just proportion according to the dignity of the subject" is chosen.

✦ Knowledge is not an end in itself, its true purpose lies in virtuous action. This can be achieved only by acquiring true knowledge of the self; that which the Greeks called *architectonike*. It is poetry alone that can purify the wit, enrich the memory, enhance judgement, enlarge the ambits of learning and thus cumulatively move to perfection the otherwise mundane human soul.

✦ For all their respective claims to being the principal branch of learning, Philosophy gets too misty as it is surrounded by precepts that are hard to comprehend; History relies too much on the particular truth of things to be able to arrive at general reason. The poet, bridges the gap between the two. He gives a tangible (perfect) picture of what the philosopher leaves to abstraction (for example Aesop's *Fables*); similarly he perfects the arbitrarily mixed patterns of history. Hence, Sidney is at one with Aristotle in the view that poetry is more philosophical and more studiously serious than history. Having proven that fiction is as forceful as truth, Sidney further asserts that poetic justice is more conducive to virtue (the true end of all learning) than historical truth and it moves (affects) higher than teaching, which is what philosophy does. The sweet prospect given by poetry makes its teaching attractive. There is in poetry a kind of suavity that is brought about by the delight of imitation (mimesis) and its persuasive quality. These basic facts are then illustrated by different kinds of poetry, and we need to remember that the term 'poetry' is here in an all inclusive manner.

✦ The use of rhymes and verses has been a persistent objection raised against the assumption of poetry being the vehicle of a higher truth. While stating that these are not necessary to poetry, Sidney tries to reason why they have often been used:

1. They present language with a rare harmony.

2. Are of great help to memory.

✦ Sidney then tries to comprehend what the basic objections to poetry have been, and he lists the following and simultaneously offers the answers:

1. There are many other fruitful branches of knowledge on which a man may better spend his time.

Ans. To say so is to beg the question! Learning that teaches and moves to virtue is the best. The other branches of knowledge are good, no doubt, but better is definitely better!

2. Poetry is the mother of lies.

Ans. Far from being the falsest art, poetry is the truest, as it lays no pretentions to factual truth. 'He (The poet) nothing affirms, and therefore never lieth'. Unlike the astronomer, the geometrician or even the physician, the poet never makes any circles about our imagination, to create a make believe world of truth about what he writes. For example, none can say that Aesop lied in his tales, for in the first place Aesop never claimed that he wrote anything that was actually true. To lie is to affirm as true, that which is false. What Sidney is in effect saying is that the truths of poetry are not of particulars or of the microcosm, but macrocosmic realities that are exemplary in nature.

3. Poetry is the nurse of abuse that has a lulling effect, driving away men from their courageous and martial natures.

Ans. Sidney amplifies in great detail all related allegations and wonders aloud if the effeminising effect has not been the stock abuse against all learning. He talks of different aspects that poetry deals with, both fair and foul, and concludes that it isn't that 'poetry abuseth man's wit, but that man's wit abuseth poetry'. A sword can equally be used to attack as also to defend; so it all depends on the perspective. It would be impossible to recall a time when there were no poets and people were all very courageous; rather, poetry has always been the companion of warriors.

4. Plato had banished poets from his commonwealth.

Ans. Sidney holds Plato with great reverence, primarily because he considers him the most poetical of all philosophers! So if Plato has 'defile(d) the fountain out of which his flowing streams have proceeded', it is worth examination indeed.

Quite in a tongue in cheek manner, he writes that philosophers are natural enemies of poets, for the former pick out of the sweet mysteries of poetry the 'right discerning true points of knowledge' and then cast away their 'guides like ungrateful prentices'! Yet the truth remains that while seven cities wanted Homer to be their citizen, many more banished philosophers as unfit to live among them! Moreover, he questions Plato's logic of banishing poets and allowing women in the commonwealth, for poetical sonnets cannot definitely be more hurtful than the company of women.

Having said so, Sidney states that Plato was against the abuse of poetry, not against poetry per se.

- Sidney is however concerned about the general decline in poetry in England and its low repute in contemporary times. He lists as factors behind this, the lack of spirit in the age; the poets having fallen from their vocation and turning into inferior men with mercenary motives; the fact of their not being born poets, and the attendant lack of training and practice. He finds few good poets in England, apart from Chaucer, Sackville, Surrey and Spenser; and laments that but for *Gorboduc*, most contemporary drama has neither 'honest civility' nor 'skilful poetry'. The non-abidance of the Unities of Place and Time is something that he feels is a serious lapse. This according to Sidney can easily be avoided by making proper use of the flexibility offered by the very medium of poetry, which aims as verisimilitude rather than exactness.
- Almost Horatian in tone, Sidney prescribes beginning in *medias res* instead of *ab ovo*; strictly keep tragedy and comedy apart; not confuse pleasure with laughter in comedy, and to this effect aim at delightful teaching instead of vulgar amusement; address genuine issues like tameness and artificiality of English lyric poetry, or its affected eloquence; be precise in the employment of metaphors.
- In a striking deviation from the Italians, Sidney upholds the capabilities of the English language and reminds how adaptable it is to both ancient and modern systems of versification.
- Thus *Apology* concludes with a valiant defence and certain very stringent prescriptions, the abidance of which are according to Sidney, necessary for ensuring that Poetry regains its pristine seat as an aesthetic manifestation of human thought and action.

3.3.4: Text (Extract) of *Apology for Poetry*

Annotated with Para wise Substance

But since the authors of most of our sciences were the Romans, and before them the Greeks, let us a little stand upon their authorities, but even so far as to see what names they have given unto this now scorned skill.

Among the Romans a poet was called vates, which is as much as a diviner, foreseer, or prophet, as by his conjoined words "vaticinium," and "vaticinari," is manifest; so heavenly a title did that excellent people bestow upon this heart- ravishing knowledge! And so far were they carried into the admiration thereof, that they thought in the changeable hitting upon any such verses, great foretokens of their following fortunes were placed. Whereupon grew the word of Sortes Virgilianae; when, by sudden opening Virgil's book, they lighted upon some verse, as it is reported by many, whereof the histories of the Emperors' lives are full. As of Albinus, the governor of our island, who, in his childhood, met with this verse -

Arma amens capio, nec sat rationis in armis

and in his age performed it. Although it were a very vain and godless superstition; as also it was, to think spirits were commanded by such verses; whereupon this word charms, derived of "carmina," cometh, so yet serveth it to show the great reverence those wits were held in; and altogether not without ground, since both the oracles of Delphos and Sibylla's prophecies were wholly delivered in verses. For that same exquisite observing of number and measure in words, and that high-flying liberty of conceit proper to the poet, did seem to have some divine force in it.

Vaticinium – Prophecy

Vaticinari – One who foretells

Foretoken – A premonitory sign/ Prediction

Sortes Virgilianae – Virgilian divination

Arma amens capio, nec sat rationis in armis – 'Frantic I seize arms; yet little purpose is there in arms'. Aeneid, Canto II, Line 314

Delphos – The son of Apollo in Greek mythology; Delphi, was named after him.

Famous for the temple of Apollo, located on the slopes of Mt. Parnassus.

Sibylla (Sybil) – Oracular women in ancient Greece, believed to have prophetic powers

Having spoken of poets as the first philosophers and historians and of the unprecedented respect accorded to poetry even in uncivilised countries, Sidney here turns to have a look at how the classical, known for their first recorded insights into learning among human generations, viewed the aspect of poetry and the vocation of a poet. The Romans believed in the vatic concept of a poet – that is to say, a poet to them was a visionary and a seer who could actually make prophecies about the future. Their greatest poet was Virgil, every verse of whose making was a divination (poetic foretelling) unto itself. Sidney quotes one such from *Aeneid*, that Decimus Clodius Albinus (a Roman who ruled Britain and laid claim to the Roman Empire) had come across in his childhood. Translated, it means 'Frantic I seize arms; yet little purpose is there in arms'. What Albinus felt about arms or warfare is indeed true, according to Sidney, of all other vocations in life – none other than poetry offers a vision that can transcend the narrow limits of human struggle for existence. Thus it transpires that the practice of reading or writing poetry can actually empower one to foresee life; hence the elevated position of the poet. He further substantiates his claim by stating that the oracles of Delphi and the prophecies of the Sybils were all delivered in verse. As a theoretician of poetry, Sidney feels that to be a true poet one has to have the right manner of expression, the control over metre and the ability to employ the right metaphor(s) to be able to communicate. All of this taken together does elevate poetry to a level higher than that normally reserved for other disciplines, pursuits or practices.

While Sidney in his time was looking at the 'vates' idea purely from a classical standpoint in the sense of the poet being a foreseer, we in our time, can see more into this. The Victorian critic Carlyle, influenced by German Transcendentalism in *The Hero as Poet*, looks upon the poet not just as a prophet but also as one who has the eye to explore the inner mystery of the self. The Romantic poet-theorist Shelley, in *A Defence of Poetry*, conclusively looks upon poets as 'the unacknowledged legislators of the world'! Thus we have ample evidence against which to test the veracity of the claims made by Philip Sidney.

Read the following poem by Arthur William Edgar O'Shaughnessy which seems to echo verbatim the idea that has been expressed in the lines above.

We Are the Music-Makers

We are the music-makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams.
World-losers and world-forsakers,
Upon whom the pale moon gleams;
Yet we are the movers and shakers,
Of the world forever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory:
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample an empire down.

We, in the ages lying
In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing,
And Babel itself with our mirth;
And o'erthrew them with prophesying
To the old of the new world's worth;
For each age is a dream that is dying,
Or one that is coming to birth.

Try to write a substance of the poem and then see if your idea becomes almost an expression in the context of a particular poem, of what Sidney says as general phenomena.

Now let us return to the main text of Sidney:

And may not I presume a little farther to show the reasonableness of this word vates, and say, that the holy David's Psalms are a divine poem? If I do, I shall not do it without the testimony of great learned men, both ancient and modern. But even the name of Psalms will speak for me, which, being interpreted, is nothing but Songs; then, that is fully written in metre, as all learned Hebricians agree, although the rules be not yet fully found. Lastly, and principally, his handling his prophecy, which is merely poetical. For what else is the awaking his musical instruments; the often and free changing of persons; his notable prosopopoeias, when he maketh you, as it were, see God coming in His majesty; his telling of the beasts' joyfulness, and hills leaping; but a heavenly poesy, wherein, almost, he showeth himself a passionate lover of that unspeakable and everlasting beauty, to be seen by the eyes of the mind, only cleared by faith? But truly, now, having named him, I fear I seem to profane that holy name, applying it to poetry, which is, among us, thrown down to so ridiculous an estimation. But they that, with quiet judgments, will look a little deeper into it, shall find the end and working of it such, as, being rightly applied, deserveth not to be scourged out of the church of God.

David's Psalms - The **Book of Psalms** (Hebrew *Tehillim* meaning "Praises"), commonly referred to simply as **Psalms** or "the Psalms", is the first book of the third section of the Hebrew Bible. The English title is from the Greek translation, *psalmoi*, meaning "instrumental music" and, by extension, "the words accompanying the music. There are 150 psalms in the Jewish and Western Christian tradition (more in the Eastern Christian churches), many of them linked to the name of King David, though modern Bible scholars have questioned the issue of his authorship. By referring to the Psalms (pronounced saams) Sidney is only ensuring for poetry the pristine and elevated status that he has referred to in the earlier section.

Hebrician – Hebrew scholars

Prosopopoeia – Personification. You will have come across this as a figure of speech that was used in Old English elegiac poems like *The Dream of the Rood* and *The Husband's Message*.

Scourged – Driven out. The obvious context is Plato's oft quoted words about banishing poets from the commonwealth. The idea is that if poetry be equivalent to prayer songs,

then it is definitely not as profane to be thrown out of the precincts of human society. Sidney continues with the idea of *vates* to remind readers that the holy Psalms are also a divine poem. The emphasis here is on the use of poetry as a vehicle to express divinity. While the earlier section talked of the content of poetry as having a visionary quality, here he shows that it has provenly been a vehicle of expressing sacred thoughts. Thus he talks both of the rules of metrical composition and of the prophetic quality of the Psalms – all of it poetic in intent. It is not that all personifications resorted to in the Psalms are actually possible – the appearance of God, the expression of joyfulness of the beasts, the visible responses of nature et all. Yet it is in the right spirit that all of it is to be taken. Hence he is virtually talking of the imaginative reception of poetry that is an important part of an involved poetic process on the part of the reader and the poet. Your counsellor will help you relate this to the Romantic concept of poets and poetry that was to arrive on the English literary scene nearly three centuries later.

In expressing his surprise at how poetry has been debased by myopic understanding, Sidney even gets a bit sarcastic when he says he fears he has profaned the holy Psalms by equating them with poetry in an era when poetry has been 'thrown down to so ridiculous an estimation'. Almost with a double emphasis, he concludes the section by placing his hopes for a proper resurrection of the worth of poetry by those who are imbued with sane judgement.

But now let us see how the Greeks have named it, and how they deemed of it. The Greeks called him a 'poet', which name hath, as the most excellent, gone through other languages. It cometh of this word, poiein , which is 'to make'; wherein, I know not whether by luck or wisdom, we Englishmen have met with the Greeks in calling him a maker: which name, how high and incomparable a title it is, I had rather were known by marking the scope of other sciences, than by my partial allegation.

There is no art delivered unto mankind that hath not the works of nature for his principal object, without which they could not consist, and on which they so depend as they become actors and players, as it were, of what nature will have set forth. So doth the astronomer look upon the stars, and, by that he seeth, set down what order nature hath taken therein. So doth the geometrician and arithmetician, in their divers sorts of quantities. So doth the musician, in times, tell you which by nature agree, which not. The natural philosopher thereon hath his name; and the moral philosopher standeth upon the natural virtues, vices, or passions of man; and 'follow Nature (saith he) 'therein, and

thou shalt not err'. The lawyer saith what men have determined; the historian what men have done. The grammarian speaketh only of the rules of speech; and the rhetorician and logician, considering what in nature will soonest prove and persuade, thereon give artificial rules, which still are compassed within the circle of a question, according to the proposed matter. The physician weigheth the nature of man's body, and the nature of things helpful or hurtful unto it. And the metaphysic, though it be in the second and abstract notions, and therefore be counted supernatural, yet doth he, indeed, build upon the depth of nature.

compassed…matter – limited to questions presented by the subject matter of the rhetorician and the logician. In fact this is applicable to all the branches of knowledge that Sidney refers to in this section. It will be seen that all these disciplines of study are specific and strictly confined to their respective areas, which in turn are governed by the laws of nature. The point he is trying to make here is that no branch of study is superior to poetry, for they are all subservient to nature; poetry alone transcends nature and constructs a super-nature for itself.

Metaphysic – Metaphysician. A metaphysician is a person who studies metaphysics. Metaphysics is a traditional branch of philosophy that concerns itself with the fundamental nature of being and the world that surrounds it. The metaphysician attempts to clarify the fundamental notions by which people understand the world, e.g., existence, objects and their properties, space and time, cause and effect, and possibility. Prior to the modern history of science, scientific questions were addressed as a part of metaphysics known as natural philosophy.

second and abstract notions – Distinctions made in logic between primary conception of things and abstract notions, e.g. – a tree, an oak, an elephant, and genus, species etc.

Supernatural – Metaphysical

If the Romans looked upon a poet as a seer, the Greeks adulated him as a maker, that is, one who created, independently. This gives Sidney the scope to compare the poet with people from other disciplines – the astronomer, the geometrician and the mathematician, the musician and the natural philosopher, the lawyer and the historian, the grammarian, the rhetorician and the logician, the physician and even the metaphysic. All of them abide by the moral philosopher's advice of following nature – that is to say, every form of human art has as its guiding factor the works of nature as example and precept. None of them are thus 'makers' having an independent volition of which to create; they are at best 'actors

and players', simply following the pre-set rules and norms of nature. Even the metaphysician whose task it is to study the fundamental nature of existence is chained to the 'depth(s) of nature'. It is important to understand the difference between a 'maker' and a follower; all the categories enumerated here belong to the former group – their art does not provide them the power to make new formations, which by implication the poet can. In following the predetermined course of nature, they can tread a safe path of never going wrong; but never can celebrate the joy of new creation.

This very idea of 'follow(ing) nature' that Sidney disdains was to become the corner stone of poetic creativity in the 18th century, which has come to be known as the Neo-Classical Age. You will read about it in Paper III. For now, it is interesting to note how subtly Sidney reverses the Platonic assumption of poetry being akin to lies on the ground that it is a copy of a copy. He questions the very idea of Nature being the sole governor that in a way thwarts creativity. Of course, later in the essay, he clarifies his stand by showing how poets can, using nature and the natural as backdrop, revel in unique creations. Once again, poetic imagination becomes the key word here in understanding Sidney. Indeed Romantic poets have transformed such ordinary aspects of nature as a skylark, a nightingale, the west wind, the season of autumn into wonderful objects of art and thereby immortalised them. This is in fact the very essence of the creative theory of master poets like Wordsworth and Coleridge. It is with this understanding that we need to go into the next section of *Apologie*.

Only the poet, disdaining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow, in effect, into another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or, quite anew; forms such as never were in Nature, as the Heroes, Demi-gods, Cyclops, Chimeras, Furies, and such like; so as he goeth hand in hand with Nature, not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging only within the zodiac of his own wit. Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry as divers poets have done; neither with pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet-smelling flowers, nor whatsoever else may make the too- much-loved earth more lovely. Her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden.

Cyclops – In Greek and Roman mythology, we come across a primordial race of giants, each with a single eye in the middle of the forehead. These are called Cyclops. While Hesiod talked of three one-eyed Cyclops, Homer actually described another group

of mortal herdsmen Cyclops. There are also other accounts in the works of Theocritus, Euripides and Virgil. The Natural History Museum in London even has a statue of a Cyclops. Sidney's moot point here is that such creatures are not natural to the order of existence, yet poetic imagination renders them tenable.

Heroes and Demi-gods abound in classical literature. It is almost impossible to think of classical epics without divine machinery, just as heroes with super-human prowess are perfectly suited to grand epics and tragedies.

Chimera – "She was of divine stock, not of men, in the fore part a lion, in the hinder a serpent, and in the midst a goat, breathing forth in terrible wise the might of blazing fire." In Canto 6 ll 179 – 82 of *Iliad*, this is the brief description of the chimera that Homer gives. According to Greek mythology, the chimera was a monstrous fire breathing dragon composed of parts of 3 animals – lion, snake and goat, found mostly in Asia Minor. The term chimera has come to describe any mythical or fictional animal with parts taken from various animals, or to describe anything composed of very disparate parts, or perceived as wildly imaginative or implausible. In the present context, Sidney's reference to it is thus self explanatory. What is interesting here is not just the way nature is replaced by a super-nature of the poet's making; but also the juxtaposition (co-existence) of contraries that is made possible. You could refer to William Blake's use of mythology and his poetic imagination in a poem like 'The Tyger' in this context.

Furies - Greek Erinyes, also called Eumenides, in Greco-Roman mythology, goddesses of vengeance. They were probably personified curses, but possibly they were originally conceived of as ghosts of the murdered. According to the Greek poet Hesiod they were the daughters of Gaea (Earth) and sprang from the blood of her mutilated spouse Uranus; in the plays of Aeschylus they were the daughters of Nyx; in those of Sophocles, they were the daughters of Darkness and of Gaea. Euripides was the first to speak of them as three in number. Later writers named them Allecto ("Unceasing in Anger"), Tisiphone ("Avenger of Murder"), and Megaera ("Jealous"). They lived in the underworld and ascended to earth to pursue the wicked. Being deities of the underworld, they were often identified with spirits of the fertility of the earth. Because the Greeks feared to utter the dreaded name Erinyes, the goddesses were often addressed by the euphemistic names Eumenides ("Kind Ones") or Semnai Theai ("Venerable Goddesses").

Zodiac – Literally, an imaginary band in the heavens centred on the ecliptic that encompasses the apparent paths of all the planets and is divided into 12 constellations or signs each taken for astrological purposes to extend 30 degrees of longitude. Here Sidney uses it in the

context of the range of the poet's imaginative faculties.

Wit – Range of imagination

Brazen – Of bronze; in reference to the gold, silver, bronze and iron ages of classical poets

In the light of the analysis of the previous section, this present one can be easily understood. The poet's very existence and volition (will) are independent of any subjection to nature, though he draws his material essentially from the nature that surrounds him. Sidney's words are remarkable here; he writes that with 'the vigour of his own invention (imaginative power harmonised with the creative impulse), [the poet] *doth grow in effect* another nature, in making things either better than nature bringeth forth, or, quite anew .... (Italics mine) Thus it is clear that the composition of poetry is viewed as an organic process, hence it is a creation in its own right. Such creation is subject only to its own norms, so the poet is able to raise new forms 'such as never were in Nature', and are the result of his imaginative prowess. The strong presence of the poet/creator/vates/ poiein can thus be felt. Carefully look at the following line from Blake's 'The Tyger':

"Did he who made the Lamb make thee ?"

Just as the poet's focus here is primarily on the creator whose awesome creative range is worth marvelling; similarly the poet himself is 'not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her (Nature's) gifts', he ranges freely around the limitlessness of his creative potential. Sidney takes examples from classical poetry to substantiate his claims. The annotations given above will help you to relate the contexts.

Even though Sidney might sound heretical in the context of neo-classical poetics (which you will study in subsequent Papers), yet it is undeniable that his theorisation is an essential guide to our understanding of classical literature; just as it foresees (like the *vates*) literature of subsequent generations, the Romantics specifically. This is because Romantic poetic theory too believed in the cult of inspired poetry that could create an independent space for itself.

Activity for the Learner

Do you in some way feel confused about the Poet-Nature relation that Sidney is talking about? Look at the following poems. Your counsellor can help you in this exercise:
***Tintern Abbey* by Wordsworth**
***Christabel* – Part I by Coleridge**
***Ode to a Nightingale* by Keats**
***Ode to the West Wind* by Shelley**

Just as poets in classical times have been subjected to much censure, similarly the Romantics too have often been branded as 'escapists'. Apart from *Christabel* mentioned above, all the rest of the poems take as their subjects, very commonplace sights of nature – the Wye river banks in Wordsworth; a common English bird like the nightingale in Keats; and the oceanic winds in Shelley's ode. Read the poems to see for yourself how poetic imagination transmutes, without falsifying, these humdrum natural aspects into 'thing(s) of beauty'. Notice how the riverside brings the poet 'home'; how the nightingale's song teaches abiding truths to the poet, or how the wind becomes the poet's vehicle of thought! Coleridge of course is a different ball game altogether! He builds upon your imagination by transporting you to a kind of nowhere-nowhen place-time setting where you willingly suspend your sense of 'disbelief' and tend to believe what the poet says. However, what the poet says is ultimately deep truth that carries philosophical value – it is just that he both 'delights and instructs' as Sidney says, without making such instruction sound very boring to you! These poems will help you to understand the concrete truth of what Sidney is saying here.

The charge of escapism often raised against Romantic poets can be answered if we understand Sidney's lines here.

It is not that the poet creates rivers, trees or flowers or other aspects of nature that we see around us. He uses his acumen to transform the ordinary and the commonplace into something extraordinary. Thus the 'brazen' world is made into a golden one. These lines may be said to contain the core of this long essay, where Sidney throws into perspective the entire aspect of creativity.

But let those things alone, and go to man - for whom as the other things are, so it seemeth in him her uttermost cunning is employed - and know whether she have brought forth so true a lover as Theagenes, so constant a friend as Pylades, so valiant a man as Orlando, so right a prince as Xenophon's Cyrus, and so excellent a man every way as Virgil's Aeneas? Neither let this be jestingly conceived, because the works of the one be essential, the other in imitation or fiction; for any understanding knoweth the skill of each artificer standeth in that idea, or fore-conceit of the work, and not in the work itself. And that the poet hath that idea is manifest, by delivering them forth in such excellency as he had imagined them. Which delivering forth also is not wholly imaginative, as we are wont to say by them that build castles in the air; but so far substantially it worketh, not only to make a Cyrus, which had been but a particular excellency, as nature might have done, but to bestow a Cyrus upon the world to make many Cyruses, if they will learn aright why and how that maker made him.

Theagenes – The hero in *Aethiopica*, a Greek romance by Heliodorus (3rd century A.D) and his only known work. Theagenes, a noble Thessalian (Thessaly was a region in Greece) falls in love with Chariclea, the daughter of King Hydaspes and Queen Persinna of Ethiopia. By a strange quirk of fate, Chariclea arrives in Delphi via Egypt and is made a priestess of Artemis, an ancient Greek deity. Theagenes has to run away with Chariclea and in course of their flight, the lovers encounter dangers through which he stands his stead, though he has to endure severe injuries. The circumstances of their getting married are as dramatic as the childhood story of Chariclea. For more details, see http://www.complete-review.com/reviews/agreek/heliodor.htm.

Pylades – A character from Greek mythology, Pylades is the son of King Strophius of Phocis and Queen Anaxibia, who was sister of Agamemnon. Orestes, son of Agamemnon, was sent to Phocis where he spent a large part of his boyhood with Pylades, whom he considered his brother. The two cousins shared an intense relation, which some classical writers have even considered romantic or homoerotic. Sidney's focus here is obviously on the closeness of ties between the two. We need to remember that the Renaissance too celebrated male friendship, un-debatable proof of which is found in many of Shakespeare's poems and plays.

Orlando – The hero of Ariosto's poem *Orlando Furioso*. Orlando is one of the most valiant paladins of the Christian Emperor Charlemagne (remember the Middle English

Romance cycles!) who is presently at war with the Saracen (pagan) king of Africa, Agramante. The episode of Orlando's falling in love with the pagan princess Angelica, her escape from the palace of the Bavarian duke Namo, and Orlando's frenzied pursuit of her form a large part of the long poem. The two meet with various adventures till Angelica meets a Saracen knight with whom she falls in love and Orlando, mad with despair, goes on a rampage over Europe and Africa. It is therefore the tragic valour of Orlando that Sidney highlights here.

Xenophon's Cyrus – The Athenian gentleman-soldier and student of Socrates, Xenophon (4th century B.C) wrote a political romance *Cyropaedia* or 'Education of Cyrus', supposedly a biography of Cyrus the Great of Persia. It describes the education and upbringing of an ideal ruler, and is an artist's portrait of the character of Cyrus who is said to be following such an ideal. It was popular among medieval writers of the genre called 'mirrors for princes'.

Aeneas – Both the legendary founder of what would become ancient Rome as also its first hero, Aeneas was the son of Prince Anchises and Goddess Venus. A major character in Greek mythology, he is present in Homer's Iliad and given extensive treatment in Virgil's Aeneid.

Loaded with allusions that show Sidney's immense knowledge of classical literature, he says something very important in this section, though in his characteristic tongue in cheek manner. While medieval Christianity believed in the supremacy of the human species in the natural order of creation, Sidney takes it in a rather roundabout manner and comments that man is the most intelligent of natural creations. In that vein, he questions if nature has ever been able to produce a human being who could be considered a prototype – and his parameters for this are the likes of a true lover like Theagenes; a constant friend like Pylades, a man of valour like Orlando; a right benevolent ruler like Xenophon's Cyrus, or an excellent all round man like Virgil's Aeneas. The range of his examples being really wide, the answer to the question is definitely in the negative; the fact is so obvious that he does not even wait to utter an answer! He then harks back to the Aristotelian concept of mimesis to restate that the poet's/artist's work is an idealised representation of the essentials (basics) posited by nature in her creation. So the artist, in creating, actually unearths and works upon the basic idea behind natural creation and not on any particularised or arbitrary manifestation. Thus the poet is not merely an imitator but also a perfecter of nature! It thus follows that the poet/artist actually culls the best parts of nature's creative scheme and imbues his creation with such sterling aspects. Hence the idealised representation is by default a perfected creation in its own right. The 'brazen-golden' binary of the earlier

section thus gets newer emphasis here – as Sidney asserts that the poet, who is also a diviner/seer/prophet along with being a maker, actually perceives the 'idea' behind natural creation and embellishes/gives complete shape to it. In his words, nature has the 'fore-conceit', meaning primary framework of idealising at the conceptual level but not the finished figure of perfection; it is the poet's task to deliver that and thereby complete the unfinished task of nature.

You need to remember that the delight of perfection in creation (Nazrul calls it ***shrishti sukher ullas***) is not Sidney's only objective in poetry; in keeping with Horace's teachings, such creation must also teach or instruct. So he clarifies that such 'delivering forth' is not just imaginative (lest we consign it to castles built in the air), it has substantive worth that is of a salutary nature. A poetic creation always has a raison d'etre (a reason behind its existence); it is exemplary in nature for common man to emulate.

Neither let it be deemed too saucy a comparison to balance the highest point of man's wit with the efficacy of nature; but rather give right honour to the heavenly Maker of that maker, who having made man to His own likeness, set him beyond and over all the works of that second nature; which in nothing he showeth so much as in poetry; when, with the force of a divine breath, he bringeth things forth surpassing her doings, with no small arguments to the incredulous of that first accursed fall of Adam; since our erected wit maketh us know what perfection is, and yet our infected will keepeth us from reaching unto it. But these arguments will by few be understood, and by fewer granted; thus much I hope will be given me, that the Greeks, with some probability of reason, gave him the name above all names of learning.

second nature – Ch. I of Genesis says that Man is the first nature of God's creation; all the rest of the created world that is placed under Man, belongs to the second nature.

erected wit – undebased (pre-lapsarian) understanding

name – of the Poet

Sidney makes it clear that there is no fundamental conflict or contradiction between the faculty of the human mind with all its creative potential, and the effectiveness of nature in providing us with a habitable surrounding. He gives all credit to God who made man in His own likeness as his best creation, and made all else secondary to man. To Sidney, the proof

of man being 'the roof and crown creation' of the divine maker is proved by the sheer fact that human beings alone can compose poetry, which is essentially a God gifted felicity. Thus the poet, as a divinely inspired being, can surpass the order of nature with his creative oeuvre. Even as he accords this pristine position to poets and poetry, Sidney is aware that he is talking of a post-lapsarian (after the Fall of Adam and Eve, and by virtue of being their progeny all men are logically fallen) existence. In terms of the human ideal of perfection, this means there is a conflict between our archetypal understanding that is pre-lapsarian, and our post-lapsarian will; yet the poet it is whose creativity remains the highest human faculty. Consequently, poetry it is that can help bridge this gap to the maximum possible limit and provide the keys to a sublime kind of life. In this sense, poetry has a therapeutic (curative) value too.

> *Now let us go to a more ordinary opening of him, that the truth may be the more palpable; and so, I hope, though we get not so unmatched a praise as the etymology of his names will grant, yet his very description, which no man will deny, shall not justly be barred from a principal commendation.*
> *Poesy therefore, is an art of imitation; for so Aristotle termeth it in his word mimesis, that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth - to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture - with this end, to teach and delight.*

opening of him – explanation of the nature of the poet
names – The various epithets that have been used to refer to poets; each of these having specific meanings that have been discussed in the sections above.
Mimesis – Idealised representation that is a more complete creation in its own right
a speaking picture – Taken directly from Horace's *Ars Poetica*, l 361
In these lines that are a logical conclusion to all that has preceded, Sidney achieves a perfect blend of Aristotle and Horace, his greatest classical influences, to clinch his arguments. Your counsellor will definitely acquaint you with the texts of *Poetics* and *Ars Poetica* according to their discretion, to round off your summative understanding of this extract from Philip Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie.*

3.3.5 : Summing Up

Sidney's basic statements in the treatise may thus be summed up in the following points:

- The purpose of writing *Apology for Poetry* was to provide an understanding of the nature and purpose of poetic art at a time when the literary scenario in England was in a state of flux.

- His basic tools in this were classical theories and theorists, among whom he was most importantly trying to place Plato and his views on poetry in a right perspective.
- The principle of simultaneously gratifying and edifying remains central to Sidney's concept of poetics. Thus both ideas of poet as inspired being and poetic art as demanding decency find equal importance.
- Poetry is the source and fount of all knowledge and hence the prime of all creative activity – this is an understanding deeply rooted in Sidney's theory.
- Poetry is an imitation on Aristotelian lines, hence it deals with enhanced limits of the plausible and the probable. The poet can therefore deliver a world better than the real; yet such world is not constructed on fantasy alone.

3.3.6: COMPREHENSION EXERCISES

Long Answer Type Questions (20 Marks)

1. What are the grounds for Sidney's upholding of poetry as the highest of all creative human faculties?
2. How does Sidney's treatise contribute to an understanding of Renaissance literature and culture?
3. What were the classical influences that Sidney resorted to in establishing his theory of poetry? How does he adapt them to build up his thesis?

Medium Length Questions (12 Marks)

1. Analyse the contemporary factors that prompted the writing of *Apologie for Poetry*.
2. On the basis of your reading of the text, show how Sidney uses Aristotle as a corner stone for his views on poetry.
3. How can you apply Sidney's views in reading Romantic poetry that came to exist much later than his time.

Short Answer Type Questions (6Marks)

1. Analyse Sidney's use of any two classical myths in his theory text.
2. 'Her world is brazen, the poets only deliver a golden.' Explain
3. 'Arma amens capio, nec sat rationis in armis'. How would you relate this quote in the context of *Apology for Poetry*?

3.3.7: Suggested Readings

Sir Philip Sidney: 'An Apology For Poetry' in *English Critical Texts*, eds. Enright and Chickera

R.A Scott James: *The Making of Literature*

Winsatt and Brooks: *Literary Criticism: A Short Story*

Visvanath Chatterjee ed. *An Apology For Poetry*

Module - 4 ❐ Reading Drama

Unit - 1 ❐ Christopher Marlowe : *Edward II*

4.1.0 : Introduction

You have already read about Christopher Marlowe, a 'University Wit', and the evolution of drama during the Renaissance and Reformation in Module 1, Unit 3. Please refer to that section again while reading this unit as and where required. This unit will introduce you to a play written by Christopher Marlowe, in fact one of the most powerful of the Renaissance plays; and after reading this unit you should be able to:

a) Note the development of the history play from the Chronicle play.

b) Understand how the dramatist used his source materials to mould a play that is relevant to the present time while trying to portray Renaissance England. The protagonists historically belong to the Middle Ages.

c) Observe how blank verse develops in the hands of Marlowe and appreciate his mature portrayal of credible characters.

4.1.1: Christopher Marlowe: A Short Biography

"Now is he born, his parents base of stock" (*Doctor Faustus*, Chorus, 11)

Christopher Marlowe (1564-93), son of a 'shoemaker' and 'clerk of St. Mary', was baptized in Canterbury on 26 February 1564. He was born in the same year as William Shakespeare. Marlowe attended the King's School in Canterbury and then joined Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. He received both his B.A. and M.A. degrees from the latter. In 1587 he moved to London, achieving instant success with *Tamburlaine* and writing its sequel almost immediately. Marlowe's association with the playacting company of the Admiral's Men, their leading actor Edward Alleyn and the theatrical manager Philip Henslowe also began at this time. Later he was patronised by Lord Strange whose actors Lord Strange's Men performed his plays. Marlowe led a mysterious life. He was accused of atheism; homosexuality; associated with secret government business, and may have been a 'spy'. In 1593 when the playwright Thomas Kyd was arrested in possession of heretical documents, Kyd claimed the papers belonged to Marlowe with whom he shared his lodgings. Marlowe met a brutal death in a house at Deptford. He was meeting Ingram Frizer, Nicholas Skeres and Robert Poley. Frizer stabbed him fatally, claiming 'self-defence'. Marlowe was buried in an unmarked grave in Deptford while Frizer was officially pardoned of his deed. Marlowe's death is shrouded in intrigue but his plays have immortalised him.

Read Harry Levin's *Chistopher Marlowe: The Overreacher* (1952)

Charles Nicholl's *The Reckoning: The Murder of Christopher Marlowe* (1992)

Anthony Burgess's novel *A Dead Man in Deptford* (1993)

4.1.2 Christopher Marlowe and Drama

Christopher Marlowe was a 'University Wit' (see Module 1 Unit 3). He belonged to a group of dramatists who had attended either Oxford or Cambridge and turned their educational skills and intellect or 'wit' to producing plays. Among other members of the group were George Peele, John Lyly and Robert Greene. The University Wits indicate the shift in English drama, moving from the guild-based Mystery cycles, through the maturing growth of the touring troupes of players to playwriting as a professional occupation for well-educated gentlemen. They were "secular professional playwrights" (David Daiches) who combined elements of Classical drama with their native tradition to cater to the rising

demand for popular entertainment. They were helped by the growth of playing companies and 'public, purpose-built' playhouses.

Marlowe's literary ambitions began while at Cambridge. He wrote *Dido Queen of Carthage* (which was later completed by Thomas Nash and published with both authors' names). He translated the sequence of poems *Amores* written by the Roman poet Ovid, shocking for its frank sexual content; he also translated the first book of Lucan's *Pharsalia* which operated as a warning of the horrors of civil war and had contemporary relevance to the Elizabethan age. He tasted success with *Tamburlaine the Great, Parts 1 and 2*. During 1588-92 Marlowe wrote *Doctor Faustus*, three acts of the tragedy *The Massacre at Paris*, *The Jew of Malta*, and *Edward II*. His famous lyric "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" cannot be dated precisely. In early 1593 Marlowe wrote an unfinished poem *Hero and Leander*. Most of his plays were published after his death and *The Jew of Malta* had a dedication by Thomas Heywood praising Marlowe in the prologue as "the best of Poets in that age".

Marlowe excelled in the sphere of tragdy. His *Dido* is a tale of unrequited love; *Tamburlaine the Great* recounted the tragedy that arose from boundless aspiration. Tamburlaine represented the Renaissance 'virtu', the belief that man can achieve any goal through his requisite will and potential. 'Virtu' is derived from a Latin word *virtus*; it describes the qualities desirable for a man and might not be the same as conventionally defined virtue. 'Virtu', as opposed to the Christian virtues, includes pride, bravery, strength and a certain amount of ruthlessness. Machiavelli, who was concerned about state, and the achievement of great things, extended the study of classical virtue to the sense of skill, valour and leadership, to encompass the individual prince or war-leader as well. Aristotle and the philosopher Thomas Aquinas both had observed that a good citizen need not necessarily be a morally good or virtuous man.

Marlowe's heroes are 'overreachers' (the term refers to Harry Levin's book who chose the Icarus myth as representing someone whose excess ambition was often a fatal flaw in character and proved to be a reason for their downfall). An overreacher is someone who, according to Aristotle also, contains the seeds of tragedy in his own character. The Marlovian hero was usually a man of humble birth who achieved great heights before his downfall e.g. Tamburlaine and Faustus. His other heroes Barabas (*The Jew of Malta*)and Edward II are considerably weaker in comparison. Marlowe's style was noteworthy. He contributed what Ben Jonson called 'Marlowe's mighty line' infusing his plays with powerful declamatory speeches. He made the existing blank verse more flexible by varying the metrical rhythm

and giving his speeches passion. However, there were not many well-defined women characters in his plays before Queen Isabella in *Edward II*, perhaps because in those days all characters were played either by men or by boys.

4.1.3 *Edward II* – The Play

● Sources and Background

According to Tancock, Marlowe's play is "history well dramatized". He borrows material from Holinshed's Chronicles published between 1577 and 1586-7 and Fabyan's Chronicle or *Concordance of Histories* (a chronicle history from the beginning of the world to the reign of King Henry VIII) and the Chronicle of John Stow (Marlowe took the story of King Edward II being shaved with ditchwater). Marlowe compresses 23 years of history, from 1307 to 1330. While this style is commendable it often resulted in some unexpected or sudden changes in character and action that give the play a rather uneven shape. The Plantagenet dynasty kings depicted in the play include Edward I 'Longshanks' (ruled. 1272-1307), Edward II (ruled. 1307-1327), and Edward III (ruled. 1327-1377).

→**Find out more** about these kings on Wikipedia and the website – http://www.royal.gov.uk/historyofthemonarchy/kingsandqueensofengland/theplantagenets/edwardilongshanks.aspx

During Marlowe's life many historical plays were acted and written. Two that are well known are *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* and *The Troublesome Raigne of King John*. Peele's *Famous Chronicle of Edward I, sirnamed Edward Longshanks, with his returne from the Holy Land* had been already acted as had the *First Part of the contention betwixt the two famous Houses of York and Lancaster* and *The True Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke.* However, as the critic Harry Levin reminds us, "Marlowe is concerned not with the state but as always, with the individual".

→ Edition

The play was entered in the Stationers' Registers on July 6, 1593 and *Edward II* was published in a quarto edition in 1594. Its title was "The Troublesome reigne and lamentable death of Edward the Second, King of England; with the tragicall fall of proud Mortimer." The title page includes Marlowe's name and the acting company for which it was written Lord Pembroke's Men. The quarto text is a good one and does not contain major problems for the editor. There was a second edition of *Edward II* published in 1598

which had the slightly expanded title "The Troublesome reigne and lamentable death of Edward the Second, King of England; with the tragicall fall of proud Mortimer: And also the life and death of Piers Gaveston, the great Earle of Cornewall, and mighty favourite of King Edward the Second, as it was publiquely acted by the Right Honorable the Earle of Pembroke his servauntes". Other editions followed in 1612 and 1622 but the 1594 edition is the authoritative one.

4.1.4 Structure of The Play

Edward II is the greatest structural triumph of Marlowe, as it is well-planned and well-constructed. The plot is well-knit and it has dramatic conflict. He chooses important incidents and events, eliminating those that are not essential to his purpose. He creates characters or does away with some of them. The scenes succeed each other with a rapidity that compresses 23 years of rule and tension. The final catastrophe of the play arouses deep pathos. King Edward II is weak and unable to control his barons or rule his land judiciously. He alienates his nobles and queen, taking his country to civil war. Ultimately his death restores order and his successor King Edward III brings new hope. An Elizabethan ruler, more so a medieval one, was sanctioned with divine authority. The murder of such a person would have moral, political and symbolic associations. Charles Lamb says "the death scene of Marlowe's king moves pity and terror beyond any scene, ancient or modern with which I am acquainted." The passages in the play contain allusions, poetic passion and display Marlowe's classical learning.

→ Textual critics draw **comparisons** with Shakespeare's *Henry VI* parts 2 and 3, *Richard II*

4.1.5 Themes and Issues

Critics like Bradbrook and Maxwell do not find any particular unifying theme or tone in Marlowe's *Edward II*. Critics like L.J. Mills see its theme as "friendship". The friendship between Edward II and his favourites is continuously focused on in the play. Edward often places his friendship with Gaveston and later Younger Spenser and Baldock above his royal responsibilities. This creates several of the crises in the play. Shakespeare's Richard II was another king who favoured friendship above duty to the kingdom. The intense friendship between Gaveston and Edward has been considered to be Marlowe's aesthetic depiction (following classical authors) of a homosexual relationship between the two. Marlowe implies

but never clearly depicts the homosexuality in the play. Edward's brutal death involving a red-hot spit (a historical fact) was considered proof of a homosexual relation. Other probable themes in the play may be the irony of kingship and the interaction between power and individual weaknesses. When we consider the irony of kingship we assess Edward II's character and his actions throughout the play. Edward inherits his kingdom from a father who was a strong ruler, King Edward I. As a king Edward is weak-willed, easily manipulated, impulsive and lacking in the necessary diplomatic and ruthless qualities of a good administrator. His son, the future Edward III, shows better instincts. Marlowe is showing us what may result when an unsuitable king is placed on the throne. The play is concerned with power and its dynamics. Edward II and Younger Mortimer are the two principal representatives of the power struggle that happens in the play. The other nobles and Queen Isabella feature importantly in various shifting power equations. Secular authority and religious authority also clash in this Marlowe play. The issues of power and authority, including the question of divine authority, were important for contemporary playgoers. Machiavelli is an important influence on the play. Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) author of *The Prince* was an important influence during the Renaissance. The Renaissance realized the power of the individual and Machiavelli sought to free the individual from his subordination to the church as seen in the Middle Ages. Machiavelli's ideal Prince is a political actor performing the role of a sincere and virtuous ruler. Although Machiavelli's manifesto was not translated into English before 1640, his ideas concerning the justification of power, political ruthlessness and treachery were legendary.

4.1.6 The Story covered in the Play

The play begins with the accession of King Edward II to the throne after the death of his father Edward I. Edward II instantly recalls his favourite Piers Gaveston to England (historically the son of a Gascon Knight but in the play a 'base' foreigner who had been banished by Edward I). The king's foolish infatuation, his cruelty towards his queen, alienates his noble lords who are angered by his behaviour. When the King and Gaveston misbehave with the Bishop of Coventry then the Church joins hands with the noblemen and Gaveston is banished. He is recalled on the insistence of the Queen. However, once again the King and Gaveston anger the noble peers. A civil war ensues. The King captures Mortimer (his main antagonist) and sends him to the Tower of London. Kent, the King's brother is exiled from the King's presence and joins the Barons. Gaveston is captured and beheaded. The King adopts new favourites in the Earl of Spenser and Baldock (a scholar). The Queen leaves for France with her son where she is joined by Mortimer and Kent. They decide to

challenge Edward II in the name of the young prince. Another battle takes place in England. The King is defeated and he flees to Wales, where he is betrayed and captured. His new favourites are put to death. Mortimer and Isabella, who have become lovers, decide to rule England keeping the young prince as a front. The King is a threat and Mortimer orders Edward's assassination with the queen's approval. The story concludes with the discovery of the murder. The young King is a decisive ruler and he takes revenge. Mortimer is beheaded and his mother sent to the Tower. He attends his father's funeral as a strong King Edward III.

4.1.7 Characterisation

King Edward II was the son of King Edward I and Eleanor of Castile. He was born in April 1284 and came to the throne in July 1307. He was deposed in January 1327 and murdered in Berkeley Castle in September 1327. The King's character is in accordance with the views of the historians of the time.

→ **Edward II** is shown as a weak king, a poor administrator, easily swayed by his favourites, fond of pleasure and shockingly indifferent to the fate of his kingdom. He angers his barons whom he should have kept as advisors by his side and wastes his kingdom's money. He defies religious authority too. Initially a poor soldier he becomes an admirable victor when avenging Gaveston's death. Edward hurts and insults his Queen who betrays him. His fortunes alternate with Younger Mortimer's. A good friend, he is extremely loyal and withstands great suffering for his favourites Gaveston, Younger Spenser and Baldock. Edward is ironically forced to abdicate and then murdered brutally. He seems pathetic rather than a great tragic hero as he never realises his weaknesses. His son whom he truly loves proves a better ruler.

Prince Edward was the son of Edward II and Isabella of France. He was born in November 1312 and became King Edward III in January 1327. He was made "Guardian" of the realm in October 1326. He died in 1377.

Edmund Earl of Kent was the half-brother of Edward II. He was the son of King Edward I and his second wife Margaret of France. He was born in 1301 and put to death by Mortimer in March 1330. Marlowe does not keep to history when he introduces him as a fully grown man in Act I of the play. ?Kent is a choric character in the play. He points out the views of the audience in his reactions to events and characters.

Piers Gaveston was the son of a Gascon Knight, Sir Arnold Gaveston who had served Edward I in Gascony. He was brought up as the foster-brother and playfellow of Edward II and banished from the court and kingdom in 1307 by King Edward I for his harmful influence over Prince Edward. He returned after Edward I's death and was made Earl of Cornwall in August 1307. He married Margaret de Clare, daughter of the Earl of Gloucester and niece of King Edward II. He was banished in May 1308, returned in July 1309, was again banished in 1311 and recalled in January 1312; taken by the Barons in May at Scarborough and beheaded without a trial on Blakclow Hill in June 1312.

→ Although **Gaveston** is shown to be of base birth in the play, he is not a Marlovian hero. He falls from power and dies because his ambition is not supported by any strength of character. He manipulates the King for his personal ends, had been intimate with Younger Spenser but chooses the King for the benefits Edward can offer him. He is a foreigner who dislikes England and English people. He angers the Queen, insults a religious man, mocks three poor men who seek his help and misbehaves with the loyal nobles of the king. His treatment of the Bishop of Coventry is like a curse that backfires on him. His death acts as a catalyst for the King's courage and is a turning point in the play. Gaveston is ultimately a bad friend to the King and instigates his ruin.

Archbishop of Canterbury was Robert Winchelsey. He was Archbishop from 1294 to 1313. He was always a stout supporter of the rights of the Church and of the people. He took the side of the Ordainers in 1311. He died in May 1313.

Bishop of Coventry was Walter Langton and appointed in 1295. As soon as Edward II began his reign, Bishop Langton was imprisoned but he was reconciled to the King in 1311, and became minister again and Treasurer in March 1312. He was removed from office in March 1315.

Bishop of Winchester from June 1323 was John Stratford. He joined the Queen in her attempt to overthrow the Despensers. He was Treasurer from November 1326 till January 1327, Chancellor from 1330-1334, 1335-1337 and April to June 1340. He was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1333 to 1348.

Warwick. Guy Earl of Warwick was the son of William Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick. He was a vigorous opponent of Edward II and did not consent to the recall of Gaveston in 1309. He was one of the Ordainers in 1311 and had a chief hand in putting Gaveston to death. He was included in the general pardon in October 1313 and died in 1315.

Lancaster. Thomas Earl of Lancaster was the son of Edmund, the second son of King

Henry III of Sicily and Blanche of Artois, queen dowager of Navarre. He was the most powerful subject in the realm and always in opposition to the King. He was one of the Ordainers and enemy to Gaveston. He opposed the King's Scottish policy and led the attack on the Despensers in 1321. He was defeated and taken at Boroughbridge in March 1322, tried by his peers and beheaded.

Pembroke. Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke was grandson of Isabella, widow of King John and her second husband the Count of la Marche. In the early years of Edward II he was on the side of the Barons and one of the Ordainers. After Gaveston was taken from his custody by Warwick, he supported the King (Marlowe does not show this, choosing to portray him as a rebellious Baron throughout the play). He died while acting as envoy for the King in France in 1324.

Arundel. Edmund Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel, was one of the Ordainers and in the beginning opposed the King. Like Pembroke he sided with the King against Lancaster in 1318. He was one of the few supporters of the King in 1326 and beheaded at Hereford in November 1326 on the orders of Mortimer.

Leicester. Henry Earl of Leicester and Lancaster was the younger brother of Thomas Earl of Lancaster Like most of the nobles he joined the Queen in her attempt to overthrow the Despensers. After the accession of Edward III he became head of the Council and Guardian of the King. He became leader of that constitutional party which opposed Mortimer. After his brother's death he succeeded to his rights in 1324 and he died in 1345.

Berkeley. Sir Thomas Berkeley was the son of Sir Maurice Berkeley. He had been dispossessed of his inheritance of Berkeley Castle by the younger Despenser. The Queen's troops restored the castle to its rightful owner on her march to Bristol.

Earl or Elder Mortimer was Roger Mortimer of Chirk, second son of the Roger Mortimer who fought on the side of King Henry III during the Barons' war. He was not an Earl but a powerful Baron on the Welsh border and Justiciar of Wales. He opposed the King in the early part of his reign, rose in arms in 1321 and surrendered to the King in January 1322. He was imprisoned in the Tower of London and died there. ?In the play he is a temperate statesman who is a soldier by temperament.

Younger Mortimer was Roger Mortimer of Wigmore, also a powerful Baron of the Welsh march. He was the nephew of Roger Mortimer of Chirk and a powerful opponent of the King. He yielded to the King in 1322 along with his uncle but escaped from the Tower of London in August 1324. He joined the Queen in France and carried out the invasion

that overthrew the Despensers. He was created Ist Earl of March in 1327 and was the real ruler of England till October 1330.

→ In the play he is Edward II's main opponent. He provides a contrast to the King's character. He is a man of action, arrogant, aware of his heredity as a Baron and determined to get due recognition and respect. He is resentful of Gaveston who is wasting the wealth of the treasury while the army gets no pay. He is angry at the weak king who misbehaves with his noble peers and loyal Queen. Initially a patriot and brave man, Mortimer is swayed by the love for power. He has an illicit affair with the Queen and towards the end of the play controls her and the future King. Renaissance in soul, Mortimer falls because of his pride and ambition. We admire his courage as he is taken away to be killed despite his transformation into a Machiavellian villain.

Old Spenser or Hugh le Despenser had fought in the Scottish wars of Edward I and became a strong supporter of Edward II against the Earl of Lancaster. He was banished in 1321 but recalled by the King soon. After Lancaster's death, he and his son guided the King entirely. He was taken and hanged at Bristol in October 1326.

Younger Spenser or Hugh le Despenser the Younger had power and influence over the King from 1322-1326. He was made Chamberlain and was quite similar to Gaveston. He married Eleanor, eldest of the three daughters of the Earl of Gloucester and niece of Edward II and was made Earl of Gloucester. He was beheaded in Hereford in November 1326.

Baldock was Robert of Baldock was Keeper of the King's Privy Seal and became a prominent member of the King's government while the Despensers were in power. He was made Chancellor in August 1323 and was intensely unpopular. He fled with the King and was taken prisoner in November 1326. He died in 1327.

Beaumont. Henry de Beaumont was grandson of John de Brienne, King of Jerusalem and Emperor of Constantinople. He was expelled by the Ordainers in 1311 from the Council as a foreigner. Later he stopped supporting the King and was arrested in 1323.he joined the Queen in her attempt to overthrow the despensers.

Trussel. Sir William Trussel was procter of the parliament of Westminster in 1327 and in the name of parliament renounced the homage and fealties made to the King Edward II.

Sir John of Hainault was the brother of William, Count of Hainault and uncle of Philippa, whom King Edward III married.

Gurney. Thomas Gurney was one of the murderers of Edward II. He fled from the country, was captured at Marseilles and murdered on the way home.

Matrevis. Sir John Maltravers or Mauntreveres was made custodian of the King on the orders of Mortimer after Berkeley treated Edward II too kindly. After the murder he fled from the country.

Queen Isabella was daughter of Philip the Fair, King of France and married Edward II at Boulogne in January 1308. She was sent to France in 1325 to negotiate with her brother King Charles IV. There she became the centre of a plot to overthrow the Despensers. She landed with a force at Orwell in September 1326 and with Mortimer ruled England till 1330. After the fall of Mortimer she was sent to live at Castle Rising in Norfolk and received an allowance of £3000 a year. She died in 1357.

→ The **Queen** is Marlowe's most successful attempt at creating a realistic female protagonist in all of his plays. Critics find the change in her character abrupt and unconvincing. We must remember that Marlowe has condensed history and she was the Queen, so he has chosen to imply rather than specify the change. Initially the Queen is a patient, virtuous, suffering wife and loving mother who adores her husband and son. She is called a "saint". It is only after repeated rejection and provocation that she turns into a she-Machiavel, determined to safeguard the interests of herself and her son. Since she has an influence over Younger Mortimer who is most sympathetic and chivalrous towards her, she allows herself to be unfaithful to her husband. She tolerates Gaveston but when the King continues to humiliate her she takes revenge by betraying Gaveston and the King. The Queen is made responsible for Edward II's murder as she gets involved in the political power play.

Niece to Edward II was Margaret de Clare, daughter of the Elder Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester and Johanna of Acre, daughter of King Edward I. She was married to Gaveston in 1307. It is only after her brother's death in 1314 that she and her sisters became the co-heiresses of Gloucester. She afterwards married Hugh of Audley. ?She is the only other woman character depicted and is responsible for reminding the King of the courtesy due to his wife.

4.1.8 : Act-wise Summary of the Scenes

The text referred to is *Marlowe's Edward the Second* edited by O.W.Tancock, Radha Publishing House, 1988, rpt. 1997.

→ **Two other definitive editions** of the text are *Edward II* edited by R.G.Lunt, New Delhi, Bookland, 2010 and *Edward II* edited by Roma Gill, New Delhi, OUP, 2005.

✦ Act I

Scene 1: opens with Piers Gaveston reading a letter. He has returned to England because Edward I, who banished him, is dead and the new king is Edward II, his intimate friend. Gaveston is a foreigner who does not care about England but at the present moment he views London 'as Elysium' or paradise because his beloved Edward lives here. Three poor men enter, seeking an audience from Gaveston but he is very rude to them, thinking that they cannot help him in his ambitions. Instead he plans to keep the king diverted with pleasure and amusement while he can carry out his plans.

→ Gaveston's soliloquy and actions are important as they reveal his character and his plans. They also show us why the Barons do not like him.

Soon the King enters followed by his nobles—Lancaster, the Elder Mortimer, the Younger Mortimer, Kent, Warwick, Pembroke and attendants. These nobles try to persuade the King to banish Gaveston. Younger Mortimer is the most vehement in his protests because he had sworn an oath to Edward I to never allow Gaveston to enter England. Kent is astonished at the defiance of the nobles and asks the King to punish them. The nobles leave, failing to change the mind of Edward II.

→ Note the speeches of the nobles, especially those uttered by Younger Mortimer.

Gaveston now comes forward and is warmly welcomed by the King. The King showers Gaveston with honours and titles like Lord High-Chamberlain, Chief Secretary to the state and the King, Earl of Cornwall, King and Lord of Man. Kent is displeased at the reckless behaviour of his brother. The King offers Gaveston a guard, gold and even his personal seal thus erasing the difference between himself and Gaveston.

→ Remember the theme of friendship. How does the king rate as a friend?

The Bishop of Coventry, who is on his way to the funeral of Edward I, is surprised to see Gaveston. Edward and Gaveston insult the Bishop of Coventry, tear his clothes and want to "in the channel ('gutter or drain') christen him anew". (p.7) They mock Christianity and its religious representative. The Bishop is arrested, sent to the Tower of London and his lands and revenue given to Gaveston.

→ In a tragedy how important is such arrogant behaviour? Does it lead to downfall?

Scene 2 is set in London, near the King's Palace. The nobles are very angry at what

Gaveston has done to the Bishop of Coventry. They are also resentful that the King rewards 'base' Gaveston with titles and honours. The Archbishop of Canterbury (highest religious authority in England) decides to join the barons in their opposition to the King and Gaveston. He also sends a messenger to inform the Pope in Rome about the Bishop of Coventry. We meet Queen Isabella who is sad and wondering if she should leave the palace and live in a forest since her King "dotes upon the love of Gaveston" (p.9) The Barons and the Archbishop decide to legally banish Gaveston from England and if necessary mutiny against the king. The Queen is alarmed and requests the nobles (in particular "sweet Mortimer") to spare the King from war.

→ How do you think the audience would have reacted in such a situation? Do you think the Archbishop and Barons have made the right decision?

Scene 3 shows Gaveston telling Kent how his enemies, Lancaster, Warwick and the two Mortimers have gone to Lambeth, the Archbishop's residence, to decide on his banishment. Gaveston enjoys the King's support and is fearless.

Scene 4 is a long and important scene. The scene is set at the New Temple in London. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the nobles sign the paper ordering Gaveston's exile. Again the Barons and the King begin to quarrel over Gaveston. The King is angry at the insolence of the nobles but is helpless when the Archbishop of Canterbury tells him that he can sanction the King's deposition and excommunication. The King requests his nobles to divide and rule his kingdom but leave "some nook or corner" to "frolic with my dearest Gaveston". (p.13) The nobles are adamant and the King has to sign Gaveston's exile orders.

Left alone the king speaks lines that are anachronistic (the context does not fit the time it is being uttered at, a historical inaccuracy). The King is angry that he must obey what a priest tells him to do. He curses the Roman Church and threatens to slaughter the priests and destroy "antichristian" churches (p.14). The King's soliloquy is more apt for the Renaissance and Reformation rather than the obedient and devout Middle Ages.

→ Note the contexts of Papacy and Puritanism.

The King and Gaveston are forced to part. He appoints Gaveston the Governor of Ireland. They exchange words of affection and pictures on their lockets. The King is unwilling to let Gaveston go as "I from myself am banished." (p.14). When the Queen enters on this scene of sorrow she is called a "French strumpet (prostitute)" (p.15) and accused of having an affair with Younger Mortimer. The Queen is humiliated by Gaveston but the King asks

Isabella to convince the Barons to repeal Gaveston's exile.

→ Notice the intimacy of the King and Gaveston, is it a suggestion of homosexuality? The Queen is humiliated, is it a reason for wanting to take revenge?

Queen Isabella convinces the Barons to repeal Gaveston. She does this with Younger Mortimer's help and it marks a turning point in the Queen's character. Mortimer asks the Barons to recall Gaveston and have him assassinated because he is a "night-grown mushroom" (p.19, ref Lyly's *Euphues*, meaning an upstart). The King is overjoyed to learn that Gaveston has been recalled. He kisses the Queen and promises to hang a golden tongue around her neck for her skills in persuasion. Edward II then announces a tilt and tournament in honour of Gaveston where he will marry the king's niece.

Younger Mortimer and Elder Mortimer have a private conversation at the end before Elder Mortimer goes to participate in the war in Scotland. He advises Younger Mortimer to be more tolerant of the King's infatuation. He cites many famous rulers and wise men who had intimate relations with men. Younger Mortimer has been made Lord Marshal of England but he is jealous and resentful of Gaveston. The scene ends ominously "But whiles I have a sword, a hand, a heart/ I will not yield to any such upstart." (p.23)

→ Act I introduces us to the important characters and issues in the play. Who do you think is prominent among the nobles? What is your impression of Edward II so far?

✦ Act II

Scene1 opens in the Earl of Gloucester's Castle. We are introduced to Younger Spenser and Baldock. The Earl of Gloucester is dead and these two men need to attach themselves to a new patron. They decide to seek the favour of Gaveston, who is the Earl of Cornwall, to enter the King's court. We also learn that Gaveston has been recalled and Edward's niece, the Earl's daughter will be married to him soon. Spenser advises Baldock to change his appearance and pose of a Puritan scholar if he wants to be accepted at court. The scene concludes with Edward's niece preparing to go to the King's court.

→ These men are the future favourites of the King. Note how their behaviour is similar to or different from that of Gaveston.

In Scene 2 the action shifts to Tynmouth Castle. Edward II is anxiously awaiting the arrival of Gaveston. Younger Mortimer informs Edward of his responsibility; the King of France has occupied English territory in Normandy. Edward is unconcerned and wonders about the devices on the shields of the Barons for the tournament.

→ Note these devices.

The devices on Mortimer and Lancaster's shields describe Gaveston as "a canker" (worm) and a "flying-fish" (Pliny/ Tancock p.29) hated by all. The King is determined to welcome and protect Gaveston. Gaveston returns and insults the Barons again, "Base, leaden, earls, that glory in your birth" (p.29) Younger Mortimer wounds Gaveston. The King decides to fight with the Barons.

A letter arrives from Scotland informing the barons about the capture of Elder Mortimer and his ransom reckoned at 5000 pounds. Younger Mortimer and Lancaster give the news to the King. Edward II refuses to pay the ransom directly and both the nobles leave the King threatening him with civil war. They are disgusted that the King has allowed internal and external rebellion to destroy his kingdom. When he participated in the war against the Scots, they mocked his appearance with a jig (Fabyan's Chronicle, Tancock, p.32) Kent tries to caution Edward II about Gaveston but the King banishes Kent instead.

The Queen enters with the King's niece and other ladies. The King is rude to her. He is pleased to meet Spenser who is "well allied" and Baldock whose "gentry/ I fetch from Oxford" (like Marlowe, Tancock p.34). The scene concludes with the King deciding to meet the Barons in battle after Gaveston's marriage.

Scene 3 depicts the Barons' Camp before Tynmouth Castle. Kent joins the Barons who trust him because he belongs to the Plantagenet dynasty. Mortimer speaks proudly of his ancestors who were Crusaders. Lancaster asks the Barons to spare the King but destroy Gaveston and his company. ? Note the importance of heredity.

In Scene 4 set inside Tynmouth Castle the King requests Gaveston to escape by sea to Scarborough while he and Spenser will escape via land. The Queen is left behind. In a sad soliloquy the Queen admits how hopeless her love for the King is. The nobles find the Queen who betrays the King and Gaveston. This marks another turning point in her character, as also in the action. When she acknowledges "So well hast thou deserved, sweet Mortimer, / As Isabel could live with thee for ever" (p.38) we realize how the Queen has changed. She decides to go to France with her son and complain about Gaveston to "the king my brother" (p.38)

Scene 5 is set in the country near Scarborough Castle. Gaveston is fleeing the Barons who are chasing him. At the moment he thinks he has escaped, they capture him. He is insulted as "proud disturber of thy country's peace, /Corrupter of thy king, cause of these broils"

and like the "Greekish strumpet" (Helen of Troy) has caused the death of several brave men (p38-9). Warwick asks his soldiers to hang Gaveston from the branch of a tree like a common thief. Lord Arundel comes to the Barons with a request that the King be allowed to meet Gaveston one last time. Lord Pembroke supports Lord Arundel and agrees to transport Gaveston to the King and bring him back. Warwick's aside to the audience is Machiavellian and ominous "Yet not perhaps, / If Warwick's wit and policy prevail." (p.41) Pembroke leaves Gaveston under the care of James and takes Lord Arundel to his "house".

→ Act II has shown continuing action and further complications. The King's obstinacy and Gaveston's arrogance have caused war. The Queen breaks free of the King's influence as does Kent.

✦ Act III

Scene 1 marks an important turning point of the play. Set in the country near Deddington, Gaveston is travelling with James when he is ambushed by Warwick and his soldiers. He is taken away to be executed.

→ What changes do Gaveston's death bring about?

Scene 2 is set in the King's camp near Boroughbridge, Yorkshire. Edward is waiting for Gaveston to arrive with Spenser, Baldock, other nobles and soldiers. He comments on the Barons "I know the malice of the younger Mortimer; / Warwick I know is rough, and Lancaster/ Inexorable," (p.43) Younger Spenser and Baldock instigate him to punish the rebellious nobles. Spenser's father, Elder Spenser, comes to fight for the King in battle with 400 soldiers. The King creates Younger Spenser the Earl of Wiltshire and gives him money to outbid and buy the land which the Mortimers are trying to buy from Lord Bruse. The Queen arrives with Prince Edward and Levune bearing bad news. The King of France has seized Normandy. The Queen is sent with the Young Prince to "parley" or negotiate with the King of France. Lord Arundel arrives and gives the news of Gaveston's death. The King vows to take revenge. He creates Younger Spenser Earl of Gloucester and Lord Chamberlain. A messenger "Herald" arrives from the Barons. They demand that the King banish Younger Spenser. Edward II refuses and a fight begins.

→ Is revenge a sufficient reason for war?

Scene 3: Marlowe has condensed the story of the rising of the Barons over a few years into one battle, the Battle of Boroughbridge fought on March 16, 1322. In this battle, where the King participates personally, the Barons are defeated. Kent is banished, Warwick

and Lancaster receive orders to be beheaded and Younger Mortimer is sent to the Tower of London as a political prisoner. Mortimer's speech is true of the Renaissance spirit "can ragged stony walls/ Immure ('imprison') thy virtue ('his virtu') that aspires to heaven?" (p.51) Younger Spenser and Baldock convince Levune to bribe the French Lords to deny help to Queen Isabella who is trying to raise an army and depose Edward II in favour of her son.

→ Note how Edward II is at the height of power and prestige at the end of this act.

✦ Act IV

(The scenes alternate in this act between London and France)

In Scene 1 Kent meets the disguised Mortimer in a street near the Tower of London. Mortimer has escaped by putting the guards to sleep and now both of them will sail to France.

Scene 2: In Paris the Queen is frustrated by the hostile behaviour of her brother and the French Lords. The Prince asks her to return to his father but she refuses as their relation is destroyed. Sir John of Hainault offers them shelter and help. Kent and Younger Mortimer meet the Queen and together they decide to go to Hainault before their war with the King.

→ How does the Prince feel about his father?

Scene 3 is set in a room in the King's palace in London. He asks Arundel to read the names of all the rebellious Lords who were executed in the Tower of London. A messenger arrives with letters. They learn from Levune's letter that Mortimer has escaped to France with Kent and they have joined the Queen. They are staying in Flanders (modern Belgium) with Sir John of Hainault and his brother. The King sets out for Bristol to meet the "traitors in the field." (p.56)

In Scene 4 the Queen returns to England and sets camp near Orwell in Suffolk. Prince Edward, Kent, Mortimer and Sir John of Hainault are preparing to fight Edward II. The Queen accuses Edward II (p.57) but Mortimer prevents Isabel from making an impolitic speech. He claims that they are fighting for Prince Edward, for "our country's cause" (p.57), to remove "flatterers" from the King and to restore the Queen's honour.

Scene 5 takes place near Bristol. Baldock and Younger Spenser are in the process of escaping the Queen's victorious forces. The King shows "princely resolution "in wanting to stay and fight "And in this bed of honour die with fame" (p.58).

Kent expresses how Mortimer has become a traitor. “Mortimer/ and Isabel do kiss, while they conspire”. (p.58) Kent fears for his life. The Queen declares the young Prince Lord Warden of the realm and thanks all their supporters. Kent asks what will happen to Edward II and Younger Mortimer sternly replies that the King will be dealt with by “the realm and parliament” (p.59) thus hiding his intentions with hypocrisy. Rice AP Howel and the Mayor of Bristow (Bristol) enter with Elder Spenser as captive. The King, Younger Spenser and Baldock are trying to sail to Ireland. Elder Spenser is executed as a “rebel”. He denies the charge claiming “Rebel is he that fights against the prince.” (p.60)

→ Who is a rebel at this point and who is a traitor?

Scene 6 is set in Wales. The King is hidden within the Abbey of Neath. He is in disguise. The king requests the monks of the Abbey not to betray them. He wishes to spend his life contemplating the philosophy they learned from the Universities. Younger Spenser fears a mower may betray them. Rice Ap Howel, the mower, Lord Leicester and Welsh soldiers enter the Abbey and arrest Edward II, Spenser and Baldock. Leicester quotes some Latin lines from Seneca’s *Thyestes* to indicate how the power of the King has gone and he is a tragic figure. By the order of Mortimer and the Queen the King is taken to Killingworth or Kenilworth Castle in a litter (a humiliating mode of transport). Spenser and Baldock will be executed. The lesson conveyed is “all live to die and rise to fall’ (p.64) an epigram.

→ At the end of Act IV we see how the fortunes of the King have fallen and Mortimer’s risen.

✦ Act V

Scene 1 is known as the Abdication Scene. This is where King Edward II is forced to give up his crown and lose his identity as King of England. The scene takes place in Kenilworth Castle. The King, Lord Leicester, the Bishop of Winchester and Trussel are present. Their presence is symbolical. The Bishop represents religious authority and Trussel represents legal or Parliamentary authority. The King is impatient with his confinement and Leicester tries to comfort him. The King laments that he is a royal lion who tears himself in sorrow when he is wounded, unlike a forest deer who would try to repair its wounds with a herb. He is angry at “ambitious Mortimer” and “that unnatural queen, false Isabel” (p.65) who have imprisoned him. He complains to the gods but he is now a king in name only:

But what are kings, when regiment is gone, [regiment-army]
But perfect shadows in a sunshine day?
My nobles rule; I bear the name of king;
I wear the crown but am controll'd by them,
By Mortimer and my unconstant queen [unconstant-unfaithful]
Who spots my nuptial bed with infamy; [nuptial-marriage, infamy-shame]
Whilst I am lodg'd within this cave of care, [cave of care- dungeon or prison]
.....
But tell me, must I now resign my crown,
To make usurping Mortimer a king? (lines 26-37)

The Bishop tells Edward II that the crown will make his son King. But the King responds by calling his son a lamb surrounded by wolves. He curses Mortimer that if Mortimer wears his crown it will burn him with fire (reference to Creusa's crown gifted by Medea) or bite him like a snake (reference to the Fury Tisiphon's head which has snakes instead of hair). He finally removes his crown in a powerful, yet pathetic scene. The lines are similar to the lines of Doctor Faustus before he gives up his soul.

Ah, Leicester, weigh how hardly I can brook [brook- tolerate]
To lose my crown and kingdom without cause;
To give ambitious Mortimer my right,
That like a mountain overwhelms my bliss;
In which extreme my mind here murder'd is!
But that, the heavens appoint, I must obey—
Here, take my crown; the life of Edward too; (takes off his crown)
Two kings in England cannot reign at once.
But stay a while: let me be king till night,
That I may gaze upon this glittering crown;
.....
Stand still, you watches of the element;
All times and seasons, rest you at a stay,
That Edward may be still fair England's king!
But day's bright beam doth vanish fast away,

And needs I must resign my wished crown.

Inhuman creatures, nursed with tiger's milk,

Why gape you for your sovereign's overthrow?

My diadem, I mean, and guiltless life. [diadem-crown] (Lines 51-73)

The King tries to keep his crown but is forced to give it up. He is ready to welcome death at this point. He sends a handkerchief wet with his tears and dried with his sighs for Queen Isabella. His sentimental actions are futile and a letter arrives from the Queen and Mortimer instructing Leicester who is sympathetic towards Edward II to let go of his charge. Lord Berkeley is the new keeper of the King and Edward II is to go to Berkeley castle.

→ Compare with the abdication scene in Shakespeare's *Richard II*

Scene 2 is set in a room in the palace in Westminster. The Queen and Mortimer are discussing their dreams and desires. The king is in prison and Younger Mortimer feels he should be made Lord Protector of the new King. He and Isabella will rule over England "Be rul'd by me, and we will rule the realm." (p.69) Isabella who now considers "Sweet Mortimer" her "life" and "loves" him suggests that they put Edward II to death.

The Bishop of Winchester is Mortimer's spy. He tells them Edward II has given up his crown; Lord Berkeley is sympathetic to Edward II and, that Kent has laid a plot to free his brother.

Mortimer summons Matrevis and Gurney and asks them to take the King under their guard and torture him. He should be moved from castle to castle in secret to prevent Kent from finding him. Mortimer arrogantly claims that he "makes Fortune's wheel turn as he please" (p.71) The Queen pretends to be sorrowful and sends a ring for Edward II.

Kent and the Young Prince enter. The Prince does not want to be King of England. Kent wonders if Edward II is still alive. Mortimer and the Queen decide to get rid of Kent who has a strong influence over his nephew. The Prince does not like Lord Mortimer. Kent decides to rescue the King from Kenilworth. (According to Holinshed the king was murdered on Sep 21, 1327 but Kent thought he was still alive in 1329-30)

→ How far has the Queen's character changed from the beginning of the play?

Scene 3 is set near Kenilworth castle. Matrevis and Gurney are moving Edward II from place to place, and they treat him cruelly.

"Within a dungeon England's king is kept,

Where I am starved for want of sustenance;

My daily diet is heart-breaking sobs," (p.74)

When Edward requests some water to clean the filth from his body, he is shaved in "channel water" or "puddle water". (p.74) This detail is taken from Stow. His beard is shaved off and they move in darkness to Killingworth. The Earl of Kent comes to rescue Edward but is captured and taken to Lord Mortimer.

Scene 4 is a room in the Palace in Westminster. Mortimer is afraid that the people have begun to pity Edward II "The king must die, or Mortimer goes down" (p.75) Younger Mortimer is now an absolute Machiavel who will plot murder to preserve himself. He writes a letter of instruction in Latin to Matrevis and leaves it unpunctuated so that it is open to interpretation. He has secretly hired Lightborn who will murder Edward II. Lightborn is an Italian assassin (an anachronism). He has many techniques of murder and reminds us of the devil himself. Mortimer boasts of his power:

"The prince I rule, the queen do I command,

And with a lowly conge to the ground, [conge-bow]

The proudest lords salute me as I pass:

I seal, I cancel, I do what I will.

Fear'd am I more than lov'd; (lines 47-51)

He pretends like a "bashful puritan" that he cannot bear the burden of Lord Protector and yet he must accept this duty to state. He resembles Gaveston in his misuse of power. Prince Edward is crowned King Edward III. Kent is a prisoner. Mortimer orders Kent to be beheaded despite Edward III pleading for the life of his uncle. The Queen supports Mortimer in his decision and calls Kent a "traitor".

Scene 5 is the famous murder scene. Set in Berkeley Castle, Matrevis and Gurney are discussing how Edward is surviving the tortures of the dungeon and starvation.

"Gurney, I wonder the king dies not,

Being in a vault up to the knees in water,

To which the channels of the castle run, [channels-sewers]

From whence a damp continually ariseth,

That were enough to poison any man,

Much more a king brought up so tenderly. (lines 1-6)

Lightborn comes with the message and token sent by Mortimer. He needs a red-hot spit, a feather bed and a table to kill the king. Lightborn enters the king's dungeon and Edward II is instantly suspicious of him, "I see my tragedy written in thy brows" (p.81). The king narrates his misery of staying ten days in filth, unable to eat or sleep (someone plays continually on a drum) and his clothes are tattered. He asks Lightborn to remind Isabella that in his better days he had defeated the Duke of Cleremont in a tournament and won her hand in marriage. Edward gives a jewel to bribe Lightborn. Lightborn asks him to sleep instead and when he repeats fearfully "tell me, wherefore art thou come?" Lightborn replies "To rid thee of thy life". Edward II is murdered savagely. Gurney (on Mortimer's secret instructions) stabs Lightborn, whose corpse is thrown in the moat. They take the King's body to Mortimer.

Scene 6 is the concluding scene. Gurney betrays Mortimer to Edward III. Matrevis reports to Mortimer and flees England. Mortimer thinks he is safe but the Queen enters with news that Edward III is devastated by his father's death and wants revenge. The play's resolution is then effected. Edward III accuses Mortimer of killing his father. He has a letter as proof. Mortimer will be dragged, hanged and quartered as a fitting punishment for traitors. The Queen pleads for Mortimer's life but Mortimer accepts his fate. He has touched the peak of success and can accept his death—"as a traveller,/ goes to discover countries yet unknown" (p.85) Edward III finds it difficult to believe that his mother is guilty but punishes her and sends her to the Tower of London. Edward III prepares for his father's funeral. Mortimer's head is placed on the funeral hearse, "Sweet father, here unto thy murder'd ghost/ I offer up this wicked traitor's head;" (p.86)

→ In Act V note how Marlowe has condensed history to show revenge being taken swiftly. What sort of a king does Edward III promise to be?

4.1.9: Summing Up

We should by now have an idea of the play, its main characters, Marlowe's literary style and note the relevance of the historical play in its own time and our own.

Marlowe's success lies in his use of history, portrayal of characters well-sketched, creation of a dialogue in blank verse that nears the human voice, makes a plot that is complex, an

organic whole and gives classical allusions (cf. Danae daughter of King Acrisius, who was locked up in a brass tower which Zeus entered as a shower of gold and Actaeon, a hunter who was transformed into a dog and killed by the goddess Diana for spying on her while bathing) while blending poetry and drama to interest us with a Renaissance play on King Edward II.

4.1.10 Comprehension Exercises

Long Answer Types (20 Marks)

1. How does *Edward II* show Marlowe's success as a dramatist?

2. *Edward II* blends history and tragedy. Discuss.

3. Discuss the importance of the Abdication Scene or the Murder Scene.

4. Describe the character of King Edward II.

Medium Length Answers (12 Marks)

1. Sketch the character of Queen Isabella

2. Show how Mortimer develops into a Machiavellian villain at the end of the play.

3. What is the importance of the character of Kent in the play?

4. Give a short sketch of the character of Piers Gaveston.

5. Marlowe uses many classical allusions in the play. Describe any **two**.

6. Could you suggest **two** examples (**anachronisms**) from the play where Marlowe refers to his contemporary age rather than to the reign of Edward II?

7. Write a note on the literary style of Marlowe.

8. What are the sources of Marlowe's *Edward II*?

Short Answer Types (6 Marks)

1. Describe two features of a typical Marlovian hero.
2. Name any four works of Marlowe.
3. Why is Marlowe called a "University Wit"?

4. Which religious man did Gaveston physically attack in the beginning of the play? How?
5. Where does Edward II hide in disguise after his defeat by the nobles? Who betrays him to Rice AP Howel?
6. Who captured and killed Gaveston in an ambush? Why?
7. Name the two men who come to remove the King's crown.
8. Where was King Edward II murdered and by whom?
9. How does King Edward III punish Queen Isabella and Younger Mortimer?

4.1.11 Suggested Reading List

Emily C. Bartels. *Spectacles of Strangeness: Imperialism, Alienation, and Marlowe*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993

J.R. Brown, (ed.) *Marlowe: Tamburlaine, Edward II and The Jew of Malta, A Casebook*. Macmillan Press Ltd, 1982.

Patrick Cheney. *Cambridge Companion to Marlowe*. CUP, 2004.
Clifford Leech (ed.) *Marlowe, Twentieth Century Views*. Prentice-Hall of India, 1979.

Avraham Oz (ed.) *Marlowe: New Casebook*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

Stevie Simkin. *A Preface to Marlowe*. Pearson Education Limited, 2000. Indian rpt 2003

J.B. Steane. *Marlowe: A Critical Study*. Cambridge University Press, 1964.

Unit - 2 ❐ William Shakespeare: *Macbeth*

Structure

4.2.0 Introduction

In Module 4 Unit 1, you have read about the ironies and politics associated with kingship in Marlowe's *Edward II*. Shakespeare's *Macbeth* introduces you to an entirely different set of complications arising out of heedless ambition for royal power, the conflagration it causes in the land, and of course the nemesis (retributive justice) of it all. The objectives of this unit are to introduce you to William Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* placing it in its historical and canonical context, and explaining in a lucid manner the themes, the structure and style, the characters and some of the important scenes of the play. You should look out for Shakespeare's use of imagery, the deployment of the supernatural, and of course the intense psychological probe to which he subjects the characters.

4.2.1 A Brief Note on Shakespeare's Life

Provided here are some facts regarding Shakespeare's life to add to the ones which you must have found in Module 1, Unit 3. Baptized on 26th April 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, about a hundred miles northwest of London, William Shakespeare is perhaps the most admired and best known playwright in the world. His birth date like many of the facts of his early life, not being confirmed is surmised to be the 23rd April which is also the date of his death. William was the third child among eight siblings and the eldest surviving son of John and Mary Shakespeare.

It is again a matter of surmise that the young Shakespeare attended the Stratford Grammar School acquiring, according to the curriculum of the day, knowledge of Latin grammar and the classics. At the age of eighteen he married Anne Hathaway who was twenty-six at the time. Their daughter Susanna was born on 26th May 1583. This birth was followed by the birth of twins – son Hamnet and daughter Judith – two years later. Hamnet died at the age of eleven of unknown causes.

There is no proven record of Shakespeare's life from the year 1585 to 1592. It is believed that during this time he found his way to London where he performed various menial chores including holding horses at the stage door. Shakespeare's name next appears as that of a rising actor in the tumultuous literary and theatrical scene of Elizabethan London. The 1592 reference to Shakespeare in Robert Greene's *A Groatswoth of Wit* as "an upstart crow…in his own conceit the only Shakescene in the country" points to the growing status of the dramatist who had become important enough to rile his colleagues, and inspire acrimonious criticism.

Shakespeare's name which is officially entered in 1595 in the payroll of the Lord Chamberlain's company of actors testifies to his active participation in it where he was the principal actor and manager. With the accession of King James to the English throne and his subsequent award of a royal patent to this company its name was changed to the Kings' Men. In 1599 some of the members of the company built their own theatre on the south bank of the Thames which they called the Globe theatre. Shakespeare was closely associated with the Globe theatre of which he was part owner.

Shakespeare was the literary genius who, according to John Dryden, "of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul". Not unexpectedly he left behind him a prolific canon comprising comedies, tragedies, history plays of the English Tudor dynasties as well as of the Roman traditions, the so-called 'problem plays' and the last plays with their typical blend of light and shade making it difficult to classify them in a particular genre. Shakespeare wrote 38 plays in all, 154 sonnets, and three narrative poems, 'A Lover's Complaint', 'Venus and Adonis' and 'The Rape of Lucrece'.

The great tragedies *Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth* and *King Lear* represent the very peak of Shakespeare's achievement in the sphere of tragedy. Displaying a subtle insight in the workings of the human psyche, and expressing a range of emotions through characters powerfully wrought these plays articulate the most profound philosophy in sublime phraseology.

Shakespeare, for the most part, divided his time between Stratford and London. In London he changed addresses a number of times moving from Bishopsgate to Southwark and thence to an area north of St. Paul's Cathedral. Around 1597 he bought a large house – New Place- in Stratford. Shakespeare retired to Stratford in 1610 and it is likely that he wrote his last plays there. However, he continued to visit London from time to time. His connection with his company of actors suffered somewhat when the Globe theatre was burned down in a fire in 1613. Shakespeare died on 23rd April 1616 and was buried in the chancel of the Holy Trinity Church two days after his death.

4.2.2 The Date and Text of the Play

The manuscripts of all the plays by Shakespeare have perished and he himself did not print any of his plays. The quarto editions of sixteen of his plays were not authoritative texts. The thirty-six plays in the First Folio edition of 1623 have been generally accepted as Shakespeare's plays. Given the circumstances it is difficult to pinpoint a specific date for the composition of the play *Macbeth*. The extant text is poorly preserved and bears evidence of several revisions. Most critics, however, agree that the play was written between 1603 and 1606. There is a general reluctance to place it earlier as it is widely

perceived to be a royal compliment to the Stuart James who ascended the English throne in 1603.

The predominance of Banquo in the plot of the play (an ancestor of King James), the show of eight kings supposedly the descendants of Banquo afforded to Macbeth in a vision by the witches among other such details have been strong arguments for locating the play within the mentioned span. Though some editors have sought to assign a more specific date to the play, such as 1605-1606 mainly because of the references to the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 and the subsequent trials their theory has not been able to win wide acceptance.

Based on Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* of 1577 (the revised edition of 1587-88 being the version that the dramatist probably consulted) William Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* was first published under the title *The Tragedie of Macbeth* in the First Folio of 1623. It was registered in the books of the Stationers' Company on the 8th of November 1623, by Blount and Jaggard, the publishers of the folio, as one of the plays "not formerly entered to other men".

Certain references in the play suggest that either the play was written after 1603 or that those portions or lines were incorporated later. The allusions to the king's Evil (iv: iii) and to the two-fold balls and sceptres of Banquo's descendants (v: i) whether as flattering images of the new monarch or as simply topical references must surely have been written after James I's accession to the English throne. In the same way the allusions to equivocation in ii:iii and to the hanging of the traitors in iv:ii must have been inspired by the controversies generated by the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. These lines were probably written after the trial and hanging of father Henry Garnet, Superior of the Order of the Jesuits for his role in the Gunpowder Plot. He was tried on 28th March 1606 and hanged in May the same year. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that these references were incorporated in the latter half of 1606. However, there appears to be a clear consensus that the play could not have been composed later than 1607 as there are unambiguous allusions to it from 1607 onwards.

The two performances of the play, one in 1606 and the other at the Globe Theatre in 1611 were both different from the published text of 1623 which contains passages which

could not have existed in the prompt books for the early performances. J.G. McManaway contends that the play was performed on 7 August 1611 at Hampton Court for King Christian of Denmark and James I of England. The performance of the play in 1611 in the Globe Theatre is the first one of which there is written record one Simon Forman having witnessed the same and written of it in his manuscript The Bocke of Plaies and Notes thereof per Formans for Common Pollicie.

4.2.3: Sources

It appears that Shakespeare drew on two main sources for his play *Macbeth*. The most extensive debt is to Raphael Holinshed whose *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* of 1577 (revised in 1587) was an important source for Shakespeare. Also useful for the playwright's purpose was George Buchanan's *Rerum Scoticarum Historia* which traces the history of Scotland from the time of the mythical Fergus.

Shakespeare's free handling of the historical materials in Holinshed's *Chronicles* in composing *Macbeth* provides an idea not only of the forces at work around and upon him at the time but also the cultural and aesthetic concerns that must have governed the selection, compaction and modification of his source materials. Shakespeare's two main sources in Holinshed are the murder of King Duff by Donwald and his wife in 967 AD and Macbeth's usurpation of the Scottish throne by murdering King Duncan around 1040AD. Not only are the two events separated by seventy years each covers a number of years. The two chronologically distant episodes, with their respective complication of action have been merged into a single intense and swift event by the dramatist, and the protagonists of the two separate developments have been given the composite character of the person we know as Shakespeare's Macbeth.

In Holinshed King Duff is an ailing insomniac who sends his trusted servant Donwald on a search for the cause of his malady. A number of rebels, several among them being the kinsmen of Donwald had been conspiring against King Duff even to the extent of seeking supernatural help and indulging in practices such as having his effigy burnt. Upon destruction of this waxen image King Duff regains his health and celebrates his return to the same by

making a spectacle of the hanged rebels. However, Donwald whose pleas for clemency for his relatives in the treasonous plot had gone unheeded by Duff began to go against the king and, incited by his wife to take the life of the king had his servants murder him and remove his body when the latter came to stay at his castle.

Jonathan Goldberg in his essay 'Speculations: Macbeth and Source' observes, "Both Duff and Donwald are versions of Macbeth". Such dispersal of identity is accentuated if you consider that King Kenneth who succeeded King Duff by killing the latter's heir to the throne suffered from a troubled conscience and sleeplessness and was prone to hearing 'voices', calling up inevitable comparisons with Macbeth who had murdered sleep. Further, like Macbeth, Kenneth is prophetically informed that his nominated heir will not succeed to the throne. Thus, Shakespeare's Macbeth who is already a complication of two distinct persons/personae – namely, King Duff and the historical Macbeth – acquires further shades in his identity in the glancing similarities with Donwald and King Kenneth.

In the historical account you will find that Macbeth was personally afraid of Banquo's moral stature despite the latter's complicity in the murder of Duncan just as he sensed a challenge to his authority in Macduff whom he consequently began to hound. In Holinshed's ***Chronicles*** Macbeth has a genuine grievance against Duncan in that he had been overlooked by the king who named his eldest son as his heir and successor when in point of fact he, Macbeth had been nominated monarch by the thanes. Also, Macbeth could apparently lay claim to the throne through his wife and her son by an earlier marriage. Moreover, both Duncan and Macbeth were the grandsons of Malcolm II, the former being the son of his daughter Beatrice and the latter being the son of his other daughter Doada both of whom had married into the Scottish nobility. Thus, Duncan and Macbeth were, in effect, cousins. The familial relationship is invoked early in the play when Duncan refers to Macbeth as "Valiant cousin" (I ii) and "peerless kinsman" (I iv).

Holinshed's Macbeth invites Banquo and his son Fleance to a dinner having instructed hired assassins to kill them as they returned to their lodgings. Not only was the order of events inverted in Shakespeare's play, the scale of the social gathering was much larger, it being

a well attended banquet. In the ***Chronicles*** Macbeth murdered Banquo after a considerable lapse of time since his murder of Duncan. With the contraction of time, in Shakespeare's play, and the subsequent omission of any references to Macbeth's long rule as an efficient king, the stability and authority of the ruler are suspect and the vulnerabilities of the king and queen in the banquet scene are only too evident. The appearance of the ghost of Banquo in the banquet scene was Shakespeare's invention.

Shakespeare's play conforms to its main source in a number of ways. In Holinshed the king was a sacred guest at Donwald's castle whom he had lately showered with gifts. Thus, in both texts one sees the triple transgression of the code of honour when Donwald/ Macbeth turns upon his fellow human being, his hallowed guest and revered king. Just as Donwald had killed King Duff at the instance of his ambitious wife ("being the more kindled in wrath by the words of his wife") so also Macbeth had been goaded to commit the evil deed by his wife, "chastised" as he had been by "the valour of her tongue". However, while in Holinshed's narrative the murder of the king is carried out by Donwald's servants in Shakespeare's play it is the host and subject himself who steels himself to commit the act.

What was recorded as an open conspiracy in Holinshed is transformed by Shakespeare into a secret regicide. Significantly while Banquo was an accomplice in the historical record in Shakespeare's play he has been absolved of any explicit role in the murder. Understandably in a play that has been largely seen as a royal compliment Shakespeare could not have risked an unfavourable depiction of Banquo who was an ancestor of James I. Shakespeare has significantly altered the character of Duncan from that of a young and weak ruler to that of an old and saintly one thereby compounding the onus of guilt on Macbeth, and making the regicide (at any time most heinous) seem all the more unjustified and sacrilegious.

The sleep-walking scene, so moving in its emotional effects, is Shakespeare's invention. The reference to Lady Macbeth's presumed suicide belongs to the same category as there is no mention of the fate of either Donwald or Macbeth's wife in the *Chronicles*. In Holinshed Lady Macbeth is mentioned only once as the dominating wife who abets her husband to murder the king that she may become queen. Thereafter there is no

mention of her.

Shakespeare's *Macbeth* betrays signs of indebtedness in the situation and development of its title character to Richard III as the protagonists of both plays commit heinous crimes to usurp and retain their thrones. It is not surprising that both these plays are regarded as the most Senecan of all the plays by Shakespeare. It is fairly clear that Shakespeare had read *Tenne Tragedies* that had been translated by Heywood and others and had been influenced by some of the actions, themes and speeches in that work. The escalating violence and bloodshed in *Macbeth* bear testimony to the characteristic traits of the Senecan tradition. Lady Macbeth particularly has echoes of Clytemnestra and Medea. In the scene in which she invokes the evil spirits to attend upon her, and again when she cries out with apparent nonchalance that she could dash out the brains of her infant one sees in her the unmistakable imprint of Seneca's Medea.

The constant subversion of the moral and political order and its reflection in the cosmic and natural worlds shown in the play link it to the medieval tradition with its belief in the divine right of kings. While some critics have tended to establish *Macbeth's* affinities with the mystery play and 'the harrowing of hell' through the Porter's speeches others, notably Howard Felperin locate its kinship with the 'tyrant plays' within the medieval liturgical drama.

4.2.4. THE PLAY

Macbeth is the last of Shakespeare's four great tragedies the others being *Hamlet, King Lear* and *Othello*. Often assessed as one of Shakespeare's darkest plays, *Macbeth* explores the pathology of evil tracing the consequences of unbridled political and worldly ambition on the part of its protagonist. The degeneration of the eponymous protagonist from "Bellona's bridegroom" to "dead butcher" is one of the most powerful trajectories of moral decline in all Shakespeare allowing no scope whatsoever for deceleration of the fall. Nor is there any hope of redemption for the protagonist who changes radically and violently in the course of the developing action. Whereas the other great heroes of Shakespeare's tragedies have had their humanity, to some extent reclaimed and reaffirmed by characters dwelling on some aspect of their nobility or the other, in Macbeth's case the stark epitaph

delivered by Malcolm, "This dead butcher and his Fiend-like queen" sums up the intensity of moral negation that the former had come to represent and inspire in the turbulent terrain of medieval Scotland as also the absolute rejection that is meted out to him.

Yet, it is also true that countering the forces of evil in the play are the positive energies that are repeatedly emphasized in the interest of a moral balance without which it would have been difficult to preserve the integrity of Shakespeare's larger political, social and moral vision. The "saintly" Duncan whose absolute trust in his subject, kinsman and host was so brutally betrayed; the young heir to the throne Malcolm possessed of the ideal virtues of a king who eventually returns to his realm to claim his birthright; the morally upright Banquo who refused to succumb to temptation; the brave and honest Macduff who served the nation with the utmost fidelity (to the point of sacrificing his family); and the stripling Siward who went down fighting for his country are without exception examples of goodness and valour that consistently try to resist the evil epitomized and unleashed by Macbeth instigated by his wife and the three Weird Sisters. Thus, though the play is titled after the protagonist, as learners, you will have to carefully study the other characters too in course of your perusal of the text of *Macbeth*.

As has been pointed out by Kenneth Muir in his Introduction to the Arden edition of *Macbeth*, nowhere is the good more evident than in the primary natures of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth who have both consciously and unconsciously suppressed it and have deliberately opted for its opposite only to fall prey to the fears and pangs of conscience that frequently attend the perpetration of evil. The following lines will give you a brief outline of the plot of the play – that is to say, the linear progression of the tragedy.

The story as it unfolds shows Macbeth and Banquo, generals in King Duncan's army returning from the battlefront after subduing a rebellion when they are confronted by three ambivalent figures roughly identifiable as witches. Their greeting of Macbeth as the Thane of Cawdor (which he is not at present) and Macbeth's subsequent discovery that the title had indeed been conferred on him set in motion a train of events that leads Macbeth to murder his king Duncan, usurp the throne, and lead the realm of Scotland on a series of misfortunes. All the while, notice how the mayhem in Scotland finds a parallel to the degenerating fortunes of Macbeth. While reading the text you should also be able to mark

a contrast between Macbeth and Banquo, both of whom the witches addressed simultaneously. Logically, while both should have been driven by the same ambition for supreme power; Banquo (as long as Macbeth allows him to stay alive) follows a course that is distinctly different from Macbeth's.

Duncan's sons, Malcolm and Donalbain flee the country, the former to England and the latter to Ireland in order to escape an attempt on their lives. Though this first crime is committed by Macbeth after an anguished struggle with his conscience, the ones which follow are perpetrated by him without any apparent evidence of scruples on his part. Spurred on by ambition and haunted by mounting insecurity he becomes a tyrant reducing Scotland to a realm echoing with injustice and horror.

Obsessed with retaining the crown for himself and his descendants, Macbeth hires assassins to murder Banquo and his son Fleance. Fleance manages to escape while Banquo is killed by the murderers. In conspiring thus Macbeth indeed stoops very low and betrays the rapid pace of his moral degeneration. He who had once been described by his wife as being "too full of the milk of human kindness/To catch the nearest way", succumbs to temptation and ambition, and is sucked into a spiraling movement of violence and murder of which he in a sense, is both author and victim.

Macbeth's conscience suppressed by him surfaces in the Banquet Scene which immediately follows the murder of Banquo and he imagines he sees the latter's ghost. He becomes progressively more disturbed every time he hallucinates this spectral figure and loses all control over himself thereby laying himself open to suspicion. The feast is thrown into disorder and the guests are asked to leave by Lady Macbeth. By the end of this scene the protagonist has degenerated to such an extent as to claim, "For mine own good/All causes shall give way: I am in blood/Stepp'd in so far, that, should I wade no more,/Returning were as tedious as go o'er".

Anxious to wield absolute control over his subjects and also to ensure that the throne is kept within his dynasty or his nominated heirs Macbeth meets the Weird Sisters in an attempt to know the future, and to learn, once and for all the direction of his fate. The equivocating agents of fate play with Macbeth's credulity exploiting his ambitious nature that is so susceptible to temptation. They set him up in hope with false promises while

actually prophesying his disaster. When confronted with the vision of the eight kings, the last with a glass in his hand, Banquo following, Macbeth realizes bitterly that he had murdered Duncan in vain and that, if the visionary show is to be believed though Banquo himself could not be crowned king his descendants would be kings.

This show of a line of kings tracing their ancestry to Banquo so unsettles Macbeth that he vows to remove his enemies as soon as he begins to doubt their loyalty. Consequently he announces in Act IV: Sc. ii, "From this moment/The very firstlings of my heart shall be/ The firstlings of my hand", and wastes no time at all in despatching murderers to Macduff's castle in Fife who mercilessly kill Lady Macduff and her children. With this last inhuman violation the tide turns against Macbeth and time begins to run out for the tyrant. Macduff who had gone to England to persuade Malcolm to return to Scotland, to save it from the tyrant receives the devastating news of the murder of his wife and children by Macbeth and, coping with his grief, resolves to return at once to Scotland and militarily confront the "Hell-kite" responsible for such an irreparable loss to him.

Shortly afterwards when in Act V: Sc. v Macbeth is given the news that Lady Macbeth is no more, he merely remarks, "She should have died hereafter:/There would have been a time for such a word" betraying his complete indifference to her who had once been so close to him. Once addressed as "dearest chuck", "dearest partner of my greatness", and "sweet remembrancer" by her husband, Lady Macbeth at the time of her death has ceased to have any meaning at all in Macbeth's life. As Kenneth Muir points out, "Macbeth's first crime is inspired by ambition and carried through by his wife's determination, the remainder, from the murder of the grooms to the slaughter of Macduff's family and the reign of terror of which this is an example are inspired by fear, fear born of guilt". Macbeth's alienation from those around him becomes clear as the forces opposed to his tyranny rally around Malcolm who, reinforced with the soldiers lent by the English king begins to march towards the tyrant's castle at Dunsinane.

In the conflict that ensues Macbeth learns of the witches' equivocation and realizes that he had been betrayed by them thereby losing the remnants of faith and hope. However, he shows his characteristic martial spirit and mettle when confronted by Macduff and goes down fighting. Macbeth's severed head is carried by Macduff as a

trophy calling up comparisons with the head of the traitor Macdonwald that had been triumphantly brandished by Macbeth during the illustrious phase of his career early in the play.

4.2.5 Themes in the Play

Now you will be guided to an overview of critical opinions on *Macbeth* down the years. L, C. Knights speaking of the two main themes in *Macbeth* identifies them in his essay 'How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?' (1933), describing them as the themes of the reversal of values and that of unnatural disorder. The inversion of moral values articulated by the Weird Sisters is adopted by Macbeth who becomes an antithesis of all the features that are associated with an ideal monarch. The scenes of disorder in the play reinforce the twisted moral values that drive its plot.

Alan Sinfield in his 1986 essay '*Macbeth*: History, Ideology and Intellectuals' distinguished between what he calls legitimate state violence and gratuitous evil in the play. The putting down of the traitors by Macbeth in the beginning of the play would qualify, according to Sinfield as legitimate violence sanctioned by political necessities while the later eruptions during the period of ruinous rule under Macbeth would belong to the illegal variety being utterly unjustified by any cause of state or society.

Among other critics on political disorder in *Macbeth*, Barbara Riebling emphasizes the sinister manipulations for power carried out by the protagonist. In her 1991 essay "Virtue's Sacrifice: A Machiavellian Reading of *Macbeth*" she maintains that Shakespeare studies in the mentioned play the consequences of misrule in a Machiavellian context.

Several critics including Janet Adelman and Jarold Ramsey have seen gender roles as one of the organizing themes of *Macbeth*. Ramsey in his essay 'The Perversion of Manliness in Macbeth' argues that the more Macbeth pursues his ideal of manliness the less humane he becomes till at length he completely surrenders his humanity to realize that his very notion of manhood had been a flawed one. According to Ramsey as the play develops Macbeth's "moral degeneration is dramatized as a perversion of a code of manly virtue so

that by the end he seems to have forfeited nearly all of his claims on the race itself".

Janet Adelman, a psychoanalytical feminist critic in her essay "'Born of woman': Fantasies of Maternal Power in Macbeth" (1985) shows how maternal power in its most potent and destructive form is projected in the play through the figures of Lady Macbeth and the three witches as they manipulate the protagonist and plant the seeds of ambition in his mind.

Jane A. Bernstein in her 2002 essay "'Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered': Lady Macbeth, Sleep-walking and the Demonic in Verdi's Scottish Opera" adds to this line of thinking when she asserts that *Macbeth* "is loaded with sexual ambiguity: the bearded sisters, a murdered king as 'passive female victim' which among other such instances lead to border-crossings that constantly challenge traditional notions on gender". William T. Liston in his 1989 essay "'Male and Female He Created Them': Sex and Gender in *Macbeth*" emphasizes the presence of a gendered space in *Macbeth* arguing for the preservation of traditional ordering believing that any deviation from it by men and women leads to the loss of their humanity.

H.R. Coursen who in his 1985 essay adopts a Jungian approach to assess the relationship between Macbeth and his wife is close to the theory of one partner complementing and completing the other. He finds in their mutual interchange of qualities normally attributed to the opposite sex a phenomenon that actually fulfils the gaps in their essential selves. It is Lady Macbeth who in II;ii had confidently proclaimed after the murder of Duncan, "A little water clears us of this deed". Ironically in the sleep-walking scene she is shown to be rubbing her hands in a compulsive and symbolic gesture to rid her soul of the stain of murder that has mentally unhinged her. "Out damned spot! out I say!" she cries out in her anguish. She who had allied herself with the powers of darkness needs to have light continually by her as she cannot bear to remain in darkness for any length of time.

It is Macbeth who has the hallucination of the dagger and, as Freud had pointed out it is Lady Macbeth who falls prey to mental illness. In II: ii after the murder of Duncan Macbeth had rued, "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood/ Clean from my hand?" and in V: I it is Lady Macbeth who laments, "Here's the smell of blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand". The pangs of conscience having

been inordinately active in Macbeth following his murder of Duncan he had cried out in II: ii, "Glamis hath murther'd Sleep, and therefore Cawdor/Shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no more". And yet it is not he but Lady Macbeth who has forfeited sleep. In V: I she rises from her sleep, and talking in her sleep betrays her guilt.

4.2.6 Structure and Style

A tragedy in five Acts, *Macbeth* is the shortest among the tragedies by Shakespeare. Most editors agree that the text of the play has suffered numerous cuts, additions and alterations. It appears to have emerged from the prompt book or a version of it prepared for the printers.

You will notice that the pace of the action has been varied as long scenes are interspersed with short ones, intense scenes by lighter ones, and scenes of action with those of reflection. Also, the time-frame of the historical action has been condensed where considered necessary by Shakespeare.

In a telescoping of time the three invasions of Scotland mentioned in Holinshed, namely that by Macdowald and his "kerns and gallowglasses", by Sueno and his Norwegians, and by Canute's Danes in revenge for Sueno's defeat are combined by Shakespeare into one important battle in Act 1: Sc. i of the play.

In much the same way the decade of beneficent rule by Macbeth between the murder of Duncan and that of Banquo is scarcely alluded to by Shakespeare while his seven years of tyrannical excess are highlighted and communicated through a few brief and volatile scenes. This lack of shading in the delineation of Macbeth's character detracts from the psychological credibility of the same in Shakespeare's play.

The unfinished, sometimes abrupt sequence of scenes and the general structure of the play owe their unusual brevity and sharp transitions to numerous cuts, excisions, and truncations to the rough and ready exigencies of a prompt book for a particular performance. Thematic and plot compulsions, too, have contributed to the conspicuous brevity of the text. The fast pace of the action along with the lack of development of any but the main character have succeeded in highlighting the rise and fall of the protagonist that is as accelerated as it is

stripped of all but the essentials.

Clusters of images, as shown by Caroline Spurgeon, enforce a sense of pattern in the rhetorical ordering of the play. While images of unnatural disorder form one group, clothing imagery constitutes another. Images pertaining to darkness, hell and blood form other recognizable categories. In II: iv after the murder of Duncan you hear of a falcon that had been attacked and killed by a mousing owl and how Duncan's horses had run wild in a fit of frenzy. Macbeth's clothes by the end of the play "hang loose about him like a giant's robe/Upon a dwarfish thief". He is the tyrant who is obeyed out of fear not love as is explained by Angus, "Those he commands move only in command./Nothing in love". He is the "Hell-kite" and 'Hell-hound" mentioned bitterly by Macduff.

Bradley notes the blackness that broods over the tragedy with almost all the most memorable scenes being played out against such a background. The murders of Duncan and Banquo and the sleep-walking scene of Lady Macbeth are night scenes. Macbeth's encounters with the witches take place in storm-tossed or cavernous surroundings. It presents an atmosphere where "night's black agents to their prey do rouse". Macbeth calls out to the stars to hide their fire that his "black desires" may not be revealed. He embraces "seeling Night" that scarfs up "the tender eye of pitiful day", and Lady Macbeth invokes thick night to come palled in the "dunnest smoke of hell". The witches are addressed by Macbeth as "secret, black and midnight hags" evoking their associations with evil.

This blackness is periodically coloured by a vivid spillage of blood caused by the numerous acts of violence in the play. The murdered Duncan whose silver skin was laced with golden blood, the "blood-boltered Banquo" with "twenty trenched gashes on his head", Scotland which bled under the heels of a tyrant and Macbeth whose guilty hands would as he believed turn "the multitudinous seas incarnadine" are but examples of violence that ironically relieve the darkness with shades that serve only to aggravate it.

4.2.7 Characters

This sub-section will briefly discuss the salient points on which the major characters of

the play might be discussed.

● **The Character of Macbeth**:

In point of character you will find that Macbeth shares similarities with Shakespeare's Antony and Richard III. Antony in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* and Macbeth in the eponymous play seek to redefine the range of their powers pursuing a throne that will yield them prerogatives hitherto not enjoyed by them. Macbeth is linked to Richard III in their shared trait of evil. However, while Richard is from the beginning totally committed to the execution of his sinful purposes Macbeth when he is introduced to us appears a model figure, one who is brave and competent in battle and of whom everyone speaks well. It is his transformation from good to evil, or should one say, the intensification in his nature of what was merely a hint of evil which excites interest in his decline.

Complexities notwithstanding earlier critics such as A.C. Bradley, Lascelles Abercrombie and G. Wilson Knight took unambiguous views regarding the character of the protagonist. While Bradley tended to see Macbeth as the epitome of evil Abercrombie and Knight praised the zest and fearlessness of the general turned king who retrieved his warrior's spirit at the end of his life. L.C. Knights, however, objected to such conclusions claiming that "the critics have not only sentimentalized Macbeth – ignoring the completeness with which Shakespeare shows his final identification with evil – but they have slurred the passages in which the positive good is presented by means of religious symbols".

Macbeth does not achieve a moral recovery at the end of the play though there are traces of his earlier valour as he confronts his enemies head on. Robert B. Heilman in his 1966 essay 'The Criminal as Tragic Hero: Dramatic Methods' exonerates Macbeth from unredeemed villainy recognizing in him a capacity for feeling and imagination that according to him should appeal to our pity and understanding. At the same time Heilman is aware that Macbeth falls short of the requirements of the tragic hero maintaining. "we expect the tragic protagonist to be an expanding character, one who grows in awareness and spiritual largeness; yet Macbeth is to all intents a contracting character who seems to discard large areas of consciousness as he goes, to shrink from a multi-lateral to a unilateral being…" It is Irving Ribner's view in his book *Patterns in*

Shakespearean Tragedy that the tragedy *Macbeth* is not resolved through the fallen hero's redemption but through the restoration of the forces of good that had been kept at bay for so long.

● The Character of Lady Macbeth

Lady Macbeth is a character who continues to inspire controversial readings amongst critics. As a rule she is criticized for her role in instigating her husband to murder their king and kinsman Duncan who at the time of the murder was also her guest at the castle in Inverness. At first in the marital partnership she is the strong and vocal one chastising Macbeth with "the valour of her tongue" and goading him to overcome his scruples. Educating her husband in the arts of deception she urges him in I:v: "To beguile the time,/Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,/Your hand, your tongue: look like th' innocent flower,/But be the serpent under't'. Later when Macbeth declares in I:vii, "We will proceed no further in this business" she upbraids him roundly asking him, "Art thou afeard/To be the same in thy act and valour,/As thou art in desire?"

Lady Macbeth stresses the word 'man' linking it to humanity and ironically underscoring, in the process, the deficiencies of mere 'manliness'. In her conversation with Macbeth in I:vii she equates manliness with killing. When Macbeth protests, "I dare do all that may become a man;/Who dares do more is none", Lady Macbeth retorts, "When you durst do it, then you were a man;/And to be more than what you were, you would/Be so much more the man". So determined is she in this scene before the murder of their royal guest that Macbeth is forced to concede that her "undaunted mettle" should "bring forth men children only".

When Macbeth hallucinates the dead Banquo in III:iv believing that he is confronted by the latter's ghost Lady Macbeth admonishes him by asking him, "Are you a man?" and later when he persists in his illusion she deplores his lack of composure by exclaiming, "What! quite unmanned in folly?" Marilyn French in her essay "'Macbeth' and Masculine Values" believes that in Shakespeare's eyes, if "Macbeth has violated moral law; Lady Macbeth has violated natural law". She goes on to note that Lady Macbeth "fails to uphold the feminine principle. For her, as for Goneril, this failure plunges her more deeply into a pit of evil than any man can ever fall".

Even more unsettling perhaps is Lady Macbeth's invocation to the spirits "that tend on mortal thoughts" to "unsex" her and fill her "from the crown to the toe top-full/ Of direst cruelty!" She cries to the same spirits, "Make thick my blood/Stop up th' access and passage to remorse;/That no compunctious visitings of Nature/Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between/Th' effect and it!" She is indeed frightening when she calls out to the "murth'ring ministers" to come to her woman's breasts, and "take her milk for gall". Janet Adelman in her essay 'Escaping the Matrix: The Construction of Masculinity in *Macbeth*' finds Lady Macbeth to be a witch-like figure whose "unsexing' primarily functions as an "unnatural abrogation of her maternal function". Adelman makes it clear that "latent within this image of unsexing is the horror of the maternal function itself". Through the image of 'perverse nursing' Shakespeare unites Lady Macbeth and the witches in an unholy combination expressing male castration fears.

In II:ii when Macbeth is thoroughly distraught after murdering Duncan Lady Macbeth again saves the situation with her presence of mind exhorting her husband, "Go get some water,/And wash this filthy witness from your hand". She further instructs Macbeth to smear the daggers of the sleeping grooms with blood that suspicion related to the crime may fall on them. When Macbeth falls short of the deed she once again takes control of the situation by declaring that she would herself go into the slain Duncan's chamber and do the needful. "If he do bleed", she resolves, "I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal, /For it must seem their guilt." In much the same vein she upbraids her husband a little later when she tells him, "My hands are of your colour; but I shame/To wear a heart so white".

It is till the murder of Banquo that Macbeth is still close to his wife. After this murder, as Macbeth becomes more and more desperate for his security, and ruthless in his methods to achieve the same, the couple drifts apart. Macbeth ceases to confide anymore in his wife. The closeness that had once existed between them manifests itself in a bizarre reversal of belief and destiny. Sigmund Freud in his essay 'Some Character-Types met with in Psychoanalytic Work' mentions Ludwig Jekels' theory that Shakespeare often split a character into two personages which taken separately are not always understandable and become so only when they are conceived as a unity. Applying this theory to Macbeth and Lady Macbeth he observes, "In that case it would of course be pointless to regard

her as an independent character and seek to discover the motives for her change, without considering Macbeth who completes her".

● **The Character of Banquo**

As the story runs, Banquo and Macbeth, both victorious generals under King Duncan, are returning from the battlefield. They encounter the witches together for the first time; Macbeth's royal ambitions are fuelled by their prophecies while Banquo is told that his progeny will be kings. Thereafter, Banquo's responses are staid – he even advises Macbeth not to attach much importance to such equivocatory figures, and thereby sets in motion one of the main themes of the play. The character does not have much stage time in the play, since his existence for a longer time means keeping alive a person who could directly place suspicions of the king's murder on Macbeth. But even within this short span, his character offers an interesting foil to Macbeth.

● **The Character of Macduff**

Another of Duncan's trusted generals, Macduff's great unrest at the usurpation of royal power at the hands of Macbeth impels him to leave Scotland and garner forces with Malcolm, Duncan's son, in England with the purpose of waging war against Scotland which is reeling with penury under the tyrant. He has however left behind his wife and children who are butchered by the king's men and this perhaps becomes the final spur that triggers Macduff to action against Macbeth. If we consider *Macbeth* as a play with deep political insinuations, then the lengthy interaction between Malcolm and Macduff on English soil is very interesting. We find each trying to gauge the other's readiness to action, because there is an inherent paradox involved in it – avenging Macbeth will also mean attacking their own homeland. In the short and quick battle scenes that follow towards the end of the play, the one between Macbeth and Macduff is the most interesting. An encounter between two brave warriors, one with the agenda of restoring order and the other, a fallen hero, becomes the high point of the play. Macduff virtually becomes a mirror against which to judge the travesty of the erstwhile hero, Macbeth. The Thane of Glamis who fought loyal battles is not the Macbeth we see now. There are only some traces of his earlier glory, which however peter out the moment he gets to know that Macduff was not 'born' but 'ripp'd untimely' from his mother's womb. The fortuitous

prophecy made by the apparition regarding the killer of Macbeth (that gave him a false sense of invincibility) is thus shattered. The inevitable happens and as Macduff returns on stage with the slit head of Macbeth and proclaims: 'Scotland is free', the play comes full circle. Through the character of Macduff thus, not only does the equivocatory nature of the play get revealed taking Macbeth to his final fall, the complex range of issues that Shakespeare takes up are also brought out through him.

4.2.8 : Selected Approaches

4.2.8. i)The Porter Scene in *Macbeth*

The Porter's grim fantasy of Hell Gate symbolically reflects the actual situation in the play. Just after the murder of Duncan the castle of Inverness is indeed hell because Lady Macbeth as the evil priestess has invoked the "murth'ring ministers" to take her milk for gall while Macbeth has cried out to the stars to "hide their fires" before inviting damnation living, as he does in a Dantesque inferno. Moreover, if we regard hell as a state of mind as is seen in Marlowe's play *Dr. Faustus*, then the distinction between inner and outer landscape disappears, and "where we are in hell/And where hell is there we must ever be".

The figures introduced in the Porter Scene are in some way or the other linked to the developments of the plot at this juncture. The sin of the avaricious farmer who is the first to gain admittance into "hell" consists of hoarding grains to sell the same at a higher price later. An abundance of crops however foiled his plans and caused his ruin. The image of the "avaricious farmer" contrasts with the images of natural growth that are to be found in the play. Duncan greets Macbeth and Banquo in I iv with the words, "I have begun to plant thee, and will labour/To make thee full of growing", to which Banquo replies, "There if I grow/The harvest is your own", thus linking human relationships to the organic and peaceful processes of growth in nature. The farmer and Macbeth share one characteristic and that is of greed. Both are hungry for profit, and they manipulate natural processes in order to serve their own ends only to be ruined at the end.

The entry of the equivocator is linked to one of the main themes of the play, i.e. equivocation. Father Garnett, a Jesuit priest who was a prime accused in the Gunpowder Plot was held guilty of equivocation. It is interesting to note that he went under the alias of Farmer. Immediately after the exit of the farmer Macbeth equivocates with ease. Macbeth's equivocation at this point in the play, through a brilliant twist of irony, becomes but an aspect of truth that involuntarily surfaces in his speech. Upon the discovery of the royal murder when all present, in a bemused state of mind, bemoan the death Macbeth says, "Had I but died an hour before this chance/I had lived a blessed time…" Unbeknown to him these words are a precise description of his own predicament

The Porter equivocates when he observes, "I had thought to have let in some of all professions that go the primrose way, to th' everlasting bonfire" deftly concealing his personal stand on hell and presenting the traditional view of it. In a complex web of pretence the Weird Sisters, Macbeth, and the very language of the play each in their own measure engages in the politics of equivocation. In a sense, Rosse sums it up, when in IV ii he says, "But cruel are the times, when we are traitors,/And do not know ourselves".

The third circumstance mentioned by the Porter is that of "an English tailor stealing out of a French hose". The humour of this observation lies in the fact that since the style of the French hose at the time required it to be very short and straight the tailor indeed had to be a master of his craft in order to be able to steal any cloth from the material intended for such an outfit. The entry of the tailor is significant in terms of the recurrent clothing imagery in the play. The tailor's sin is that he had stolen cloth with the result of having fashioned an ill-fitting garment. Macbeth had stolen the royal title and the prerogatives that went with it and the new honours did not quite cleave to his form. In II iv Macduff says, "Lest our old robes sit easier than our new!" Angus in V ii compares Macbeth's regal title to a robe that is too large for him meaning thereby the moral dimensions that are required to fit kingly vestments were so noticeably lacking in the wearer, namely Macbeth. He says, "Now does he feel his title/Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe/ Upon a dwarfish thief".

4.2.8. ii) The Presentation of the 'Witches' in *Macbeth*

The witches in *Macbeth* as New Historicist critic Stephen Greenblatt has pointed out in his seminal work *Shakespeare Bewitched*, have the conventional attributes found in both Continental and English witch lore, associated with tempests, thunder and lightning. They call to their familiars and conjuring spirits, raise winds and sail in a sieve. They stir their hideous broth in their huge cauldron, and above all, they traffic in "prognostication and prophecy". "What are these", asks Banquo in I iii, "So withered and so wild in their attire/That look not like the inhabitants of the earth/And yet are on it?" The basic identity of the witches is unclear, there is uncertainty over their very origins and their gender is also called into question. Banquo wonders, "…you should be women,/And yet your beards forbid me to interpret/That you are so".

The presentation of the witches in *Macbeth* is ambivalent. On the one hand they appear to have been endowed with powers enabling them to foresee the future which has led some critics to see them as a symbolic extension of fate, or the personification of a psychological dilemma. On the other hand they may be viewed, as Peter Stallybrass has pointed out, from a practical standpoint. In I iii they are shown to kill swine and to be involved in petty vendetta, typical offences in English witch prosecution. They have their familiars, (Graymalkin and Paddock) the common companions of English witches but rarely mentioned, according to Stallybrass in Scottish or Continental prosecutions. They further share the features of an English country witch being old women with a withered look, "choppy fingers" and "skinny lips". It is also clear that the witches' power is limited as they can cause discomfort to the sailor and hint to Macbeth his impending doom but are powerless to alter the actual course of action. At best they can ensure that "Though his bark cannot be lost/Yet it can be tempest tost" thereby supplying proof of their perverse and evil intentions.

Feminist criticism of the play encourages you to see the witches as androgynous, equivocal and mysterious, who strike at the stable social, sexual and linguistic forms which the society of the play needs in order to survive. They believe that the witches and Lady Macbeth conspired to persuade Macbeth to overthrow patriarchal authority which led to the 'womanish' killing of the saintly Duncan representing family and state.

4.2.8. iii) The Banquet Scene

The Banquet Scene in III iv presents a masterly mingling of elements through which are shown the development of the plot, a crucial phase in the moral degeneration of Macbeth, and the dissipation of order into chaos which becomes increasingly prominent in the play. Macbeth, who has ordered the killing of Banquo and his son Fleance can scarcely maintain his composure during this scene. Inaugurating the feast after being prompted by Lady Macbeth he meets the murderers and learns from them that while Banquo has been killed Fleance has escaped. The news upsets him greatly but what unsettles him completely is his hallucination of Banquo's ghost.

A figment of his tormented imagination and guilty conscience, the ghost of Banquo appears to Macbeth to be sitting in his place. He turns to the assembled nobles and asks them, "Which of you have done this?" Lady Macbeth saves him by attributing an invented illness to him, an untruth that Macbeth too resorts to a little later in order to save the situation. He barely regains his composure and begins the feast than the ghost reappears bringing on the fit once more in Macbeth.

The elements of irony, hypocrisy, prophecy and usurpation surface in this brief but powerful scene. The conversation between husband and wife, strewn with references to the word 'man' directs attention to the notions of 'manhood', 'manliness' and 'humanity'. This scene is important for its contribution to the development of the action. It exposes Macbeth to the nobles two of whom in the very next scene voice their suspicions about Macbeth maintaining that "this tyrant" has usurped the throne of Scotland. It also shows the moral degeneration wrought in Macbeth, and the depths to which he can descend in his pursuit of power.

4.2.9: Summing Up

Having considered the varied aspects of the play you must have by now gained an understanding of its historical context, Shakespeare's modifications of the same for artistic purposes, some of the major characters and the sequence of action which constitutes the plot. Some of the important scenes, too, have been discussed for your benefit as has been the stylistic elements which are expected to guide you in your understanding of the play.

4.2.10: Comprehension Exercises

Essay Type Questions (20 Marks)

1. Would you consider Macbeth to be a villain or a hero? Give reasons in support of your view.
2. Write a critical essay on the Sleep-Walking Scene in *Macbeth*.
3. Examine the role of the witches in *Macbeth*. Do you think that they are the driving force behind Macbeth's crimes?
4. Write a brief essay on the Porter Scene in *Macbeth* justifying its presence in the play.
5. Examine the main themes in the play *Macbeth*.
6. Compare Macbeth's moral and psychological states before and after the murder of Duncan.
7. Critically comment on the Banquet Scene.
8. Discuss the character of Lady Macbeth.

Questions for Medium Length Answers : (12 Marks)

1. Why do most critics place the composition of *Macbeth* between 1603 and 1606?
2. Briefly discuss the Senecan elements in *Macbeth*.
3. Analyze the significance of the English tailor in the Porter Scene.
4. Write a brief note on a gendered reading of the play *Macbeth*.
5. Discuss the aspects in which Shakespeare's *Macbeth* conforms to its main source.

Questions for Short Answers : (6 Marks)

1. Name the two main sources on which Shakespeare drew for his play *Macbeth*.
2. Provide two instances of how Shakespeare has modified history in *Macbeth*.
3. What is Macbeth's reaction on hearing of Lady Macbeth's death? How does it reflect on the changes in their relationship?
4. What are the acts of violence committed by Macbeth?
5. Why do Malcolm and Donalbain flee the country?

4.2.11: Suggested Reading List

Macbeth (Primary Text) – The Arden Shakespeare ed. Kenneth Muir

Shakespearean Tragedy, A.C. Bradley, 1904

The Wheel of Fire, G. Wilson Knight, 1949,

Shakespeare's Imagery, Caroline Spurgeon, 1935

Shakespeare's Tragic Sequence, Kenneth Muir, 1972.

Unit - 3 ❐ William Shakespeare: *As You Like It*

Structure

4.3.0 Introduction

As with Tragedy, so with Comedy, the Elizabethan approach in general and the Shakespearean style in particular was quite different from the proposed models of classical drama. In the two earlier units you have come across some of the best specimens of post – Renaissance tragedy and seen for yourselves the wide range of issues encompassed. This unit will introduce you to the other kind of drama – Comedy of the period. In course of your study, you will realise how intricate aspects of life, across social hierarchies, can also become the staple of comedy. To pinpoint the specific purpose behind this unit, we are keeping the following areas in mind, as things that are basic to an understanding of the play and the genre:

- To acquaint you with Shakespearean Comedy.
- To give you an idea about the sources of the play *As You Like It,* highlight the evolution of the plot, the themes, structure and style of the play.

- To equip you with the right tools to approach and discuss the various aspects of the text.
- To help you to answer different types of questions.

It is only desirable that on reading this unit after correlating it with the text of the play, you will have many more aspects in your mind!

4.3.1 Shakespearean Comedy

In Module I Unit 1, you have read about the impact of the Renaissance in England and that Shakespeare belongs to the period of the English Renaissance. You have also come across the different literary forms which evolved in that period, including drama. In Module I Unit 3 you have been given an idea about Shakespeare's plays located in the context of Elizabethan drama and the chronology of his works. Since we will be studying Shakespeare's comedy *As You Like It* I will acquaint you with the dramatic form of Comedy and go on to define and describe Shakespearean Comedy.

Generally speaking Comedy is a dramatic form essentially light and humorous in nature, with a happy or cheerful ending. It may be a play in which the central motif is the triumph over adverse circumstances leading to a happy conclusion. Comedy can be divided into two broad divisions: Satirical Comedy and Romantic Comedy. Classical Comedy, both Greek and Roman, belong to the former category. Its aim is to satirize an individual and his flaws and foibles, or a class of people with a certain ideology. Hence, Jonsonian Comedy or Comedy of Humours of the Jacobean period in England and the Comedy of Manners of the Restoration period can also be called satirical (You have read about these in Module I Unit 3). Latin Comedy, especially the plays of Plautus and Terence – in which certain type characters (the foolish parent, the prodigal son, the parasite, the braggart soldier) are satirized – influenced Renaissance English drama which is obvious when we read a play like Ralph Roister Doister (1553).

The genre of Romantic Comedy evolved in Elizabethan times. The comic plays of Shakespeare's predecessors like Robert Greene belong to this category and are characterized by richness, variety and a sense of abundant gaiety. Such dramas focus on

lovers who seek fulfilment in love and find it only after overcoming obstacles to their union. The pursuit of love and happiness usually takes place in a world of fantasy or an idyllic pastoral setting which serves as a symbol of freedom and harmony. Pastoral Comedies/ Romances also belong to this broad category.

Shakespearean Comedy is *sui generis* (a class by itself). It does not belong to any particular class (Satirical or Romantic) and yet imbibes some of the features of both traditions, especially the tradition of Elizabethan Romantic/ Pastoral Comedy. "Although he employs all the devices his forerunners and contemporaries make use of, the impression one derives from his dramas is fundamentally different from that which is produced by theirs" (S.C. Sengupta, *Shakespearean Comedy*, 1950).

Shakespeare's Comedies can be divided into four groups: the Early Comedies, the Middle Comedies (often known as Mature Comedies), the Dark Comedies and the final plays (they are linked thematically and can be called Comedies). We should concentrate on the Middle or Mature Comedies because *As You Like It* belongs to this group. The main theme of these plays is love and its fulfilment in a real world which presents obstacles both external and internal. It is often contrasted with a parallel quasi-fantasy world where love grows and matures so that it can later adapt itself in a realistic space. This can be seen in *As You Like It* in which the main love relationship germinates in the corrupt world of the court of Duke Frederick, but grows and matures in the forest of Arden. Usually there are several love relationships running parallel to the main relationship. The dramatist posits different kinds of love to show its variety and different perceptions of the lovers involved. Most of Shakespeare's Comedies are concerned with love and desire, overcoming barriers to the fulfilment of these and end in physical and emotional union, usually marriage. Renewal of life through marriage is an underlying theme of these plays.

Shakespearean Comedy is a mixture of many disparate elements which, however, cohere to convey a single impression of harmony and joy. C. L. Barber (in *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*, 1972) associates this spirit of unpolluted joy with the gaiety of 'festivals' celebrated by people in Shakespeare's time. Hence, he feels that *As You Like It* is also a 'festive' Comedy. Shakespeare's Mature Comedies are characterized by a variety of

moods and tones which ultimately blend into one another. Characters from different areas of society meet and their attitudes to life are constantly juxtaposed. We find this in *As You Like It* in the dialogues between Touchstone and Jaques, or Rosalind and Celia, or Corin and Touchstone, or Rosalind and Orlando. There is also a unique mingling of humour and poetry in the Comedies and a stylistic balance of the use of verse and prose.

The main characters of Shakespeare's mature comedies are delineated with a fine understanding of human psychology. Characters like Rosalind in *As You Like It* and Viola in *Twelfth Night* take charge of the development of the plot. They are daring individuals who do not hesitate to admit their own frailty on many occasions. They are aware of the vagaries of fate in a real world and yet fall in love 'at first sight'. The use of disguise in the plays also complicates the plot and allows the central female characters to manifest a diverse range of attitudes and emotions. Such disguises are also related to issues of gender which are constantly highlighted to convey traditional and non-traditional views. We also find isolated characters like Jaques and Malvolio who remain outside the mainstream of humanity. In most of the plays the professional Fool has a significant role as choric commentator and source of sophisticated humour.

There are many other characteristics of Shakespearean Comedy which have not been mentioned. You must refer to some important reference books (a short bibliography is given towards the end of this unit) to find and understand them.

4.3.2 Date and Text of *as you like it*

There are basically two ways of knowing the date of the text: internal evidence (records of productions/ performances or publications), and internal evidence (references in the play to contemporary events whose dates are known, the play's style vis-a-vis the evolution of Shakespeare's style).

The date of the play is fixed by the fact that it does not appear in the list Francis Mere gives in *Paladis Tamia* in 1598, and it does appear In the 'Stationer's Register' in August 1600. It has been suggested that *As You Like It* could have been produced after 1598 to rival two Robin Hood plays: *The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntingdon* and

The Death of Robert Earl of Huntingdon which were very popular in 1598.

The figure of the satirical Jaques and the discussion of the ethics of satire are suitable to the year 1599. But there are two allusions to events of a later date than 1600: Rosalind's words "...though I say I am a magician" which may refer to a severe statute against witchcraft passed after James I had come to the throne in 1603, and her reference to "pretty oaths that are not dangerous" which may be an allusion to another Act of the early years of James I's reign, restraining the "abuses of players" and forbidding the use of the Holy name of God in stage plays.

4.3.3 Sources

Shakespeare's main source for *As You Like It*, identified by Capell and Farmer in 1767, is a prose romance by Thomas Lodge - *Rosalynde, Euphues Golden Legacie*, first published in 1590. An introductory remark in Lodge's text is "If you like it, so", and this may account for Shakespeare's choice of the title. *Rosalynde*, a pastoral romance, is itself based on an earlier poem, 'The Tale of Gamelyn', wrongly attributed to Chaucer. The tale as appropriated by Lodge, provided the intertwined plots, and suggested all the characters except Touchstone and Jaques in Shakespeare's play.

Two other minor debts have been suggested by some critics. The first is Michael Drayton's *Poly-Olbion,* a poetic description of England, but there is no evidence that the poem was written before *As You Like It*. The second suggested source is *The Historie of Orlando Furioso* by Robert Greene, produced around 1592.

4.3.4 Summary of the Play in five Acts:

● Act I

As You Like It has a twin plot: two narratives about two brothers (the Duke Senior and his younger brother Frederick; Oliver and his younger brother Orlando) are intertwined. Although the **first Act** starts with the story/ sub-plot of Oliver and Orlando, we have to know the background of the entire play which contains the seeds of the main plot. A Duke has been usurped by his younger brother Frederick. The banished Duke lives

like Robin Hood and his merry men in the Forest of Arden which provides the pastoral setting in the play. His daughter, Rosalind, is allowed to live in the Duke's court with the younger Duke's daughter Celia. Similarly, another pair of brothers, the sons of the Elder Duke's friend Sir Roland de Boys, are shown to be in conflict because Oliver, the elder brother treats Orlando, the younger brother, as a second class citizen and deprives him of the education suitable to his rank.

Act I begins with Orlando and the old servant Adam. He complains about his brother Oliver's attitude towards him and his disregard for the instructions of their father about the upbringing of the younger son. When Oliver approaches them there is a verbal skirmish between the brothers. Orlando is seen as a positive and spirited character. Hence, very rightly he rebels against his brother's treatment, exclaiming**,** "**Shall I keep your hogs and eat husks with them? What prodigal portion have I spent that I should come to such penury?**". This is a reference to the parable of the prodigal son in the Bible. Adam and Orlando have barely left the stage when Oliver begins plotting to punish his brother for his impudence. Hearing that Orlando is planning to try his strength against Charles, the Duke's prime wrestler, Oliver incites Charles to foil his brother and teach him a lesson.

The following scene (**Scene 2**) takes place in the Duke's court where Rosalind and Celia are seen conversing on topics like the former's depressed state of mind and the latter's love for her. The affection between the two cousins presents a contrast to the hatred between the two brothers that we have just witnessed in Scene1. Rosalind, whose father has been banished is in low spirits and feels she is compelled to show more 'mirth' than she is capable of. There is a witty exchange between the cousins which clearly shows the importance of the concept of 'Fortune' in the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Celia wishes that the "**hussif Fortune**" may distribute her gifts among mortals "**more equally**". Rosalind aptly calls Fortune "**blind**." Then the court jester/ clown Touchstone appears and they engage in a playful war of wits. He contributes to the Folly versus Wisdom motif in the play: "**The more pity that fools may not speak wisely what wise men do foolishly**." He suggests that it is fools only who attempt to criticize the foolish actions of men (people in high places like Celia's father). There seems

to be a precarious balance between foolishness and wisdom. These characters then witness a wrestling match between Orlando and Charles. Orlando wins the match, but after being snubbed by the Duke he receives a chain from Rosalind ("**Wear this for me; one out of suits with fortune**") who shows an interest in him from the moment they meet. Orlando is also struck by Rosalind (her beauty and her manners) and his state of wonder and confusion is suggested in the words, "**What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue**".

In **Scene 3** of this Act the Duke, reluctant to keep Rosalind in the court any more, banishes her, despite Celia's outspoken defiance: "**Pronounce that sentence then on me, my liege. / I cannot live out of her company**". When left alone with Rosalind Celia insists upon following her cousin. They decide to disguise themselves, Rosalind as a boy and Celia as an ordinary girl. Touchstone, the jester also accompanies them.

In the **opening Act** we are introduced to some of the important characters in the play. Their characters as they are revealed to us merely outline their behaviour and attitudes in the **Duke's Court** and its vicinity. In the **second Act** the action moves to the **Forest of Arden** which presents a stark contrast to the setting in **Act I**. This contrast is one of the main themes of the play which is often seen as a conflict between the civilized state and the natural condition of man.

● **Act II**

The **Second Act** begins in the Forest of Arden which, according to Helen Gardner, "is set over against the envious court ruled by a tyrant and a home which is no home because it harbours hatred, not love" (*More Talking of Shakespeare*, 1959). In **Scene 1** the banished Duke is shown living in the heart of nature with his followers. He goes on to describe the world of nature, not as an ideal state of existence, but a harsh world with extreme climatic changes: "**the icy fang / And churlish chiding of the winter's wind.**" This is where Arden differs from the typical Arcadian pastoral scene often evoked in pastoral romances of the Elizabethan age. This is a real world never free from "**winter and rough weather**". It is characteristic of the Duke that he should transform disadvantages into advantages. In his very first speech in this scene he utters the famous lines, "**Sweet are the uses of adversity, / Which like a toad ugly and venomous, / Wears yet**

a precious jewel in his head." These philosophical musings lead to a discussion on the 'melancholy Jaques' who is a significant character in the play both as choric commentator and a type-character – almost "the humorous character ... the man with a dominant passion carried to the point of absurdity" (Agnes Latham, Introduction, Arden edition of As You Like It, 1975). The humour emerging from the First Lord's description of Jaques's reflection on the weeping deer is very much in tune with the spirit of *As You Like it* – a Romantic-pastoral comedy and a 'festive' play (refer to C.L. Barber).

In the next scene (**Scene 2**) Duke Frederick comes to know about the flight of Rosalind, Celia and Touchstone. He is further incensed by reports that they may have joined the young wrestler, Orlando. Here we also see that Oliver is summoned by the Duke.

This is followed by **Scene 3** in which the sub-plot advances as Orlando, warned by Adam not to return home, also proceeds towards the Forest of Arden with the old servant and his meagre savings.

Back in the Forest of Arden in **Scene 4** the three travellers (Rosalind, Celia and Touchstone) totally exhausted, come upon an old shepherd who informs them about a farm for sale. Rosalind and Celia, who are well provided with funds, suddenly decide to purchase it, retaining the old man as their servant at higher wages. We are also introduced to Silvius, the love-sick shepherd who expresses his passion for Phebe, the cold-hearted shepherdess. This is a typical example of the kind of love which is often satirized by Shakespeare. It also presents a contrast to Rosalind's mature love for Orlando.

The focus then shifts back to the Duke and his band of outlaws in **Scene 5**. This scene opens with the famous song by Amiens: "**Under the greenwood tree**". Here we are properly introduced to Jaques. In his typical manner he asserts that he "can suck **melancholy** out of a song, as a weasel sucks eggs". After the song is over Jaques responds with his own kind of song: "**If it do come to pass / That any man turn to ass**". Amiens departs to announce to the Duke that a banquet awaits him.

A brief scene (**Scene 6**) follows. We see the weary Adam and Orlando who have walked into the forest. The former, faint from hunger sinks on the wayside, while the

latter goes deeper into the forest in search of some food to revive the former.

In **Scene 7** the sub-plot converges with the main plot. At first the Duke and his companions are seen gathered around the venison from the deer they have slain, when Jacques joins them, relating how he has been detained in the forest by a most edifying conversation with a Fool. He has obviously met Touchstone. Suddenly Orlando bursts into the scene with sword drawn and demands food. Surprised, but unperturbed, the Duke generously offers him food. After hearing the young man's story about the plight of Adam, the Duke asks him to fetch his companion, promising that not a morsel shall be eaten until the weary travellers can share the meal. It is when Orlando goes to bring his companion that Jaques delivers the famous "**seven ages of man**" speech. He says that "**all the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players**,' and describes the seven ages of man in sentences so graphic that they have become world-renowned quotations. The comparison between the world and a stage in a theatre is a typical Shakespearean metaphor which can be found in many of his plays, both tragedy (*Macbeth*, *King Lear*) and comedy (*The Merchant of Venice*). Orlando returns with Adam and while they eat, Amien sings "**Blow, blow, thou winter wind**". This song once again reminds us that Arden is not an ideal place for the outlaws, and yet it is superior to the court and its corruption. This over, the Duke, who has been studying Orlando's countenance, recognises his strong resemblance to his old friend, Sir Roland de Boys. On learning about his identity he bids him welcome to Arden. Adam is revived and he also joins the rest.

● **Act III**

The **First Scene** of **Act III** takes us back to the court of the ruling Duke who angrily orders Oliver to produce his brother alive or dead very quickly or else forfeit his property, which is confiscated in the meantime. When Oliver protests against this decree and declares that he never loved his brother, the duke instead of supporting him, banishes him.

Back in the Forest of Arden in **Scene 2** the theme of love advances further – love has transformed Orlando into a poet, and he hangs verses in praise of Rosalind and carves

her name on trees ("**Hang here my verse, in witness of my love**"). After a conversation between Touchstone and the old shepherd Corin regarding the advantages of the court and the countryside Rosalind, in the guise of a youth, enters the scene and reads the poems. While Rosalind as Ganymede and Touchstone argue about the verses, Celia as Aliena joins them. Rosalind herself is critical of the verses hanging from the trees; she comments: "**O most gentle Jupiter, what tedious homily of love have you wearied your parishioners withal**". When left alone with her cousin Celia tells her that she has met Orlando in the forest. At this stage Jaques and Orlando arrive and the two girls hide themselves to hear them talk. After Jaques leaves Rosalind peers at Orlando from behind the tree, asking the time. When he reproves her for using the expression "**the lazy foot of time**," she saucily describes how time passes for different persons under varying circumstances. She also offers to give good advice to the man who hangs verses from trees because "**he seems to have the quotidian of love upon him**." "Quotidian" means an ague or malarial attack accompanied by continuous shivering. It is obvious that Rosalind considers typical love-sickness as a kind of disease. She represents Shakespeare's view of mature love which is adapted to reality with all its inconsistencies. After conversing on the subject of Orlando's love for the lady who is the inspiration for his verses, Rosalind as Ganymede offers to cure the love-sick youth if he will woo her as if she were Rosalind. Orlando consents to try the plan, before he and Rosalind disappear into the forest depths.

The Clown, Touchstone, strolls into the next scene (**Scene 3)** with a shepherdess, Audrey, whom he is helping to gather her goats. Here we witness another variant of 'love' which seems to be ubiquitous in the Forest of Arden. Touchstone proposes an immediate marriage; but an unaccredited priest, Sir Oliver Martext, refuses to marry them unless someone gives away the bride. At this point Jaques, who has been eavesdropping upon Touchstone's conversation, intervenes and postpones the wedding. Touchstone then leaves with Audrey deciding to be properly married some other day.

The following scene (**Scene 4**) in the forest brings back Rosalind and Celia, the former lamenting that Orlando has not kept his promise to visit them. She also refers to her meeting with her father who fails to recognize her. Their conversation is cut short by the arrival of Corin who takes them to another part of the forest where the young shepherd

Silvius is pleading with the disdainful Phebe (**Scene 5)**. This presents another kind of love experience – the lovelorn man suffering from the pangs of unrequited love. This is a typical motif in Elizabethan plays and sonnets. After the three have overheard Phebe rejecting Silvius, they enter the action and Rosalind rebukes Phebe in strong terms. Phebe adds to the complexity of the plot by falling in love with Rosalind in the guise of Ganymede. They depart as Phebe decides to write a letter to the young man she desires and asks Silvius to deliver it.

● **Act IV**

The setting of the **Fourth Act** is the Forest of Arden. In the **First Scene** Jaques meets Rosalind and Celia. Rosalind refers to his 'melancholy' which Jaques tries to explain as being of a peculiar sort. He further adds that in his life he has gone through many experiences, and Rosalind wittily retorts that if experience only serves to make him sad, it would be better to have none: "**I had rather have a fool to make me merry than experience to make me sad** ...". While they are arguing Orlando appears and Jaques leaves them in haste. Then we witness the fake courtship which was arranged in **Act III, Scene 2**. Rosalind who pretends to be Ganymede is ironically pretending to be Rosalind. Hence she chides Orlando for his absence and eggs him on to make a proposal. When Orlando declares that he would kill himself Rosalind mockingly comments that "**men have died from time to time and worms have eaten them, but not for love**!" Being good-natured and charmed by the witty Rosalind (as Ganymede) he consents to a mock-marriage. After that Orlando asserts that he would like to possess Rosalind "**For ever and a day**" and she retorts, "**Say a day without the ever. ... men are April when they woo, December when they wed**"**.** She is obviously critical of the typical attributes and expressions of conventional love. And yet she herself is deeply in love: "**O coz, coz, coz, my pretty little coz, that thou didst know how many fathom deep I am in love ... My affection hath an unknown bottom like the Bay of Portugal**".

Scene 2 deals with Jaques and the merry followers of the banished Duke. A deer has been killed and this event is being celebrated with a song. Jaques suggests that the hunter

who has killed the deer should be presented to the Duke with the deer's horns set upon his head.

In **Scene 3** Rosalind and Celia return to the spot where they are supposed to meet Orlando again, apparently after two hours. Rosalind complains to Celia about Orlando's unpunctuality. Sylvius arrives with Phebe's letter to Ganymede. Rosalind reads it aloud and asks Sylvius to tell Phebe that if she truly loves him/ her she should then love Sylvius. Once he leaves Oliver appears and reports that his brother has asked him to carry a blood-stained handkerchief to the youth whom he calls 'Rosalind' in sport. He goes on to relate to them the incident where Orlando saved him from a serpent and a lioness and was wounded in the fight with the latter. Reconciled with his brother Oliver had followed him to the Duke's cave where Orlando fainted. After that he had asked Oliver to explain his absence to Ganymede and deliver the handkerchief as proof of his condition. Hearing this and losing her consciousness briefly, Rosalind/ Ganymede regains consciousness and pretends that she has pretended to faint. This episode introduces Oliver to Celia bringing together the different strands of the plot. Oliver and Celia stand out as another love-pair adding to the complex pattern of love experiences in the Forest of Arden.

● **Act V**

The **Fifth** and final **Act** ties all the loose ends together preparing us for the grand finale in the concluding scene. It begins with Touchstone and Audrey (in **Scene 1**) wandering in the forest discussing the marriage that did not take place. Another suitor walks in – he is another clown who stupidly answers Touchstone's questions. After Touchstone lectures this simpleton, Corin enters and asks them to meet Rosalind and Celia.

In **Scene 2** the brothers, Oliver and Orlando, are seen together; the former expresses his love for Celia. The truth of this newborn passion is proved, when he proposes to give up everything and settle down as a shepherd for the sake of his peasant lady-love. When Orlando sees Rosalind/ Ganymede approaching, he asks his brother to go and 'prepare' Celia/ Aliena. Rosalind regrets that Orlando's arm is in a sling and reports what we

already know: Oliver and Celia's love for each other. Their approaching marriage makes Orlando complain that the sight of such great happiness intensifies his loneliness: "**But O, how bitter a thing it is to look into happiness through another man's eyes**!" When he also tells Rosalind/ Ganymede that he is not satisfied with the fake relationship between them, the latter assures that she, with the help of magical powers, will bring Rosalind tomorrow so that they are also united in matrimony. At this point another pair of lovers enters the scene: Sylvius and Phebe. After being reproached by Phebe Rosalind as Ganymede manages to prove that Sylvius is deeply enamoured by the shepherdess by making him describe his passion. Phebe exclaims that she feels the same way about Ganymede. Towards the end of the scene Rosalind tells the shepherd that she will help him, adding that should he ever marry a woman it will be Phebe, but exacting in exchange for this conditional promise Phebe's solemn pledge to marry either Ganymede or the shepherd on the morrow.

In the following scene (**Scene 3**) Touchstone and Audrey enter and refer to their imminent marriage. Two pages of the banished Duke also enter and sing to the lovers one of the most popular lyrics in Shakespearean Comedy: "**It was a lover and his lass**".

Act V, **Scene 4** marks the climax of the play. It is also the concluding scene of this pastoral comedy. Here Duke Senior and his companions are present to witness a quadruple wedding. While the Duke and Orlando, who is also present, discuss the possibility of Rosalind/ Ganymede living up to her/ his promise, Rosalind herself (still in the guise of Ganymede) appears with Silvius and Phebe. Rosalind initially obtains the Duke's promise that he will give his daughter Rosalind to Orlando if she (as Ganymede) brings her in and Phebe's promise to marry Silvius if she refuses to marry Ganymede. She then leaves with Celia so that she can bring the Duke's daughter with the help of magic. While Orlando and the Duke are speaking about Ganymede's resemblance to Rosalind, another pair of lovers – Touchstone and Audrey – enters the scene. There is a lively conversation between Jaques, the Duke and the Clown. But this is interrupted by the appearance of Hymen, the god of marriage with Rosalind and Celia. While father and lover are surprised to see the change in Ganymede, Phebe is compelled to dismiss her illusions and give consent to marry the shepherd, Silvius. Immediately after the four pairs of lovers are

united in holy matrimony by Hymen, the god of marriage, Orlando's second brother, Jaques de Boys, appears, saying that he is sent to atone for the wrong the usurping duke has done. He then relates how Duke Frederick had entered the forest to pursue and kill his elder brother; but he met a hermit who changed him totally. The younger Duke has now decided to restore his kingdom to his elder brother and retire into a monastery. Thus the ending of the play establishes the harmony which Shakespearean comedy celebrates and upholds. It also re-affirms the magical quality and reformative powers of the Forest of Arden.

The epilogue of this play is recited by Rosalind. She declares that just as **'good wine needs no bush,**' a '**good play needs no epilogue**,' before 'conjuring' the audience by stating that for the love they bear men the women cannot help liking this play, while for the love they bear the women, the men will do likewise.

4.3.5 Characters

- **Rosalind (Ganymede)**: As the central character of the play Rosalind (Ganymede) embodies the very spirit of this Romantic/festive comedy. Her lively character "arises from, and continually illuminates the thematic structure of the play" (John Russell Brown, Shakespeare and his Comedies, 1957), especially in her role as someone who mocks at love and also falls deeply in love.

She is the daughter of the banished Duke Senior and cousin to Celia. In the Duke's court she is very reserved and hence, restrained in her response to her cousin's words, feelings and attitudes. She is also the saucy and practical person who, after being banished by the present Duke, dresses as a young man, Ganymede, and reaches the Forest of Arden accompanied by Celia and Touchstone. From the moment she puts on doublet and hose her vivacity is irrepressible. The free ambience of the forest allows her to express her freedom from all conventional modes of behaviour and manners. She is a free spirit, merry, witty and also down-to-earth. Her constant bantering with Orlando show-cases her wit and good-natured humour (Refer to her comments in **Act IV, Scene 1**). In the Forest of Arden she takes control of the action and characters like Orlando, her father Duke Senior, Silvius and Phebe. Shakespeare puts the "denouement into her capable

hands" (Agnes Latham). Although she is in love with Orlando, she does not hesitate to mock conventional love and its romantic excesses. She allows herself to be disguised as a boy who pretends to be a girl, so that Orlando can practice his so-called art of loving and yet is willing to wed the very person she ridicules for writing love lyrics on trees. Rosalind's notion of love is endorsed in this play. It is a love which can withstand the obstacles and problems of reality and still remain intact as a powerful emotion and inextricable bond. "What she will not countenance is an affected and humourless intensity, the besetting fault of Elizabethan love-cults" (Agnes Latham).

● **Orlando**: Even though he is Rosalind's partner and the so-called 'hero' of the play he seems a mere shadow beside the vivacious Rosalind. He is the youngest son of the banished Duke's friend Sir Rowland de Boys and the brother of the tyrannical Oliver. He is not one of Shakespeare's usual comedy heroes. He lacks wit and presence of mind, prefers wrestling to witty give-and-take. After he falls in love with Rosalind and escapes to the forest he hangs indifferent verses on trees to express his feelings. "He comes from the folk-tale of Gamelyne and not from a polished novella" (Agnes Latham). Initially Orlando's idea of love is highly artificial. Rosalind in the garb of Ganymede helps him to grow into a mature lover.

● **Celia (Aliena)**: Even though she is the daughter of the selfish younger Duke, she remains, throughout the play, an unselfish, loyal cousin who accompanies Rosalind in her exile in the guise of a simple country girl, Aliena. The two girls balance one another even as they participate in similar activities. She also contributes to the romantic plot of the play by falling in love with Oliver.

● **Jaques**: He is one of Duke Senior's attendants and he has got a well-deserved reputation for being "melancholy." We might even say that Jaques *enjoys* being sad because he purposefully seeks out experiences that are depressing. He also plays a choric role in the play as an observer and commentator. He is the very essence of sophistication – he experiments with everything and finds nothing worthwhile in human life. His sensitive resentment against man's cruelty and injustice even in a semi-magical world like Arden cannot be taken too seriously because that would go against the very spirit of *As You Like It*.

He is best known for his "**Seven Ages of Man**" speech in **Act II, Scene 7**. It has been praised too frequently. "It is an instance of a highly rhetorical structure successfully expressing a truth which would seem too stark for rhetoric" (Agnes Latham). Like Touchstone he is also an incongruous figure in the Forest of Arden. Jaques and Touchstone complement each other. In the eyes of his fellow companions he is bit of a 'fool', more so than Touchstone can ever be.

"His cynicism, which is temperamental, has been aggravated by his experiences" (S.C. Sengupta). He also presents the typical figure of a man suffering from melancholia which is an Elizabethan type figure and would be ridiculed in Shakespeare's time.

- **Touchstone**: As the court jester Touchstone is a typical witty clown of the Elizabethan period, and yet he has a more important role in the play because he goes with Rosalind and Celia to the Forest of Arden. There he contributes to the plot and the theme of love by being involved with Audrey. He is also a choric figure inasmuch as he comments on different topics in the play. He has the training of the court 'jester' whose role is to flout the world. But many critics give him importance as a critic in the play (E. Welsford, *The Fool*, 1935). "He tests all that the world takes for gold, especially the gold of the golden world of pastoralism" (J.D. Wilson, Shakespeare's *Happy Comedies,* 1962).

His response to Corin's "How like you this shepherd's life" is an elaborate piece of nonsense, comparable with the sham logic he uses to baffle characters like William. The values of romantic love, which are what the play endorses, are strengthened rather than undermined by the presence of Touchstone.

- **Oliver**: As the eldest son of Sir Roland de Boys and Orlando's elder brother he is initially a negative character. His jealousy compels his bother to escape from his home. But in the Forest of Arden he reforms completely and becomes Celia's worthy partner.

- **Duke Senior**: Rosalind's father, the Duke, lives in exile in the Forest of Arden. He is a wise and amiable person who enjoys the fruits of nature despite nature's adversities. At the end he consents to Orlando and Rosalind's marriage and returns to the court after his brother restores the kingdom to him.

● **Duke Frederick**: The younger Duke is a usurper, an unpleasant character who dominates over the court and all the people of his dukedom. He even banishes his niece to whom his daughter Celia is attached. At the end he also reforms as he steps into the magical arena of the forest of Arden and comes across a religious man who changes him completely. He gives back his kingdom to his brother.

The others are minor characters like Adam, the faithful servant who accompanies Orlando to the forest, Silvius the love-sick shepherd, Corin the genial but typical shepherd, Phebe the disdainful shepherdess in love with Ganymede, Audrey Touchstone's love interest, etc.

4.3.6 Themes

✦ Love: Being a Romantic Comedy, pastoral romance and a festive comedy *As You Like It* centres round the theme of love in all its variety. In the figures of the principal characters it becomes clear that each in his/her own way is in search of love, and each person's notion of love is different from the other. Here typical Romantic love is purged of its excesses and seems to contribute to the development of the persons pursuing it. This is very clear from the character of Oliver who finds love when he meets Celia and changes his ways.

The central love relationship is that between Rosalind and Orlando. Although they meet and fall in love in the court of Duke Frederick, their love grows and flourishes in the forest of Arden which has a congenial atmosphere for such an experience. Rosalind's disguise as Ganymede serves as a means through which she educates her lover in the proper attitudes to love. All the other love-relationships stand out as variations of different kinds of love. While Silvius and Phebe are the typical lovers of a pastoral romance with all its excesses and stereotyped nuances, the love of Touchstone and Audrey present an opposite extreme by underscoring the physicality of such a relationship. Rosalind and Orlando's love is poised between these two extremes. The Celia and Oliver love relationship has not been developed at all in the play.

Rosalind's understanding of love stands out in this play and it is she who balances the

practical and idealistic aspects of love. “Romantic participation in love and humorous detachment from its follies, the two polar attitudes which are balanced against each other in the action as a whole, meet and are reconciled in Rosalind’s personality” (C.L. Barber).

✦ Court Life Versus Country Life: Much of this play is based on the difference between the two different value systems: that of the country and the city. In the country (Forest of Arden) the value system is characterized by simplicity, honour and truthfulness. By contrast the value system in the city (the Court) is governed by deceit and hypocrisy. The play sets out to expose the destruction of human relationships, which such values can cause, while at the same time highlighting the power of simplicity and loyalty which the country upholds. The Forest of Arden epitomizes freedom. Here love grows and flourishes to full fruition. Here the exiled Duke finds ‘winter and rough weather’ preferable to the deceit and envy of the court. It may not be wholly idyllic as a place of rest, but it underscores the possibility of happiness in human life which is largely dependent on values which the forest breeds. Its reformative power is evident in the way Duke Frederick is said to be transformed into a holy man when he steps into theforest.

✦ Foolishness and Folly : There is an intricate interplay between foolishness and wisdom in the play. Both Orlando’s effusive declarations of love and Jaques’s melancholic philosophical ramblings are exposed as forms of foolishness. The so-called Fool Touchstone is one of the wittiest characters in the play. His quick wit and insight into human nature allows him to expose the folly of those around him, even as he participates in clowning and tomfoolery. Despite its critique of human folly, As You Like It also acknowledges that foolishness and folly are the very things that make us human.

✦ Gender : Like some of Shakespeare’s Romantic Comedies *As You Like It* features a cross-dressing heroine whose disguise enables the playwright to explore the fluidity of gender construction. When Rosalind flees into the woods for safety, she disguises herself as an attractive young boy, “Ganymede”. Rosalind’s gender-bending game of make-believe is further complicated by the fact that she pretends to be a woman while disguised as a man in order to teach Orlando the meaning of true love, and also by the fact that

the actor playing the role of "Rosalind" in Shakespeare's time would have been a boy since women were not allowed to perform on the public stage. In *As You Like It*, Shakespeare makes it clear that gender roles can be imitated and performed – in theatre and in real life.

4.3.7 Structure and Style

As we have discussed earlier *As You Like It* is a Romantic Comedy, a genre which was very popular in the English theatre of the Renaissance. Its structure includes a plot dealing with a pair of lovers who encounter many problems in the beginning and in the end are united. Usually there is an ideal space in which love is seen to progress through various stages. The structure also includes sub-plots dealing with similar love interests. All these sub-plots are tied up together in the conclusion.

Shakespeare's version of the Romantic Comedy presents a criticism of life within a taut structure, and the main pair of lovers move towards a more mature understanding of love, both ideal and real. *As You Like It* has also been called a pastoral comedy within which lovers meet and unite in an ideal pastoral locale. But in *As You Like It* this particular structure is somewhat subverted because the play is also a satire on the typical pastoral romance. As mentioned earlier C. L. Barber calls *As You Like It* a 'festive comedy' associating it with midsummer celebrations and festive spirit. But in Shakespeare's play the festive spirit is often undercut by shades of melancholy, harsh experiences and man's innate evil inclinations.

Shakespearean drama is mostly written in blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter), which the dramatist has often modified and used fluently to suit the genres and the moods of each play. In comedies he uses both blank verse and prose. This is evident in *As You Like It*. It is often seen that people belonging to the aristocratic class speak in blank verse (e.g. Duke Senior) and common people like Audrey speak in prose. But there is no such rule in *As You Like It* where Rosalind speaks to Orlando in prose in the courtship scenes and Silvius and Phebe speak in blank verse. Sometimes the logic behind such use of verse and prose is not obvious. Perhaps Rosalind speaks to Orlando in prose to do away with the artifices associated with the courtly tradition of 'courtship'.

It could also be that Silvius and Phebe speak in verse because they are the typical shepherd and shepherdess of pastoral romance which Shakespeare satirizes in his play. But the blank verse used by Jaques is unique in its distinctive character. The sheer brilliance of the "Seven Ages of man" speech has been acknowledged by all critics – here the blank verse gives depth to the philosophy conveyed through the use of its rhythm, apt words and rhetorical figures.

4.3.8 Summing Up

As You Like It is a typical Shakespearean comedy which appropriates two different genres: the Romantic Comedy and Pastoral Comedy/Romance. It strips the artificiality of both the forms and makes the play a lively comedy based on a mature vision of love. It is also called a 'Festive Comedy' because of its spirit of celebration. It is a celebration of both love and life. There is also an intermingling of levity and seriousness in the play which allows the play to be both entertaining and philosophical in many ways.

4.3.9 Comprehension Exercises

Essay-Type Questions : (20 Marks)

1. Discuss *As You Like It* as a Romantic Comedy.
2. Discuss *As You Like* It as both a pastoral comedy and a satire on pastoralism.
3. Compare and contrast the life in the Forest of Arden and in the Court in *As You Like It*.
4. Discuss the different notions of 'love' as expressed in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*.
5. "Rosalind embodies the very spirit of the play, *As You Like It*". Discuss.
6. Analyse the role of Touchstone in *As You Like It*.
7. Discuss the role of Jaques in the play *As You Like It*.
8. Analyse the plot-construction in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*.

Questions for Medium-length answers : (12 Marks)

1. Write a brief essay on the element of wit in As You Like It.
2. Comment on the use of disguise in As You Like It.
3. Critically evaluate the function of music in the play As You Like It.
4. Discuss the effectiveness of the climax of the play.
5. Comment briefly on the minor characters in the play.

Questions for Short Answers : (6 Marks)

1. "The more pity that fools may not speak wisely what wise men do foolishly." Explain.
2. Write a short note on the debate between Court and Country life in the play.
3. Explain with reference to the context the following line: "I had rather have a fool to make me merry than experience to make me sad ..."
4. Mention (quote) any two references to love in the play and explain their significance.
5. Give the summary of the "Seven Ages of Man" speech in Act II, Scene 7.

4.3.10 Suggested Reading

H.B Charlton, *Shakespearean Comedy*, Gaskell-House Publishers, New York: 1972 (1938).

S.C Sengupta, *Shakespearean Comedy*, Oxford University Press, Delhi: 1950.

Bertrand Evans, *Shakespeare's Comedies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford: 1967.

C.L Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton N.J: 1972.

Harold Bloom, ed., *William Shakespeare's As You Like It: Modern Critical Interpretations*, Chelsea House Publications, New York: 2003.

Timeline Chart - II

Date	Major historical events Date	Date	Major literary figures and their works
1455	First battle in the War of the Roses between the houses of Lancaster and York fought	**1455**	The Gutenberg Bible is printed in Mainz
1461	Edward IV proclaimed King after the deposition of Henry VI		
1470	Restoration of King Henry VI		
1471	Murder of King Henry VI, Edward IV becomes king again		
		1473	William Caxton, *History of Troy:* first book to be printed in England.
		1477	Lord Rivers, *The Dictes and Sayengis of the Philosophers:* Printed in Caxton's press
1483	Death of Edward IV; accession and suspected murder of young Edward V; Richard III ascends the throne		
1485	Richard III killed in the battle of Bosworth; Henry VII becomes king.	**1485**	Malory, Morte Darthur
1492-1504	Voyages of Christopher Columbus to America		
1503	James IV of Scotland marries Margaret Tudor		
1509	Death of Henry VII; Henry VIII becomes king		

1513	Battle of Flodden between England and Scotland		
		1516	Thomas More, *Utopia*
1517	Martin Luther nails his '95 Theses' on the church door at Wittenberg		
1521	Henry VIII accorded the title 'Defender Of the Faith' by Pope.		
		1526	Publication of Tyndale's English translation of the New Testament
1529	Rise of Thomas Cromwell, chief minister under Henry VIII; Thomas More becomes Lord Chancellor		
		1531	Elyot, *Boke named the Governour*
1533	Thomas Cranmer appointed Archbishop of Canterbury; Henry VIII divorces Catherine of Aragon and marries Anne Boleyn		
1534	Abolition of Pope's authority in England; King Henry VIII declares himself to be the 'Head of Church'.		

1535	Thomas More executed for not taking the Oath of Supremacy	**1535**	Coverdale's Bible printed
1536	Anne Boleyn executed; Henry VIII marries Jane Seymour (mother of James VI); Beginning of dissolution of monasteries in England under Thomas Cromwell		
1540	Fall and execution of Thomas Cromwell		
1544	Henry VIII and Charles V invade France		
1545	Opening of Council of Trent		
1546	Death of Martin Luther		
1547	Death of Henry VIII and accession of Edward VI to the throne.		
1549	Act of Uniformity passed; introduction of uniform Protestant service in England	**1549**	Archbishop Cranmer, *The Book of Common Prayer.* It is established as the sole legal form of worship in England
		1551	Nicholas Udall, *Ralph Roister Doister.* It is the first extant comedy in English language
1553	Death of Edward VI; Mary Tudor becomes the Queen of England; Restoration of Roman Catholic bishops in England		
1555	England returns to Roman Catholicism. Cranmer burned at the stake along with other Protestants		

		1557	Tottel, *Miscellany or Songes and Sonettes*
1558	Death of Mary; accession of Queen Elizabeth I. Repeal of Catholic law in England		
1560	Treaty of Edinburgh among England, France and Scotland	**1560**	Geneva Bidle
		1562	Sackville-Norton, *Gorboduc.* It is the first English play in Senecan form
		1563	Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*
1564	Birth of William Shakespeare		
1567	Mary, Queen of Scots imprisoned and forced to abdicate; James VI becomes King of Scotland		
1570	Excommunication of Elizabeth	**1570**	Ascham, *The Scholemaster*
1571	Battle of Lepanto between allied Christian forces and the Ottoman Turks		
1577	Sir Francis Drake starts his circumnavigation of the world	**1577**	Sidney, *Arcadia;* Holinshed, *Chronicles*
		1579	Lyly, *Euphues;* Spenser, *Shepheard's Calender*
		1581	Sidney starts writing *Astrophil and Stella*
		1584	Peele, *The Araygnement of Paris*
1586	Death of Philip Sidney at Zutphen		

1587	Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots; England at war with Spain; opening of Rose theatre	**1587**	Greene, *Alphonsus, King of Aragon;* Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great*
1588	Defeat of the Spanish Armada		
		1590	Spenser, *Faerie Queene;* Lodge, *Rosalynde*
		1591-92	Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy;* Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus;* Daniel, *Delia;* Shakespeare, *Henry VI (Part 1,2,3)*
		1593	Marlowe, *Hero and Leander*; Drayton, *Idea;* Shakespeare, *Richard III, Comedy of Errors, Venus and Adonis*
		1594	Shakespeare, *Sonnets, Romeo and Juliet, Taming of the Shrew, Love's Labour's Lost, Titus Andronicus;* Nashe, *The Unfortunate Traveller*
		1595	Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream; Daniel, Civil Wars;* Spenser's *Amoretti;* Sidney, *Apologie for Poetrie*
		1596	Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*
		1597	Bacon, *Essays:* First edition published
		1598	Ben Jonson, *Everyman in his Humour*
1599	Globe theatre opened	**1599**	Shakespeare, *Henry V, Julius Caesar;* Daniel, Poetical Essays; Dekker, *The Shoemaker's Holiday*

1600	Elizabeth I grants charter to East India Company		
1601	Essex rebellion against Queen Elizabeth I	**1601**	Shakespeare, *Hamlet, Twelfth Night;* Donne, *Of the Progres of the Soule;* Campion, *A Book of Ayres;* Jonson, *The Poetaster*
1603	Death of Elizabeth; accession of James VI as James I; union of the crowns of England and Scotland	**1603**	Jonson, *Sejanus;* Heywood, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*
		1604	Shakespeare, *Othello, Measure for Measure*
1605	Gunpowder Plot	**1605**	Shakespeare, *Macbeth* and *King Lear;* Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*
1607	Colony of Virginia established at Jamestown (first permanent settlement in North America) by the Virginia company		
		1608-9	Jonson, *The Masque of Beauty* and *The Masque of Queens*
		1611	James I's Authorized Version of the Bible published; Shakespeare, *The Tempest*
1613	Fire at Globe theatre	**1612-13**	Webster, *The White Devil and The Duchess of Malfi*
1616	Death of William Shakespeare		
1618	Execution of Walter Ralegh; beginning of Thirty Years' War in Europe		

1620	Pilgrim fathers (Puritans) set sail for America on the 'Mayflower'		
1621	John Donne appointed Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London (Church of England)	**1621**	Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*
		1622	Middleton, *The Changeling*
		1623	First Folio of Shakespeare's works published
1625	Death of James I; accession of Charles I	**1625**	Samuel Purchas, *Purchas his Pilgrimes*
		1628	Cowley, *Pyramus and Thisbe*
1629	Charles I dissolves Parliament and begins independent rule		
1633	William Laud appointed Archbishop of Canterbury	**1633**	Donne, *Poems;* Herbert, *The Temple;* Massinger, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts;* Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore;* Fletcher, *The Purple Island;*
		1634	Milton, *Comus (performed)*
		1637	Milton, *Lycidas*
		1639	Fuller, *The History of the Holy War*
1640	Long Parliament summoned		
1642	Start of Civil war between Parliamentarians (Roundheads) and Royalists (Cavaliers); Theatres closed by order of Parliament		

1644	Victory of Parliamentary army	**1644**	Milton, *Areopagitica*
		1642	Browne, *Religio Medici*
1646	Charles surrenders to Scots	**1646**	Crashaw, *Steps to the Temple*
1647	Members of the New Model Army take part in the Putney debates to form a new constitution for England	**1647**	Cowley, *The Mistress*
1648	Treaty of Westphalia ends Thirty Years' War	**1648**	Herrick, *Hesperides*
1649	Trial and execution of Charles I	**1649**	Lovelace, *Lucasta*
1650	Charles II flees to Scotland and is proclaimed King	**1650**	Marvell, *An Horation Ode;* Vaughan, *Silex Scintillans*
		1651	Hobbes, *Leviathan*
1653	After his campaigns in England and Scotland, Oliver Cromwell becomes 'Lord Protector'		
		1656	Cowley, *Pindarique Odes*
1658	Death of Cromwell	**1658-6767**	Milton, *Paradise Lost*
1660	Restoration of Charles II to the throne; opening of theatres		
		1671	Milton, *Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes*