

ELIZABETHAN AGE: (1550 -1603)

Unit Structure:

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Renaissance
- 1.3 Humanism
- 1.4 Reformation
- 1.5 Elizabethan Poetry
- 1.6 Elizabethan Drama
- 1.7 University Wits
- 1.8 Conclusion
- 1.9 Suggested Questions
- 1.10 References

1.0 OBJECTIVES:

After going through this unit you will be able to :

- 1. Understand the features of Elizabethan age.
- 2. Describe the Shakespeare's England.
- 3. Explain the history of Renaissance.

1.1 INTRODUCTION:

The Elizabethan age roughly started from 1558 and it lasted until 1603. It was known as a golden era in English literature. Elizabeth I crowned the throne of England in 1508 and since her accession the age was moving very rapidly. "The Elizabethan age is considered a part of the general Renaissance –that is, the flowering of arts and literature –that took place in Europe during the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries." (Richardson 57) England emerged as leading naval and commercial power of the western world.

The age produced great literary jewels like William Shakespeare, Francis Bacon, Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser. In Elizabethan Age Drama and Poetry had enjoyed its heyday. With the wake of Elizabethan age Renaissance started in Europe. The Elizabethan Age is an age known for new learning, of adventure, of unbounded enthusiasm springing from the new lands of fabulous riches revealed by English explorers. Elizabethan age is dominated by nationalism, colonial expansion and commercial

growth as well as religious controversy. Bacon tells us that he has taken all knowledge for his province while the Elizabethan explorers searched the New World; her poets produced a great literary works that are young forever. This age was a time of intellectual liberty, of growing intelligence and comfort among all classes. Such an England could well be compared to the Age of Pericles in Athens, or of Augustus in Rome. In the age of Elizabeth literature the drama was clamored and reached its highest peak.

In the Age of Elizabeth all ambiguity seems to disappear from the surface of English shore. With the accession of a popular monarch Elizabeth Who had educated and always concerned for her subjects and public life. It was look like the sunrise after a long and dark night, and, in Milton's words, we suddenly see England, "a noble and puissant nation, rousing herself, like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks".

In England under the administration of Queen Elizabeth I the English national life made headway by enormous strides. The most characteristic feature of the age was the comparative religious tolerance, which was due largely to the queen's influence. The defeat of the Spanish Armada established the Reformation as a fact in England. It was an age of comparative social contentment. Such an age, of thought, feeling, and vigorous action finds its best expression in the drama; and the wonderful development of the drama, culminating in Shakespeare, is the most significant characteristic of the Elizabethan period. The Elizabethan age is majorly known for reformation, humanism and renaissance in history of England.

1.2 RENAISSANCE:

In the long reign of Henry VIII the changes are less violent, but have more purpose and significance. His age is marked by a steady increase in the national power at home and abroad, by the entrance of the Reformation "by a side door" and by the final separation of England from the ecclesiastical bondage in Parliament's famous Act of Supremacy. It was an age when the human spirit was reborn or awakened after the long slumber of the Middle Ages. By Renaissance or Revival of Learning we refer to the gradual enlightenment of the human mind after the darkness of the middle Ages. The names Renaissance and Humanism are often applied to the same movement. It means the revival of art resulting from the discovery and imitation of classic models in the 14th and 15th centuries. This rebirth or awakening was brought about by a revival of interest in the culture and civilization of ancient Greece and Rome. As we have already noted the study of classical Greek and Roman art and literature came to be called Humanism and its devotees Humanists. Humanism means the religion of humanity or devotion to human or secular interests as opposed to divinity. Birch rightly says that, The term 'Renaissance' has been applied in the 20th century to earlier periods which manifested a new intense in and study of the classics, such as the 12th century and the age Charlemagne. But the Italian Renaissance is still seen as a watershed in the development of civilization, both because of its extent and because of its emphasis on the human. Whether independent of or in association with

the divine. The pioneering account is Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (184)

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1.3 HUMANISM:

“It is a philosophy that places faith in the dignity of humankind and refuses the medieval perception of the individual as a weak fallen creature”.(Richardson, 84). Humanism adheres to thought or action devoted to human interests and human values rather than to the religious ideals. Historically “the term ‘Humanism’ is used to designate rebirth of literature and thoughts that began in Italy during the fourteenth century and that lay at the heart of the Renaissance”.(Morner and Rausch 100)

Humanists believe in the perfectibility of human nature and view reason education as the means to that end. Humanist thought is reflected in the works of Marsilio Ficino, Ludovico Castiglione, Edmund Spenser, John Milton, Dean John Colet, Erasmus, John Dryden, Alexander Pope, Matthew Arnold and Irving Babbalanja.

1.4 REFORMATION:

“Referring primarily to the religious history of Europe in the early 16th century, though it can include both John Wycliffe and the 15th century “Lollards” and the later period to 1700. In its primary sense, the initiating event was challenge to the selling of indulgences issued by Martin Luther in 1517. This attack on corrupt practices quickly developed into a repudiation of the primacy of the pope and the ecclesiastical authority of Rome, and led by Jean Calvin in Geneva, Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) in Zurich, and John Knox in Scotland to the development of a distinctively Protestant conception of the Christian life, and the establishment of a separate national, regional and local congregational churches in northern and Western Europe.”(Birch 832). In the reign of Henry VIII England separated from Rome in the 1530s for political, rather than religious, reasons nevertheless, through the liturgy of Thomas Cranmer, the sermons of Hugh Latimer and biblical translations of William Tyndale, the national church of England became increasingly Protestant, adopting under Elizabeth I a *via media* (middle way) between Rome and continental Reformed churches.

1.5 ELIZABETHAN POETRY:

Elizabethan poetry was enjoyed its heyday like Elizabethan Drama in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. Elizabethan poetry was immensely marked by some great poets Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser and William Shakespeare. Elizabethan poets were influenced by Greek poets. The Elizabethan poetry was known by Shakespeare's sonnets, Edmund Spenser's *Shepherd's calendar*.

Sonnet:

It is a fixed form of lyric poetry that consists of fourteen lines, usually written in iambic pentameter. There are two basic types of sonnets, the Italian and the English. "The Italian sonnet is also known as the Petrarchan sonnet, is divided into an octave which typically rhyme abbaabba and a sestet, which may have varying rhyme schemes. Common rhyme patterns in the sestet are cdecde, cdcdcd and cdccde. Very often the octave patterns a situation, attitude, or problems that the sestet comments upon or resolves as in John Keats's 'On first Looking into Chapman's Homer'. The English sonnet also known as the Shakespearean sonnet is organized into three quatrains and a couplet which typically rhyme ababcdcdedefgg. This rhyme scheme is more suited to English poetry because English has fewer rhyming words than Italian because of their four-part organization. Also have more flexibility with respect to where thematic breaks can occur." (Richardson 160). Sonnet form flourished in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. There were some great English poets who cultivated sonnet. William Shakespeare was known for his finest sonnets. His contemporaries Edmund Spenser, Philip Sidney even nourished the beauty of sonnet. William Shakespeare's "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" is an epitome of English sonnet.

Epic:

It is originally a lengthy poem recounting in elevated style the exploits of a legendary hero or heroes, especially in battles or voyages. This is also known as heroic poem. Epic is generally divided into 12 books. In modern times the term sometimes extended to certain prose works, especially to a large scale historical novels. In the poetic sense, the major examples in English are John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, unusual in its biblical subject and the old English *Beowulf*. Others include John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, John Keats 'Hyperion' is an unfinished attempt at an epic poem. English poets wrote great episodes of epic poems though classical epic conventions were very richer. Homer and Virgil introduced epic form to the world. Elizabethan Poets like Edmund Spenser followed the style of Homer and Virgil and made a classical epic 'Faerie Queen'.

Pastoral:

A term derived from Latin word 'pastor' meaning shepherd. "A pastoral is literary composition on a rural theme. The conventions of the pastoral were originated by the third-century Greek poet Theocritus, who wrote about the experiences, love affairs and pastimes of Sicilian shepherds. In a pastoral, characters and language of a country nature are often placed in a simple setting. The term pastoral is also used to classify dramas, elegies and lyrics that exhibit the use of country settings and shepherd characters." (Richardson 126) The pastoral poetry was not merely composed in the reign of Elizabeth I but Romantic age was also dominated by pastoral poetry. In the 16th and 17th century, Edmund Spenser wrote *Shepherd's Calendar* (1579) a well-known pastoral poem. Spenser laments over the death of his poet friend Philip Sidney and another great

poet of Elizabethan age was Philip Sidney whose prose romance interspersed with pastoral verses, the *Arcadia* published in 1590. There were several Elizabethan poets composed pastoral poems, among them Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Lodge and Michael Drayton and some attempted prose romances in this vein, notably Thomas Lodge's *Rosalyn* (1590). In drama, the most significant pastoral plays are Shakespeare's *As You Like It* and *The Winter's Tale* along John Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess*. Romantic poet Percy B. Shelley's 'Adonais' is featuring pastoral. John Milton's 'Lycidas' is celebrated pastoral. (Birch 759)

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1.6 ELIZABETHAN DRAMA:

The Elizabethan Drama was applauded and reached its highest peak in 16th century. The Elizabethan Drama was swiftly moving not in the reign of Elizabeth I but also progressed in the Jacobean reign. English comedy and tragedy produced during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I and even in the Jacobean age. Shakespeare is known as well acclaimed Elizabethan dramatist although most of his plays were produced during the reign of James I. Some great Elizabethan comedies include John Lyly's *The Woman in the Moon*, Thomas Dekker's *The Roaring Girland* and William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Some great Elizabethan tragedies include Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* and John Webster's *The Tragedy of the Duchess of Malfi*.

Regular Drama the Miracle Plays ceased to be acted about 1600 but by that time the Regular Drama was established. Moralities were acted in the reign of Henry VI and like the Miracle plays; they continued to flourish until the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. The Moralities, like the Miracles were adapted to the audience. Vice and Devil were serious and comic characters respectively. The Interlude of the four P's (1540), that is, the Palmer, the Pardoner, the Poticary and the Peddler is the best known of the Interludes. Real Founders of Drama With the advent of the Renaissance and the triumph of Protestantism the Miracles declined. The Moralities, however, survived. Moralities became either secular or religious. Skelton's *Magnificence* (1516) was aimed at the extravagance of Henry VIII. The Reformers used Morality to propagate their own views. Lindsay's *Satire of The Three Estates* satirizes the Clergy, the nobility and the Citizens. Towards the close of this transitional period appear a group of highly gifted writers who raised and recognized drama as a form of art.

1.7 UNIVERSITY WITS:

The term 'University Wits' refers to group genius playwrights who were graduated from Oxford University. The University Wits members are per-Shakespearean dramatists. They were men of learning and made English drama very promising. University Wits include playwrights like Thomas Kyd; George Peele; John Lyly; Robert Greene; Thomas Nash; Thomas Lodge and Christopher Marlowe. University Wits were paved the way for Elizabethan dramatists and brought English drama to the point where William Shakespeare began to exercise upon it. The Elizabethan was in the hands of University Wits. They knew the stage and audience and in

their writing they remembered not only the actor's part but the audiences' love for stories and brave spectacles. Shakespearean and Jacobean dramatists were influenced by the University Wits playwrights. University Wits were romantic in their attitude and represented the spring of renaissance. Christopher Marlowe followed the spirit of renaissance while John Webster followed with enthusiasm. Thomas Kyd revealed the bloodshed in his famous 'The Spanish Tragedy'.

1.8 CONCLUSION:

The Elizabethan age witnessed the development of Renaissance, humanism and reformation. The reign of Queen Elizabeth I was a flowering period for English drama and poetry. Dramatists of the Elizabethan age have tried to expose human errors and pettiness through their plays. Marlowe, Shakespeare truly depicted the spirit of renaissance.

1.9 SUGGESTED QUESTIONS:

1. What does the term Renaissance apply to?
2. What influenced Elizabethan theatre?
3. State an important facet of the Renaissance.
4. What is epic?
5. Describe Sonnet as important literary form?
6. Define University Wits?

1.10 REFERENCES:

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THE JACOBAN PERIOD PART I

Unit Structure:

2.0 Objective

2.1 Jacobean Age- Introduction

2.2 Literature of Jacobean Age

2.2.1 Prose writers

2.2.2 Poets

2.3 Metaphysical Poets

2.4 The poets post 1625

2.5 Conclusion

2.6 Questions

2.0 OBJECTIVE:

To give an overall idea to the students regarding the Jacobean era and the literature written during that period. The students are introduced to the major characteristics of the age and also to the major writers of the time.

2.1 JACOBAN AGE- INTRODUCTION:

The period of reign of James I (called 'Jacobus' in Latin) of England is known as the Jacobean period which ranged from 1603-1625. James VI of Scotland, who was a distant relative of Queen Elizabeth, had succeeded her after her death in 1603. After being crowned as the King of England, he started to be known as James I of England. The Jacobean age succeeds the Elizabethan era.

Historically, Jacobean era is important as it caused the unification of Scotland and England under a single ruler. The first British colonies in North America were also established during the reign of King James. Other important historical events of this age include the Gunpowder plot. The religious reforms were still in progress in England when James I became the king. On 5 November 1605 a group of Catholics attempted to kill the king by blowing up the parliament. It was a failed attempt at the lives of James I, his family and all Protestant aristocracy. The aim of the conspirators was to reinstate a Catholic monarch but instead this plot led to greater religious persecution of Catholics in England. The disastrous thirty years war in which many countries of the continent were involved also happened in this period. King James' decision of refraining from the war prevented England from plunging into devastation and bankruptcy

like many other countries who involved. This helped in maintaining peace in England even when most parts of the continent were war torn. It was also during this age that the tobacco industry emerged it started being consumed in large amounts.

In the area of Science also England was flourishing. Major works in navigation, surveying and cartography was being done. Tremendous advancement of modern science occurred under the influence of Francis Bacon. Francis Bacon's scientific method of objective enquiry influenced the later stages of scientific revolution. One of the major contributions of King James in the field of religion and literature can be said to be the translation of Bible that he had commissioned. In 1611, the King James Bible/ the Authorized Version was published and it gave the common people of England direct access to Bible. Till then Bible was available in Latin and common man had to rely on the priests to have access to Bible. The translation of Bible to English democratised it.

2.2 LITERATURE OF JACOBAN AGE:

Some of the greatest works of literature were produced during this age. The period saw both comedies and tragedies being written equally. Most famous tragedies of Shakespeare - *Macbeth*, *King Lear* and *Othello*- were written during this period. Another famous dramatist who wrote tragedies having a dark mood was John Webster. Thomas Middleton was credited with writing both comedies and tragedies during this time which also included masques. It can be said that tragedy and satire was at its peak during Jacobean era. John Ford was a poet and dramatist of this age whose plays mainly dealt with the conflict between passion and conscience. Ben Jonson, Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher contributed to the comedies of that era. Ben Johnson introduced a sub-genre of drama known as masque. A new school of poets who emerged during this period were Metaphysical poets. These poets were known for their ability to merge intellect with emotion in their poems. They were famous for their use of metaphysical conceits. John Donne, Andrew Marvell, Henry Vaughan, John Cleveland and Abraham Cowley were some of the Metaphysical poets. A new style was developed in the prose writings of Robert Burton and Francis Bacon. George Chapman translated Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* into English during this period. The period's most important prose achievement was still King James Version of the Bible in 1611. It had a huge impact on the following generation.

2.2.1 Prose writers- Francis Bacon was a British author, philosopher, essayist, statesman and champion of modern science who filled in the intellectual vacuum of the seventeenth century in England. Throughout his life he revalued and restructured the traditional learning. He proposed a system based on empirical and inductive principles. He had dedicated his life for intellectual reform. He also is popular for his essays. He is known as the father of English Essays. His essays were characterised by being short and concise. His style of writing was known as aphoristic. His essays had clarity and rhythm and coherence. The themes of his essays were related to science, government, state, worldly wisdom and ethical

qualities. His narrative fiction *New Atlantis* shows the design of an institution where interpretation of nature is done. It describes Solomon's house where investigators collect data, conduct experiments and apply knowledge to produce useful things for human beings. This work can be said to be an inspiration for the founding of British Royal Society and acted as a model for international scientific community. His philosophical work *The Advancement of Learning* mentions about the intellectual impasse of Europe and he advocates that the obstacles or diseases of learning must be avoided for progress.

Another important work published during this age was *The Anatomy of Melancholy* by Robert Burton. He was an English scholar, writer and clergyman. *Philosophaster* was his first work which was written in Latin. Later it was translated to English. He is best known for *The Anatomy of Melancholy* which first appeared in 1621. It was a huge success and had five subsequent editions with Burton's revisions. The work was greatly admired by Samuel Johnson and Charles Lamb. Melancholy was a literary and social fashion of the times and Robert Burton analysed it. He analysed the causes and cure of melancholy. The book was divided into a number of parts. The first part of the book describes melancholy, its causes and symptoms. The second part deals with its cure. The initial sections of third part deals with love melancholy and the next sections contain world's greatest love stories and contain a modern approach to psychological problems. The fourth part is about religious melancholy. Burton used to write in long sentences and his style can be called colloquial. His work is also full of classical allusions.

Although the reputation of Ben Jonson rests on him being a dramatist and also a poet to some extent, he was also a critic who wrote "Discoveries". He wanted to raise the excellence of English to that of Greek and Latin. He discusses the methods to do so and why English literature falls short. He also discusses the qualifications and requirements needed to be a poet. In his prose work he also elaborates on the requirements for good style in writing.

2.2.2 Poets-Michael Drayton was a poet who wrote during the reign of Queen Elizabeth and James I. He wrote "The Harmony of Church", "Shepherd's Garland" and "Beta" during the Elizabethan age. He wrote a panegyric of King I in 1603 and in 1604 he wrote "The Owle".

In 1606 he published odes known as "The Virginian Voyage". The first thirteen books of his "Polyolbion" celebrating the rivers of England and the great events in the valleys were published in 1612.

Giles Fletcher the Younger was a Jacobean poet whose *Christ's Victorie, and Triumph in Heaven, and Earth, over and after death* (1610) was considered as his masterpiece. The poem was written in eight lined stanzas modelled after Edmund Spenser's writing. The poem consists of four cantos. Milton borrowed a lot from this work for his *Paradise Regained*. Fletcher tells the story of the life of Christ through this poetic work of his. He has made use of much imagery in this poem. He had also published a

prose tract titled *The Reward of the faithfull: the ground of our faith* in 1623.

Sir John Davies was a poet who wrote during both Elizabethan and Jacobean age. His early poems consisted of epigrams and were published in many collections. In 1596 he wrote the poem "Orchestra" based on cosmology. In 1602 he contributed two dialogues to *Poetical Rhapsody* of Francis Davison. A collected edition of his poems was published in 1622 by him. He was also a lawyer and in 1606 he was made the attorney general for Ireland.

Samuel Daniel was a historian and a poet who wrote during late Elizabethan and early Jacobean age. His works published during Jacobean age were "Ulisses and the Syren" (1605) and *A Funerall Poeme upon the Earle of Devonshire* (1606). In *The Tragedie of Philotas* (1605) he defended himself against the charge of sympathizing with the Earl of Essex. He had also written *The Collection of the Historie of England* (1612-18).

Ben Jonson was a multifaceted personality who was an essayist, poet and dramatist. Although much of his popularity comes from the plays that he had written, he was also a famous poet of his time. One of his most famous poems is "Song to Celia" which begins with the lines "Drink to me only with thine eyes". Some other famous poems by him were "Cynthia's Revels: Queen and huntress, chaste and fair", "Ode to Himself", "To Heaven", "To John Donne", and "To the Memory of my beloved the Author, Mr. William Shakespeare".

2.3 METAPHYSICAL POETS:

The term metaphysical for poetry was first used by Dr. Johnson. He had borrowed the term from Dryden who in his Essay on Satire said about Donne "He affects the metaphysics" in his love poems, perplexing "the fair sex" with "nice speculations of philosophy". Originally this term was used by Dr. Johnson as a way of condemning the poets who came under this category. He goes on to say that the whole endeavour of these men of learning was to display their learning and in doing so they neither imitated anything, copied nature or life, neither painted the forms of matter, nor represented the operations of intellect. According to Johnson the most heterogeneous ideas were yoked together by violence. He believed that although their thoughts were new, they weren't natural. Metaphysical style of writing was founded by John Donne and formed as an example for a number of poets to follow. The poets who come under this category are Sir John Suckling, Richard Crashaw, John Cleveland, George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, Abraham Cowley and Andrew Marvell. All poets under this school had graduated from Oxford or Cambridge University and were men of high intellect.

One of the characteristics of metaphysical poets was their use of conceits (far-fetched comparison/ extended metaphor). Comparisons are made between completely dissimilar things. Unexpected similes and metaphors

were used to display their wit. Comparisons are made from the field of science, nature, law, medicine and religion. A metaphysical conceit joined two different fields/worlds. Some examples of conceit would be Donne comparing a flea to a temple and marriage bed in “The Flea” and two lovers being compared to the legs of a compass in “A Valediction Forbidding Mourning”. In the poem “The Mistress” by Abraham Cowley, the speaker compares his love for ladies to his habit of travelling in various countries of the world. Apart from metaphor, puns, paradox and meter were also made use of.

Metaphysical poets often made use of hyperboles. In the poem “A Valediction Forbidding Mourning”, the speaker asks his beloved to not create a flood by her tears and not to create a tempest of sighs. In the poem “To his Coy Mistress” by Andrew Marvell, the speaker tries to seduce the lady by saying that if he had enough time, he would spend thousands of years praising each part of her body. The speaker in the poem “A Valediction: of Weeping” by John Donne calls his beloved “more than moon”. He makes this comparison to show that his beloved is fairer than the moon.

Metaphysical poets sought delight in novel thoughts and expressions. Wit was the salient feature of metaphysical poets. They expressed their thoughts and ideas using apt words and figures of speech. John Donne was called the “Monarch of wit”. An element of playfulness characterised by the use of puns and conceits could be observed in some poems. The poets tried to make a logical connection between the abstract and the concrete. They tried to blend together intellect and emotion.

The term ‘metaphysical’ as first used by Dr. Johnson in the context sprang from an unease, determined by ‘classical’ canons of taste, with the supposed contortions of the style and imagery of Donne and Cowley. It was T.S Eliot who found in the work of Donne a blend of emotional and intellectual quality which he considered was an example and an inspiration in the revivification of the poetic tradition.

The poems of Donne put the readers in contact with a sensitively feeling heart, but with vigorously active mind. In some poems of Donne and most other metaphysical poets, it can be seen that there is an argument and then it moves in a logical manner. The tone of the argument clarifies and intensifies the emotion. The finest works of Donne are his short poems. *Elegies* is a series of poems which he has written on diverse aspects of love. In the *Holy Sonnets* the lover can be seen having a dialogue with his beloved and here the beloved is God. He invites God to batter his heart, break and burn him so that he can be free from the Devil:

Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

Donne has made reflective studies of human soul’s pilgrimage and destiny in *Anniversaries*.

Abraham Cowley was a poet and essayist of the metaphysical and neoclassical age. His *Miscellanies* and *The Mistress* reflected the theme and motifs of metaphysical poets. He used grossly elaborate, self-consciously poetic language that decorated rather than expressed his feelings. His works exaggerated Donne's metaphysical wit. He applied wit to matter and combined philosophy with charity and religion.

George Herbert was a priest whose most famous collection of religious poems is known as *The Temple*. There is lot of technical variety in rhythmic suppleness and in stanza form. A large number of his poems expressed his spiritual experience and conflicts. He often indulges in conversations/ controversy with God in his poems. In his poem "Love" he has a conversation with Love. Love in this poem represented God. He feels unworthy of being Love's guest but Love reminds him that he is his creator therefore the speaker is welcome on the table and he must sit down and eat:

'You must sit down,' says Love, 'and taste My meat.'

So I did sit and eat.

The poems of Richard Crashaw were full of his rare imaginative sensitivity. He had written a volume of poems titled *Steps to the Temple*. His poems were quite eloquent. In the poem "The Weeper" by Crashaw he makes use of hyperbole when he describes the eyes full of tears of the woman following Christ as two faithful fountains and oceans:

Two walking baths; two weeping motions;

Portable & compendious oceans.

In the poems of Henry Vaughan influence of George Herbert can be seen. In his earlier works there was much spiritual criticism. In his poem "The World", the best lines represented a mystic's glimpse of the divine joy to oneself and life to the whole creation:

I saw Eternity the other night

Like a great Ring of pure and endless light

Poems of Andrew Marvell had an enigmatic quality. Marvell is placed under the category of being a metaphysical poet due to his use of fanciful conceits. In the poem "Upon Appleton House", a parallel is drawn between England and garden where the flowers are the soldiers firing 'fragrant Volleys'

Well shot ye Firemen! Oh how sweet,

And round your equal Fires do meet;

Whose shrill report no ear can tell,

But echoes to the Eye and smell.

In conclusion it can be said that the term 'Metaphysical poets' has been attached to a loosely connected group of poets of seventeenth century whose poems contained colloquial diction, philosophical exploration, use of ingenious conceits, paradoxes, irony and metrically flexible lines. They wrote on the themes of religion, morality and love/lust. All the poets were intellectuals and they tried to depict it through their poems by representing complex thoughts in their poem.

2.4 THE POETS POST 1625:

The poets post 1625 were called Cavalier poets due to their loyalty towards King Charles I. Richard Lovelace, Thomas Carew, Sir John Suckling, Edmund Waller and Robert Herrick fall under this category. Their poems were based on the themes of religion, beauty, love and war and were lyrical in nature. This age saw decline of drama and rise of Puritanism. The work of these poets displayed the life of upper class. These poets were an admirer of Ben Johnson. Their writings were rich in references to ancients and there was a combination of pleasure and virtue in their writings. Their poems celebrated life including honour, beauty, love and nature. They often made it a point to glorify the crown through their writings. "Seize the day" was an oft repeated motif in their poems.

Richard Lovelace was a Cavalier poet whose best known poems are "To Lucasta, Going to the Warres" and "To Althea, from Prison". The oft quoted lines from "To Althea, from prison" are: "Stone walls do not a prison make, Nor iron bars a cage, Minds innocent and quiet take That for an hermitage." While he was a student of Oxford, he had written around two hundred poems and he fought on behalf of Charles I during the Civil war.

"A Rapture" was a famous poem by Thomas Carew. He wrote short poems which were about the themes of female beauty, love and sex. His reputation had a steady decline during the seventeenth century and was not adequately appreciated during that time. Later in the twentieth century, an interest in his writings was revived.

Sir John Suckling was an English poet who was famous for his careless gaiety and wit. His most famous poem is "Ballade upon a Wedding". A collection of his poems was published named *Fragmenta Aurea*. *Aglaurea* is a dramatic work written by him.

Hesperides was a collection of poems by Robert Herrick. Amongst the 2,500 poems that he had written, many appeared in this collection. His earlier poems contained references to female body but his later poems were of spiritual and philosophical in nature. He was a lyrical poet who presented his thoughts in clear and simple manner. The "carpe diem" theme can be seen in his poems "To Daffodils", "To Blossoms", "Corinna's Going A Maying" and "To the Virgins, to make much of Time". His poem "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time" opens with the famous lines:

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a flying;
And this same flower that smiles today,
Tomorrow will be dying.

2.5 CONCLUSION:

Historically, Jacobean age was significant since it brought about the unification of England and Scotland under a single ruler. The translation of Bible into English can be said to be the most important contribution of James I. Significant contributions were made by Francis Bacon, Ben Jonson, Robert Burton, Drayton, Davies, Metaphysical poets and others.

2.6 QUESTIONS:

1. What were the major historical changes during the Jacobean age?
2. Comment on the contribution of Francis Bacon during this age
3. Discuss the major poets of Jacobean age.
4. Who were the major Metaphysical poets and what were the characteristics of their writing?



JACOBAN PERIOD PART II

Jacobean Drama

Unit Structure:

3.0 Objective

3.1 Jacobean Drama- Introduction

3.2 Revenge Tragedy

3.3 Tragedies of Jacobean Age

3.4 Tragicomedy

3.5 Jacobean Comedies

3.6 Conclusion

3.7 Questions

3.0 OBJECTIVE:

To give students an overview of the plays written during Jacobean age with special focus on Revenge Tragedies, City Comedies and tragicomedy; and introduce them to major dramatists of the age.

3.1 JACOBAN DRAMA- INTRODUCTION:

The age of drama was considered to be at its peak during the Elizabethan era. There was a general change in the plays written during the Jacobean age from that were being written during the Elizabethan age.

During the Jacobean period audience were interested in a more realistic representation of society rather than imaginative stories. Therefore the plays dealt with city life, politics, decadent spirit or corrupt society. The Jacobean drama saw a shift from the comic drama of the Elizabethan stage to satire led by Ben Jonson. The language used was conversational in tone. The oft used themes were adultery, lust, death, corruption, sickness, exploitation, cruelty, hypocrisy, eccentricities and family crisis. The themes were in general dark and cynical compared to Elizabethan romantic themes. There was frankness while dealing with sexuality and sexual relationships on stage. A fascination with the wicked and corrupt could be seen. The plays were mostly melodramatic as sensationalism and excessive emotional moments were in display. There were still some dramatists who had nostalgia for old world's decencies and decorous behaviour and an influence of Shakespeare and Marlowe could be seen in their writings.

On stage we could see extreme violence and exaggerated human situations. In *King Lear*, Lear's daughter plucks out Gloucester's eyes and says 'Out, vile jelly'. Iago from *Othello* is considered to be one of the most notorious villains. In the plays *The White Devil* and *Duchess of Malfi*, highly intelligent characters commit crimes and violence in pursuit of their ambition. In *The Changeling* a murderer can be seen cutting off the finger of his victim because the ring that he wants does not come off. The age saw an obsession with moral corruption and violent stories of revenge. In general a cynical and pessimistic outlook on life could be seen. Another type of drama that dominated the age was masques.

The four major types of dramas that were presented on Jacobean stage were Revenge Tragedy, City Comedy, Tragi-Comedies and Masques. Revenge tragedies followed the Senecan tradition and it used to be bloody and violent. It usually consisted of revenge plots. Tragedy is brought about in the pursuit of revenge. This form was quite popular during Elizabethan and Jacobean age. Revenge was considered as a sacred duty. Physical horror was represented and at times even ghosts were represented. There would be an abundance of violence and terror and in the end the stage would be littered with dead bodies. Middleton's *The Revenger's Tragedy*, John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The White Devil*, John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* fall under this category.

The city comedies dealt with the lives of lower class London life. The themes of adultery, unhappy marriages, debts and cuckoldry could be seen in this type of comedy. Beaumont and Ben Jonson were two major writers who dealt with city comedies. Beaumont's *The Night of the Burning Pestle*, Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* and Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* and *A Mad World* are some examples of city comedies.

Tragi-comedy combined the features of both tragedy and comedy. It is complete tragedy upto a certain point and then it is complete comedy thereafter. The rising action is usually a tragedy and the falling action is a comedy. It was a contribution of Elizabethan romantic times. Most romances of Shakespeare fall under this category. Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, *Winter's Tale* and *Cymbeline* are examples of his romances. The characters in tragi-comedy undergo forced or natural transformation. The general atmosphere of such plays is fantasy and the elements of pastoral and supernatural are added. This form rose under Italian and Spanish influence in England during the reign of James I. It was the dramatic counterpart of prose romance already popular in Europe at that time. Beaumont and Fletcher's *A King and No King* established this form on English stage. Milton and Addison had strongly condemned this form due to it not following the Unity of Action. This form declined after 1642. *The Faithful Shepherdess* by Fletcher, *Phylaster* and *Love lies a bleeding* by Beaumont and Fletcher are some other examples of tragi-comedy.

Masques attained high degree of perfection during the reign of James I. Masques was of Italian origin and was introduced in England in the early

sixteenth century. It was a medley of music, elaborate scenic effects and dancing, woven around a fairy tale, myth or allegory. Saintsbury defined a Masque as “a dramatic entertainment in which plot, character and even to great extent dialogue are subordinated on one hand to spectacular illustration and on the other to musical accompaniment. The main features of early Masque were masks, elaborate costumes and dancing. Later on beautiful speeches and songs were also added to it. It was favourite form of Ben Johnson. The features of masques were as follows- characters were deities of classical mythology, nymphs and personified abstractions like Love, Delight and Harmony. The number of characters was restricted to six. The scenes were laid in ideal places like Olympus, Arcadia etc. Dances of various kinds were introduced at appropriate places. The scenery and costumes were elaborate. It was only as long as a single act of Shakespearian plays. Comic interludes were introduced and were known as anti- masques. Masque was generally performed as a part of celebration of wedding in a great family. It was a costly form of entertainment and fell on lean times after the death of James I in 1625. Apart from Ben Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Daniel and Chapman had written masque. Post 1625, one famous masque is *Comus* by Milton.

3.2 REVENGE TRAGEDY:

The origin of revenge tragedy can be traced back to Roman philosopher Seneca. His plays contained elements of revenge via supernatural. Influenced by the Senecan tragedies of Roman times, revenge tragedies became popular during Elizabethan and Jacobean period. Revenge tragedy is also known as ‘tragedy of blood’. This term was coined by A.H. Thorndike to represent certain plays produced during Elizabethan and Jacobean era. The revenge tragedies differed from Senecan tragedies as in Senecan tragedies the violent actions were usually reported by Chorus or a messenger but in revenge tragedy; the violent actions and bloodshed take place on stage. *Gorboduc* is considered to be the first revenge tragedy modelled on Senecan tragedy.

The revenge tragedy consisted of one or more of the following characteristics. There would be ghosts or supernatural elements. A murder happens and a character seeks revenge against the wrongdoing (real/imagined). A clear villain is always seen. There might be scenes of insanity in stage. Violence is shown in a sensational way on stage. Some revenge tragedies also included disguises. Conclusion of the plays is often bloody and full of corpses. Jacobean revenge tragedies also contained lots of soliloquies and asides. Play within a play was another aspect of Jacobean revenge tragedy.

The most famous revenge tragedy of Shakespeare is *Hamlet*. It consists of most features of revenge tragedy including ghost and a play within a play. In the play, the ghost of Hamlet’s father asks Hamlet to revenge his death. He tells Hamlet that he was murdered by Claudius (Hamlet’s uncle) who has now become the King of Denmark after Hamlet’s father’s death and has married Hamlet’s mother (Gertrude). Prince Hamlet is devoted to the purpose given by his father but he is deeply contemplative and thoughtful

by nature. He delays the revenge by entering deep melancholy and even apparent madness. Hamlet makes a group of travelling performers enact scenes having close resemblance to the murder of his father. Seeing the performance Claudius leaves the room which confirms his guilt. Once Hamlet goes to kill Claudius but does not do so since he feels that killing him while he is praying would send him to heaven. Claudius also starts having doubts on Hamlet and plans to send him to England. Hamlet goes to confront his mother but sensing someone behind the tapestry, he kills that person mistaking him to be Claudius. That person turns out to be Polonius with whose daughter (Ophelia) he was in love. Ophelia goes mad and Hamlet is sent to England. Ophelia drowns and dies. Ophelia's brother, Laertes is misled by Claudius into believing that Hamlet was responsible for both the deaths. Hamlet returns as his ship to England was attacked by pirates. An innocent duel between Laertes and Hamlet is planned where the blade of Laertes' sword is poisoned. Claudius also keeps a goblet of poison ready to give to Hamlet in case he wins the duel. In the end Laertes, Claudius and Hamlet die due to the poisoned sword and Gertrude dies by drinking from the goblet. The stage is full of corpses by the end of the play. Thus the play is full of bloodshed especially the final act. The play also contained certain famous soliloquies by Hamlet.

The Duchess of Malfi by John Webster is another famous revenge tragedy of Jacobean era. Two brothers, Ferdinand and Cardinal, ask their widowed sister, the Duchess to not remarry and they leave for Rome leaving Bosola to spy on her. She falls in love with her steward, Antonio and they get married in secret. She gives birth to his child and Bosola starts having suspicions. They have two more children and when Ferdinand returns from Rome, he asks her to kill herself by giving her a dagger. She reveals that she is married and Ferdinand leaves angrily that he would never see her again. Bosola tricks the duchess into telling him who the father of children is and takes the information to her brothers. Duchess asks Antonio to flee with her elder son to Milan. Duchess and her younger children are imprisoned and are later strangled. Ferdinand loses his mind after this incident and joins the Cardinal. Bosola plans to kill the two brothers but mistakenly kills Antonio. In the end Bosola, Ferdinand and Cardinal are killed by each other. Almost seven characters are killed on stage by the end of this play.

Thomas Middleton is a Jacobean playwright who has written both comedies and tragedies. His famous revenge tragedy is *The Revenger's Tragedy*. Vindici decides to avenge the murder of his beloved, Gloriana who was murdered by the Duke as she refused to sleep with him. His brother Hippolito counsels him against this. Vindici comes to know that Duke's son, Lussurioso is looking for a procurer who can procure a woman for him to satisfy his lust. Vindici decides to disguise as a procurer. Vindici disguised as the procurer comes to know that the woman Lussurioso is lusting after is his sister – Castiza. Now Vindici decides that instead of killing the Duke, he would kill Lussurioso. The night Lussurioso expects Castiza, Vindici and Hippolito tells him that Duchess is sleeping with another man to create a diversion. Lussurioso rushes to her bedchamber to find that Duchess was sleeping with her own husband,

the Duke. Duke assumes that Lussurioso had come there to murder him and he is arrested for treason. Duke's younger son, Junior, had a trial going on for raping a woman. That woman commits suicide and at a later point of time due to confusion in prison, Junior is executed on sight. The Duke asks for an effigy of Gloriana to the procurer. Vindici and Hippolito poison the effigy and the Duke falls to his knees when he kisses it. Vindici stabs him then. Lussurioso becomes the new Duke. Commotion takes place as rest of the Duke's family thinks that they have what it takes to be a Duke and meanwhile Hippolito and Vindici kill Lussurioso. By the end of the play, the Duke and his two sons are killed.

3.3 TRAGEDIES OF JACOBAN AGE:

A Woman killed with Kindness is a tragedy which considered to be a masterpiece of Thomas Heywood. The plot of the play has been borrowed from an Italian novel by Illicini which was translated and reprinted in William Painter's *The Palace of Pleasure*. The play explores the social norms of the time and relationship between men and women along with female sexuality. The play is about a married couple Master John Frankford and Anne. Wendoll, a houseguest tries to seduce Anne and when her husband finds about this, he decides to ostracise her. This decision of his leads Anne to a self-destructive path of self-imposed punishment. The play also depicts the subplot of Sir Charles Mountford who tries to use the sexuality of his sister, Susan, to get him out of debt. His sister keeps fighting the intention of her brother.

The Virgin Martyr is a tragedy written by Thomas Dekker and Philip Massinger. The play centres around the martyrdom of St. Dorothea of Caesarea. The play has been categorised as a saint's play. The play has been popularly categorised as a tragedy but it also has a spiritual element to it. The play ends in the death of the protagonist. The theme of Christian conversion is also represented in this play.

Two popular tragedies written by Ben Jonson were *Sejanus His Fall* and *Catiline His Conspiracy*. Both were Roman Tragedies written by him which were a failure on stage.

3.4 TRAGICOMEDY OF JACOBAN AGE:

Tragicomedy had the element of both tragedy and comedy combined in a single play where the first of the play would be a tragedy and the second part a comedy since the play ended on a happy note.

One of the famous tragicomedies written by Thomas Dekker, William Rowley and John Ford is *The Witch of Edmonton*. The play is a domestic tragedy based on events that supposedly took place in the parish of Edmonton. The play was inspired by the life of Elizabeth Sawyer who was executed for witchcraft. In the play, Elizabeth Sawyer is a poor, lonely ostracised witch who turns to witchcraft and with the help of a talking devil dog Tom she causes one of her neighbours to go mad and kill herself. In the subplot, Frank Thorney is forced to marry Susan in spite of

him being married to Winnifride. Later at one point he stabs Susan in the presence of the devil dog. The play on an optimistic note when both Frank and Elizabeth are executed and Cuddy Banks emerges unaffected by his encounters with the dog Tom due to his innocence.

A King and No King, *Philaster* and *Love's Pilgrimage* are tragicomedies written by Beaumont and Fletcher. The play consisted of extreme sexual scenarios and provides implausible solutions to problems. Arbaces, the King of Iberia has an inability to control his wild mood swings and he falls in love with his sister, Panthea upon his return home. The play mainly depicts his desperate struggles against his passion for his sister. Later however it is revealed that Arbaces was the son of Gobrius (the regent) as a result of which he isn't the brother of Panthea. In the end he marries Panthea but steps down from being the king. The comic relief in the play is provided by the Bessus.

In *Philaster*, the protagonist, who is the legitimate heir to the throne of Italy falls in love with Arethusa, the daughter of the usurper. The plot of the play involves the issues and confusions that both of them have to face before reconciling with each other.

3.5 JACOBAN COMEDIES:

Comedies of the Jacobean age were famous by the name city comedies as they portrayed the life in London. They were basically satires commenting on the life in the busy city of London. Ben Jonson was a famous Jacobean dramatist and poet who was famous for his comedies than his tragedies. The comedies of the era were predominantly written by Ben Jonson. During the Jacobean age he was considered at par with Shakespeare or only second to Shakespeare in his writings. His first success as a dramatist came with the play *Every Man in His Humor* which was a huge success. It came under the category of being comedy of humours. The play was based on four humours (blood, phlegm, choler and melancholy) of the medieval physiology which were considered responsible for personality or temperament. He makes use of humours in depicting the dominant peculiarity of his characters. Therefore he deals with a type and not a personality. The success of *Every man in his Humor* led Jonson to write *Everyman out of his Humor* which was a failure.

Some famous comedies of Ben Jonson include *Volpone*, *The Silent Women*, *The Alchemist* and *Bartholomew Fair*. *Volpone* is a city comedy, a merciless satire of greed and lust. It is considered to be one of the best comedies of Jacobean era. The play is about Volpone who is a con artist who has amassed wealth and is planning on his new con. The consequences of this new con are the content of the play. Volpone pretends to be very ill and attracts the interest of three legacy hunters (Voltore, Corbaccio and Corvino) in him. They bring him gifts with the hope that he would write their name in his will as his heir. Corbaccio declares to name Volpone his heir with the hope that Volpone would return the favour. Volpone is supported by Mosca in this plan of his. Mosca tells Volpone about the beautiful wife of Corvino, Celia. Volpone

starts lusting for her and after a failed chance of meeting her directly. Mosca promises to help him and tells Corvino that if he lets Celia sleep with Volpone, then he will be chosen as his heir. Corvino consents to this. Bonario, Corbaccio's son comes to Volpone's house in order to catch his father in the act of transfer of property. Celia is also brought to Volpone's house where he attempts to rape her but is saved by Bonario. Celia and Bonario accuse Corvino, Corbaccio and Volpone of their respective actions in court but instead they get falsely accused of an affair and ordered to be arrested. Volpone decides to play a final prank by pretending to be dead and Mosca being his heir. He disguises himself and ridicules the three men. Voltore gets upset and goes to the Senate and declares about the past actions of Volpone and other men. Mosca's refusal to give back Volpone's property to him results in the truth of everyone coming out in the open and in the end all culprits are punished accordingly. Ben Jonson has tried to represent the harsh reality of the society through this play. The theme of greed and lust are very openly discussed here. Jonson took inspiration from the classical works of Aristophanes in this play. The animal imagery used in *Volpone* is that of sly fox, raven, vulture, crow, parrot and peregrine falcon.

Epicene or *The Silent Women* is another comedy by Jonson. The play is about Dauphine who creates a scheme to get his inheritance from his uncle, Morose. Morose is a wealthy old man who hates noise and is planning to disinherit his nephew, Dauphine. To counter this, Dauphine comes up with a plan with Morose's barber, Cutbread. Cutbread introduces Morose to a supposedly silent woman. After confirming her to be a silent woman, he marries her in spite of warnings from Truewit against the marriage. After marriage Morose comes to know that his wife is loud. Morose tries to divorce her but is unable to do so. Dauphine promises to help Morose to divorce his wife if he agrees to give him his inheritance. After the agreement is made, it is revealed by Dauphine that Morose's wife was in reality a boy and therefore their marriage cannot be upheld.

The Alchemist by Jonson satirises the follies, vanities and vices of mankind. The play depicts what happens to people who take advantage of each other. The play shows how the con artists Subtle, Face and Doll are undone by the same human weakness that they try to exploit in their victims. Face disguises himself as a sea captain, Subtle disguises himself as an alchemist and Doll as an aristocratic lady. During the course of the play, envy and jealousy leads to their downfall. *Bartholomew Fair* is an experimental comedy written by Jonson. He has tried to blend farce and meta-commentary on playwriting in this play. The whole story takes place at Bartholomew Fair. It is considered to be one of the interesting comedies written by Jonson.

3.6 CONCLUSION:

The Jacobean period produced a combination of both comedies and tragedies. The area of comedies was dominated by Ben Jonson and revenge tragedies were quite popular during this period. Some famous writers of this age were Ben Jonson, Shakespeare, Thomas Middleton,

John Webster, Thomas Dekker and Beaumont and Fletcher. Apart from tragedies and comedies, the period was also famous for tragicomedy and elaborate plays known as masques. The Jacobean period in literature was an extension of the Elizabethan period with certain changes in the themes of the play and satires playing a major role in drama. Thus Jacobean period had its own characteristics which differentiated it from the Elizabethan age which was considered as the golden age of Drama.

3.7 QUESTIONS:

1. Explain the different genres of Drama with reference to Jacobean age.
2. Mention some characteristics of Jacobean revenge drama with reference to any play which comes under this category.
3. Explain the characteristics of masques.
4. What was the role of Ben Jonson during the Jacobean age?
5. What is a tragicomedy?



CRITICAL STUDY OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK PART I

Unit Structure:

4.0 Objectives

4.1 William Shakespeare

4.2 About the play, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*

4.3 Plot

4.4 Characters

4.0 OBJECTIVES:

This unit discusses William Shakespeare's play, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. It deals with a short introduction of William Shakespeare, characteristics of Shakespearean tragedies. It explicates briefly the play—its background, content, Characters, themes, symbols and language.

4.1 WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE:

William Shakespeare was one of the the most influential writers in English literature. He was born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. Around 1590 he left his family behind and traveled to London to work as an actor and playwright and soon became successful playwright in England and part-owner of the Globe Theater. His career witnesses the reigns of Elizabeth I (ruled 1558–1603) and James I (ruled 1603–1625). James considered his company as King's Men. In 1616 at the age of fifty-two he died in Stratford. At the time of Shakespeare's death, Ben Jonson established his writings as timeless. Shakespeare's works got published and he got popularity as poet but there was not much biographical information available about him. Therefore, his life was confined with lots of ambiguity. It is considered he penned down thirty-seven plays and 154 sonnets. He portrayed the Western society and culture of his time especially, the first part of the seventeenth century (probably in 1600 or 1601).

4.2 ABOUT THE PLAY, THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK

The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, often shortened to *Hamlet*. It was probably first performed in 1602 and was appeared in an enlarged

edition in 1604. Shakespeare borrowed ideas and stories from earlier literary works. He could have taken the story of Hamlet from several possible sources, including a twelfth-century Latin history of Denmark compiled by Saxo Grammaticus and a prose work by the French writer, François de Belleforest, entitled *Histoires Tragiques*. It is also claimed that Shakespeare borrowed Hamlet's story from a Danish prince whose uncle murders the prince's father, marries his mother, and claims the throne and then the prince pretends to be feeble-minded and manages to kill his uncle in revenge. Shakespeare presents *Hamlet* as a philosophical genius with remarkable revenge story. Shakespeare in *Hamlet* points out renaissance humanism as he pinpoints new interest in human experience and an optimism about the potential scope of human understanding through Hamlet's famous speech in Act II,

What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god—the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals! (II.ii.293–297)

The speech focuses on better understanding of human behaviour and society. Shakespeare borrowed it from Italian humanists, Pico della Mirandola's Oration on the Dignity of Man. *Hamlet*, the play underlines the complexities of human relations and behaviour.

William Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet* approximately between 1599 and 1601. It is Shakespeare's longest play set in Denmark. Shakespeare depicts Prince Hamlet and his revenge against his uncle, Claudius, who has murdered Hamlet's father, seized his throne and married Hamlet's mother, Gertrude. He structures the play and characterization with depth. Hence, many people got inspired with it and lots of work and research has been done by the scholars on play. Today also it is topic of debate whether Hamlet's hesitation to kill his uncle is merely a plot device to prolong the action or it is a dramatisation of the complex philosophical and ethical issues intertwined with cold-blooded murder, calculated revenge, and dissatisfied desire. Psychoanalytic critics underline Hamlet's unconscious desires whereas feminist critics evaluate characters of Ophelia and Gertrude from feminist and gender perspective.

4.3 PLOT SUMMARY:

Hamlet is a protagonist of Shakespeare's one of the best tragedies, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. He is Prince of Denmark, son of the recently deceased King Hamlet, and nephew of King Claudius, his father's brother and successor. After King Hamlet's death, Claudius, King Hamlet's brother and Prince Hamlet's uncle hurriedly marries King Hamlet's widow, Gertrude, Hamlet's mother, and takes the throne for himself. Denmark has disputes with neighboring country, Norway. King Hamlet killed King Fortinbras of Norway in a battle few years ago. Although Denmark defeated Norway, Denmark fears about an invasion led by the dead Norwegian king's son, Prince Fortinbras.

On a cold night, the Danish royal castle sentries—Bernardo and Marcellus—discuss a ghost resembling to the late King Hamlet. They bring Prince Hamlet's friend, Horatio as a witness. Three of them see the ghost and they vow to inform Prince Hamlet about what they have witnessed.

Next day in the court, King Claudius and Queen Gertrude discuss affairs of state with their elderly adviser, Polonius. Hamlet is also present in the court with sad mood. Claudius grants permission for Polonius's son, Laertes to return to school in France and sends envoys to inform the King of Norway about Fortinbras. Claudius expresses his concerns about Hamlet's grievance over his father and forbids him to return to his schooling in Wittenberg. After the court exits, Hamlet despairs of his father's death and his mother's hasty remarriage. Meanwhile Horatio tells him about what he witnessed. After Learning of the ghost, Hamlet resolves to see it himself.

Laertes prepares to depart for a visit to France. Polonius's daughter, Ophelia, admits her love for Hamlet but Laertes warns her against seeking the prince's attention. Polonius orders her to reject Hamlet. On the same night, the ghost appears to Hamlet and tells him that he is murdered by Claudius and demands Hamlet avenge him. Hamlet agrees. Though Hamlet remains uncertain of the ghost's reliability, he oaths the revenge and accordingly he behaves erratically.

Further, Ophelia informs Polonius about Hamlet's arrival at her door half-dressed. Polonius considers love as a reason behind Hamlet's madness and informs the same to Claudius and Gertrude who invites Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to investigate the reason behind Hamlet's madness. Meanwhile, messengers from Norway inform Claudius about Prince Fortinbras' attempt to re-fight with Denmark. Polonius discusses his theory with Claudius and Gertrude regarding Hamlet's behavior. He tries to get more information from Hamlet. Hamlet insults Polonius. Hamlet's friends turned-spies, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern meet Hamlet. Hamlet admits his disappointment but refuses to tell the real reason. Meanwhile, Hamlet welcomes the drama group and asks them to deliver a soliloquy about the death of King Priam and Queen Hecuba at the climax of the Trojan War. He plots to stage The Murder of Gonzago, a play in which he recreates King Hamlet's murder to study Claudius's reaction in order to determine the truth of the ghost's story, as well as Claudius's guilt or innocence.

Ophelia returns Hamlet's love letters and gifts. Polonius and Claudius observe Hamlet's reaction secretly by standing at Ophelia's entrance. Hamlet manages the situation by calling Ophelia immodest which confuses everyone whether its due to madness or genuine distress, he blames her. Claudius gets the idea that Hamlet is not mad for love. Thereafter, the court gathers to watch the play Hamlet has commissioned. After seeing the Player King murdered by his rival pouring poison in his ear, Claudius abruptly runs from the room. Hamlet gets the proof of his uncle's guilt.

Gertrude summons Hamlet to her chamber to demand an explanation as Claudius repents badly for murdering his brother and usurping his crown and wife too by sinking to his knees. Hamlet feels to kill him at that moment but he does not as killing Claudius while he is praying will send him to heaven. Hamlet and Gertrude fight bitterly. Polonius, spies on the conversation from behind a tapestry. Gertrude believes Hamlet wants to kill her. Hence, Polonius hides there to help her. Hamlet misunderstands Polonius as Claudius and stabs him. Hamlet blames Gertrude for her ignorance of Claudius vicious nature. The ghost enters and scolds Hamlet for his inaction and harsh words. Gertrude considers Hamlet's conversation with it as further evidence of madness. After begging the queen to stop sleeping with Claudius, Hamlet leaves, dragging Polonius's corpse away. Hamlet jokes with Claudius about where he has hidden Polonius's body. Claudius senses the danger for his life from Hamlet. So, he sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to accompany Hamlet to England with a sealed letter in which he requests to the English king to execute Hamlet.

Polonius's death mentally disturbs Ophelia. Laertes returns from France, enraged by his father's death and his sister's madness. Claudius convinces Laertes that Hamlet is solely responsible for all his loss. Similarly, Hamlet spoils Claudius's plan and returns to Denmark. He proposes a fencing match between Laertes and Hamlet to settle their differences. He conspires to give Laertes a poison-tipped foil, and, if that fails, he will offer Hamlet poisoned wine as a congratulation. Gertrude gets the news of Ophelia's death. It remains unclear whether it was suicide or an accident caused by her madness.

Horatio receives a letter from Hamlet, explaining that the prince escaped by negotiating with pirates who attempted to attack his England-bound ship, and the friends reunite offstage. While digging Ophelia's grave, diggers discuss her suicide. Hamlet and Horatio and banter with one of the gravediggers, who unearths the skull of a jester from Hamlet's childhood, Yorick. Ophelia's funeral starts by Laertes. Hamlet and Horatio hide but when Hamlet realizes that it's Ophelia's funeral comes out from his hiding place and declares his love for her. Laertes and Hamlet fight but the brawl is broken up.

Hamlet explains to Horatio how he discovers Claudius's letter with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern which he replaces with a forged copy indicating that his former friends should be killed instead. Osric delivers the news about fencing challenge to Hamlet. Hamlet accepts it. Hamlet does well at first. Gertrude raises a toast to him using the poisoned glass of wine Claudius sets aside for Hamlet. Claudius tries to stop her but she drinks. Laertes realizes the plot will be revealed so hurriedly he wounds Hamlet with his poisoned blade. During the scuffle they switch weapons and Hamlet wounds Laertes with poisoned sword. Gertrude collapses dies. Laertes before dying reveals Claudius's plan to Hamlet. Hamlet kills Claudius. He feels unconscious due to poison but he manages to hear that Fortinbras is marching through the area, names the Norwegian prince as his successor. Meanwhile, Horatio thinks of committing suicide by

drinking the dregs of Gertrude's poisoned wine as he does not wish to remain as a last survivor. Hamlet begs him to live on and tell his story. Hamlet dies in Horatio's arms, proclaiming "the rest is silence". Fortinbras arrives at the palace, along with an English ambassador bringing news of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's deaths. Horatio promises to tell the full story of what happened. Fortinbras after knowing how the entire Danish royal family dead, takes the crown for himself and orders a military funeral to honour Hamlet.

4.4 CHARACTERIZATION:

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

Hamlet, the protagonist of the play who is cannot decide the proper course to avenge his father's death. He fails to choose between fate and free will. When he comes to know about his father, King Hamlet's murder by his uncle, Claudius, he takes the responsibility to avenge. Meanwhile, he doubts about his situation and own feelings that he delays his revenge. His internal struggle can be easily witnessed in throughout the play. Hamlet attempts to confirm the information given by the ghost regarding Claudius's guilt. His frustration to take proper action provokes him to murder Polonius by mistake. This lack of resolution makes the ending of Hamlet especially horrifying as all the characters are dead, but nothing has been solved.

Hamlet is mysterious character. Shakespeare sketches him so differently that the audience/readers always find more to him than the other characters in the play. Even the most careful and clever readers come away with the sense that they don't know everything there is to know about this character. Hamlet makes the other characters to feel that there is more to him than meets the eye. Shakespeare pens down the soliloquies and dialogues in such a way that When he speaks, he sounds as if there's something important he's not saying, maybe something even he is not aware of.

Hamlet is very discontented with the state of affairs in Denmark and in his own family especially, his mother, Gertrude's quick marriage with his uncle, Claudius disappoints him. He feels betrayed by all females. Hence, he rejects Ophelia whom he loves. He distrusts all women in general. Though he belongs to the royal family, he does not care about his country. On the contrary, he traps himself in his own internal and familial conflict .

Claudius

Claudius, the antagonist in the play, *Hamlet* is a shrewd, lustful, conspiratorial king who kills own brother, King Hamlet and marries his wife, Gertrude and crowns himself as King of Denmark. He is morally corrupt and lusts for power. He is a corrupt politician who manipulates others through his language. Claudius's speech is compared to poison being poured in the ear—the method he used to murder Hamlet's father. Claudius loves Gertrude but to marry her and get the throne is his real strategy. After Polonius' death, he tries to kill Hamlet and when his plan

fails he involves Laertes in killing Hamlet for his own benefit. He advises Laertes to poison the blade, and he poisons goblet. Gertrude unknowingly drinks the poison and dies Hamlet kills Claudius and dies.

Gertrude

Gertrude, the Queen of Denmark and mother of Hamlet. Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet* does not answer the questions about Gertrude regarding her loyalty and love towards King Hamlet and Prince Hamlet, her involvement in King Hamlet's and Prince Hamlet's murder. Her character remains equally mysterious as Hamlet's character.

Shakespeare does not portray Gertrude clearly in *Hamlet*. He does not talk about her desire for station and affection. Hamlet's most famous comment about Gertrude is his furious condemnation of women in general: "Frailty, thy name is woman!" Shakespeare through this dialogue defines Hamlet's agonized state of mind Gertrude's moral weak. Gertrude does not critically analyze the situation. She always grabs safe choices and support whenever she is in trouble.

Polonius

Polonius is a royal courtier and concerned father. He sends his son, Laertes to France with heavy heart at the same time, advises his daughter, Ophelia to stay away from Hamlet. The secure and happy family unit of Polonius' family which includes Laertes and Ophelia is complete contrast with the dysfunctional royal family—Claudius, Gertrude, and Hamlet. Polonius plays a perfect father who keeps eye on Laertes by appointing spy, Reynaldo. He is very loyal and courageous who ready to put his life in danger for royal family. Hamlet kills him by mistakenly assuming him as Claudius. Sometimes, he provides comic relief.

Ophelia

Ophelia case whose character is always under the influence of the three powerful male characters—her father, Polonius, her brother, Laertes and Hamlet who loves her. And suddenly three of them disappear which pushes her towards madness and takes her towards death.

These male characters especially her father and brother decide dos and don't for her. They both tell her to stay away from Hamlet. They do not allow her to take her own decisions. Due to her Hamlet's cruelty and her father's death sends Ophelia into a fit of grief. In the end, she dies under ambiguous circumstances. Ophelia suffers without her fault which makes her tragic character.

Laertes

Laertes, Polonius' loving son and Ophelia's caring brother spends much of his time in France. He is very passionate and quick to action opposite to Hamlet, Laertes oaths to take revenge of his father's murder so he challenges Hamlet for fight but at the same time, helps Claudius in his plan to poisoning Hamlet. He dies at Hamlet's hands with poisonous

weapon. Before dying understands the real game of Claudius and reveals it to Hamlet who he too wounds with poisonous sword.

Fortinbras

The young Prince of Norway, whose father, King Fortinbras was killed by Hamlet's father, King Hamlet. Now Fortinbras wishes to attack Denmark to avenge his father's honor.

The Ghost

The ghost claims himself as Old Hamlet's spirit who has been murdered by Claudius. He tells Hamlet to avenge him. However, ghost's presence is questionable because it is not entirely certain whether the ghost is what it appears to be, or whether it is something else. Hamlet thinks the ghost can be a devil sent to deceive him and tempt him into murder. This can be considered one of the reasons behind his inaction and delayed revenge. The question of ghost's real existence and motives are not clear throughout the play.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern

Two are former friends of Hamlet from Wittenberg, who spy upon Hamlet by Claudius and Gertrude to discover the cause of Hamlet's strange behavior.

Osric

The foolish courtier who summons Hamlet to his duel with Laertes.

Voltimand and Cornelius

Courtiers whom Claudius sends to Norway to persuade the king to prevent Fortinbras from attacking.

Marcellus and Bernardo

The officers who first see the ghost and summon Horatio to witness it. Marcellus is present when Hamlet first encounters the ghost.

Reynaldo

Polonius's spy on Laertes in France.

4.5 QUESTIONS:

- 1 Hamlet as a tragedy.
2. Discuss the theme of uncertainty and the complexity of action woven by Shakespeare in his play, *Hamlet*.
- 3 How does Shakespeare present the idea of madness in *Hamlet*?
- 4 comment on the function and nature of Hamlet's soliloquies.
- 5 critically analyze the thematic set up/characterization in *Hamlet*.

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK PART - II

Unit Structure:

5.0 Objectives

5.1 Themes

5.2 Criticism

5.3 Hamlet as a tragedy or a problem play

5.4 Conclusion

5.5 Questions

5.6 Reference for further study

5.0 OBJECTIVES:

This unit discusses William Shakespeare's play, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. It deals with a short introduction of William Shakespeare, characteristics of Shakespearean tragedies. It explicates briefly the play—its background, content, Characters, themes, symbols and language.

5.1 THEMES

Uncertainty

Shakespeare presents *Hamlet* different than just a revenge plays. He narrates the story of Hamlet who continually postpones his revenge and tries to find out the authenticity of the information provided by the ghost about King Hamlet's murder by Claudius. This play poses many questions regarding the certain knowledge about ghost and its motives and reality of the information provided by it, about King Hamlet's death, Queen Gertrude's loyalty and love, her involvement in Claudius' conspiracy against royal family, Claudius' knowledge about Hamlet and his revenge for Old Hamlet's murder. The play also poses questions about the life after the death. These uncertainties disable Hamlet to take his revenge and doubt about himself.

The Complexity of Action

The complexity of action is related to the theme of uncertainty. Throughout the play, the protagonist remains in dilemma and uncertainty which causes why the action is delayed. In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare highlights

how certain action is involved with certainty, emotional, ethical, and psychological factors. Hamlet does not believe about the purposeful execution of the act. Hence, he acts blindly, recklessly, and violently. The other characters act according to their gut feelings. The best example of it is Claudius who gets queen and crown through bold action of murdering his brother, but his karma torture him. Laertes resolves that nothing will distract him from acting out his revenge, but manipulative Claudius without Laertes' knowledge makes him part of his plan of poisoning Hamlet during the fight. All the characters' action is difficult to understand because they think something but the outcome of their action is not what they desired.

Death

Shakespeare plots the theme of death very dexterously in the play. The play begins with the death of King Hamlet and ends with the death of all the important characters—Laertes, Gertrude, Claudius and Hamlet. The death of King Hamlet creates the distrustful environment in Denmark. Hamlet tries to find out the truth behind his father's death. He spends much time in evaluating the information provided by the ghost about King Hamlet's murder. He thinks about the spiritual aftermath of death, ghost, and the physical remainders of the dead, such as by Yorick's skull and the decaying corpses in the cemetery. Polonius' murder states the depression and the mental status of Hamlet whereas Ophelia's death emphasizes the emptiness and sorrow she goes through after disappearance of three men from her life. Shakespeare portrays death as the cause and the consequence of revenge and justice too as Claudius's murder of King Hamlet initiates Hamlet's quest for revenge, and Claudius's death is the end of that quest. The play is actually a circle of death, it starts from it and end at death. Shakespeare connects death with religion, morality and mystery. *Hamlet* philosophically concludes that no one would choose to endure the pain of life if he or she were not afraid of what will come after death, and that it is this fear which causes complex moral considerations to interfere with the capacity for action.

The Nation As A Diseased Body

Shakespeare in *Hamlet* connects the welfare of the royal family and the health of the state. He narrates transformation of power from Old Hamlet to Claudius. He talks about the morally sound ruler, his rule and nation. Denmark is frequently described as a physical body made ill by the moral corruption of Claudius and Gertrude. He states the condition of the nation and royal family through just one sentence, "something is rotten in the state of Denmark". He projects the healthy condition of Denmark under King Hamlet's rule whereas Claudius, a wicked politician turns Denmark as corrupted country. At the end of the play, he suggests hope of Denmark's rise.

Performance

Hamlet decides to play insane in order to find out the reality of the information given by the ghost about King Hamlet's murder by Claudius.

However, it becomes very difficult to understand what he is really feeling and what he is performing. He plans to pretend as mad. Ophelia finds his behavior as comic performance. Hamlet says his friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that he is depressed. Shakespeare develops Hamlet's character in such a way that it becomes difficult to know whether Hamlet is really mad or just performing madness. In the end of play, even Hamlet himself doesn't seem to know the difference between performance and reality. Shakespeare makes his audience constantly aware about the theatrical performances. Hence, Polonius informs how he plays the role of Julius Caesar. He adds the device of the play within the play which gives Hamlet further opportunities to comment on the nature of theater. He makes realize that something fake can feel real, and vice versa.

Madness

Shakespeare weaves Hamlet's character so dexterously that the whole story and all the characters move around to find out the reality about Hamlet's mental state. After encounter with the ghost, Hamlet decides to pretend to be mad. Initially, he himself seems to believe he's sane and switch on and off his madness time to time as he tells it to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. But as plot develops, he doubts his own sanity. He blames his madness behind the killing of Polonius and Laertes which can also be considered functioning of a sane and cunning mind.

Doubt

In *Hamlet*, the main character, Hamlet doubts about everything. He does not believe the ghost who claims as spirit of King Hamlet and informs about his murder by Claudius. Hamlet decides to take revenge by killing Claudius but he doubts about the authenticity of the information provided by the ghost. Hence, he attempts to find out whether Claudius is guilty or innocent. He also doubts about his mother, Gertrude's love and loyalty towards Old Hamlet. He stops trusting all the women in general, hence, he rejects Ophelia. Not only this even, at the end of the play, he starts doubting about his own feelings and desires regarding Gertrude. He also doubts about his own sanity. He leaves audience with many doubts regarding Gertrude's affair with Claudius before he killed Hamlet's father; Hamlet's sanity and his feelings for Ophelia.

Christianity

Shakespeare introduces multiple religious ideas and beliefs in the play, *Hamlet*. He talks about the idea of life after the death. The ghost represents this idea. It also informs Hamlet about his murder by Claudius and his purgatory and how can get relief from it only by revenge. Hamlet also gets confused due to the idea of Christianity where devil takes form of any one and provokes to be sinner. Hence, Hamlet doubts about the ghost's identity as his father, King Hamlet. God punishes the sinner and the ideas related to fate confuse him more. Due to which he prolongs his revenge. Hamlet does not kill Claudius at the time when he kneels down and prays because it is Christian belief that if a person dies while he is praying, he goes to heaven. Hamlet does not want Claudius to get heaven

after killing his father. Shakespeare also puts light upon the death and the last ritual mentioned in the Christianity. In short, the play has a very strong religious foundation which helps to develop the plot and characters.

5.2 CRITICISM:

Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* is popular among the masses from the early 17th century. The supernatural elements like ghost and vivid dramatisation of melancholy and insanity made the drama extremely popular in Jacobean and Caroline drama. Restoration critics of late seventeenth century found *Hamlet* lack of unity and decorum in the play. In 18th century this view altered when critics regarded Hamlet as a hero—a pure, brilliant young man caught into unfortunate circumstances. However, the advancement of Gothic literature brought psychological and mystical readings, to the light in the mid 18th century. As a result, in late 18th century *Hamlet* is considered as a confused character earlier which was either mad and not as hero. These developments represented a fundamental change in literary criticism, which focus more on character than plot. By the 19th century, Romantic critics evaluate Hamlet for inner conflict, internal struggles and inner character in general. Critics focus on Hamlet's delay as a character trait, rather than a plot device. In 20th century also the focus on character and internal struggle continued.

Dramatic structure

The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark is different in many ways than the traditional play structure given by Aristotle in his *Poetics*. According to Aristotle action is more important than the character. In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare reverses it by giving more importance to character than action. He reveals the motives and thoughts of the character through the soliloquies and not through the action. He structures the plot with multiple discontinuities and irregularities of action. He depicts the character and the action with such a uncertainty through which he manages to surprise the audience. For example, in the Gravedigger scene, Hamlet seems to resolve to kill Claudius but in the next scene when Claudius appears, he suddenly changes his mind. These twists till today make scholars to evaluate whether they are mistakes or intentional additions to add to the play's themes of confusion and duality. Shakespeare introduces his literary device of a play within a play in which one story is told during the action of another story. By using this literary device, he manages to make his tragedy, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* timeless.

Language

Shakespeare uses a language smartly in *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. Every character's words provide information about its social, financial, emotional and psychological statutes. In the play, he uses courtly language which is elaborate and witty as recommended by Baldassare Castiglione's 1528 etiquette guide, *The Courtier*. Osric and Polonius, especially, use courtly language. Hamlet and Claudius's speech

too is rich with rhetorical figures. Ophelia, Horatio, the guards, and the gravediggers use a simple language. Shakespeare underlines the royal and high status of Claudius, the king with the use of first person plural like we and us.

Pauline Kiernan argues that Shakespeare changed English drama forever in *Hamlet* because he "showed how a character's language can often be saying several things at once, and contradictory meanings at that, to reflect fragmented thoughts and disturbed feelings". She gives the example of Hamlet's advice to Ophelia, "get thee to a nunnery", which is simultaneously a reference to a place of chastity and a slang term for a brothel, reflecting Hamlet's confused feelings about female sexuality.

Shakespeare gives the greatest rhetorical skill to Hamlet than any other character. He uses highly developed metaphors, stichomythia for example, in the closet scene in *Hamlet*, Gertrude says Hamlet, "Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue" to which Hamlet replies "Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue." Hamlet relies heavily on puns to express his true thoughts while simultaneously concealing them. For instance, his "nunnery" remarks to Ophelia are an example of a cruel double meaning as nunnery was Elizabethan slang for brothel. He uses pun even from beginning of the play when Claudius addresses him as "my cousin Hamlet, and my son", Hamlet says as an aside: "A little more than kin, and less than kind."

An unusual rhetorical device, hendiadys, a typical expression of an idea by two nouns connected by 'and' appears in several places in the play. Examples are found in Ophelia's speech at the end of the nunnery scene: "Th'expectancy and rose of the fair state" and "And I, of ladies most deject and wretched". Many scholars claim that *Hamlet* was written later in Shakespeare's life, when he was adept at matching rhetorical devices to characters and the plot. Linguist George T. Wright suggests that hendiadys had been used deliberately to heighten the play's sense of duality and dislocation.

Hamlet's soliloquies have also captured the attention of scholars. Hamlet interrupts himself, vocalising either disgust or agreement with himself and embellishing his own words. He has difficulty expressing himself directly and instead blunts the thrust of his thought with wordplay. It is not until late in the play, after his experience with the pirates, that Hamlet is able to articulate his feelings freely.[95]

Contexts

Religious

The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark depicts religious upheaval and English Reformation, The ghost introduces himself as someone in purgatory and as he dies without last rites. This and Ophelia's burial ceremony shows the play's Catholic connections. According to Catholic doctrine the duty to God and family precedes civil justice. Hence, Hamlet

gets confused whether to avenge his father and kill Claudius or to leave the vengeance to God, as his religion belief teaches.

Philosophical

Shakespeare and the French writer, Michel de Montaigne were the contemporary who shared the same Philosophical ideas. Shakespeare has emphasized the same philosophical base in *Hamlet*. Hamlet is often considered as a philosophical character who can be studied as a relativist, existentialist, and sceptical. For instance, he is a subjectivist when he says to Rosencrantz: "there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so". He promotes Greek Sophists who believe that nothing is real except in the mind of the individual and argue that since nothing can be perceived except through the senses—and since all individuals sense, and therefore perceive things differently—there is no absolute truth, but rather only relative truth. Shakespeare gives the best example of existentialism through his soliloquy, "to be, or not to be" where Hamlet is thought by some to use "being" to allude to life and action, and "not being" to death and inaction.

Hamlet highlights scepticism promoted by the French Renaissance humanist, Michel de Montaigne. In the beginning, Pico della Mirandola argued that man was God's greatest creation, made in God's image and able to choose his own nature. Montaigne challenged this view in 1580. Hamlet's "What a piece of work is a man" makes the scholars to discuss how Montaigne and Hamlet both simply reacting similarly to the spirit of the times.

Psychoanalytic

Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalytical theory published his thoughts about *Hamlet* in his book, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899). He mentions the play as a footnote to a discussion of Sophocles' tragedy, *Oedipus Rex*, all of which is part of his consideration of the causes of neurosis. Freud uses the two tragedies to illustrate and corroborate his psychological theories. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud says that according to his experience parents play important parts in the psychological development of everyone who subsequently become psychoneurotics, a kind of mental disorder. He also states that "falling in love with one parent and hating the other" is a common impulse in early childhood, and it causes "subsequent neurosis". Freud considered that Sophocles' tragedy, *Oedipus Rex* involves crimes of parricide and incest. He states that as the legend puts forth these theories of "infantile psychology" with universal acceptance. He named these ideas of Freud's psychological theories, as the "Oedipus Complex", once, he considered calling it the "Hamlet Complex". Freud considered that Hamlet "is rooted in the same soil as Oedipus Rex." He explains that the only difference between the two plays is that in *Oedipus Rex* such sexual desires and murder are shown on the stage whereas in *Hamlet* it remained repressed. He states in *Hamlet* the conflict is "deeply hidden".

Hamlet's inaction of taking revenge Claudius who murders his father and takes his father's place with his mother makes him to realize the repressed desires of his own childhood. Hence, Hamlet thinks, "he himself is no better than the murderer whom he is required to punish".

Freud suggests that the character Hamlet goes through an experience that has three characteristics, which he numbered: 1) "the hero is not psychopathic, but becomes so" during the course of the play. 2) "the repressed desire is one of those that are similarly repressed in all of us." It is a repression that "belongs to an early stage of our individual development". The audience identifies with the character of Hamlet, because "we are victims of the same conflict." 3) It is the nature of theatre that "the struggle of the repressed impulse to become conscious" occurs in both the hero onstage and the spectator, when they are in the grip of their emotions, "in the manner seen in psychoanalytic treatment".

Freud points out that Hamlet is a psychopathic character whom audience can understand if they have experience such emotions. Freud says, "It is thus the task of the dramatist to transport us (audience) into the same illness."

Ernest Jones, a psychoanalyst and Freud's biographer developed Freud's psychoanalytical ideas related with Hamlet and Oedipus Rex in "The Oedipus-Complex as an Explanation of Hamlet's Mystery: A Study in Motive" his book, *Hamlet and Oedipus* (1949).

After Jones's psychoanalytic approach, *Hamlet* portrayed the "closet scene", where Hamlet confesses his sexual desires towards his mother, Gertrude. Reading *Hamlet* through psychoanalytical theory clarifies cause of Hamlet's inaction as his mother's "incestuous" relationship with Claudius disappoints him and he fears to kill Claudius which would clear Hamlet's path to his mother's bed. Ophelia's madness after her father, Polonius's death can be explained the Freudian lens.

Joshua Rothman has written in The New Yorker that "we tell the story wrong when we say that Freud used the idea of the Oedipus complex to understand Hamlet". Rothman suggests that "it was the other way around: Hamlet helped Freud understand, and perhaps even invent, psychoanalysis". He concludes, "The Oedipus complex is a misnomer. It should be called the 'Hamlet complex'."

Feminism

Shakespeare portrays two important female characters in the play, *Hamlet*—Gertrude and Ophelia. Shakespeare presents how the females were expected to fulfill their social and cultural responsibilities imposed on them in the parochial society. He showcases the woman's suffering if they failed to live or behave according to the set norms of male-dominated society. He recreates the gender system of early modern England, pointing to the common trinity of maid, wife, or widow, with whores outside of that

stereotype. In *Hamlet*, Hamlet considers his mother, the queen Gertrude as a whore because of she fails to remain faithful to Old Hamlet. As a result, Hamlet loses his faith in all women and starts treating Ophelia as if she too is a whore and dishonest with him.

Carolyn Heilbrunn's essay, "The Character of Hamlet's Mother" (1957) defends Gertrude. He argues that the text never hints that Gertrude knew of Claudius poisoning King Hamlet as she does not have any idea that the same plan Claudius conspires for Prince Hamlet. Due to Gertrude's ignorance about Claudius' vicious ambitions, she drinks the poison which Claudius keeps aside for Prince Hamlet. He also states that Gertrude's worst crime is of pragmatically marrying her brother-in-law in order to avoid a power vacuum. Hence, King Hamlet's ghost tells Hamlet to leave Gertrude out of revenge.

Elaine Showalter provides the evidences in Ophelia case whose character is always under the influence of the three powerful male characters—Polonius, Laertes and Hamlet. And suddenly three of them disappear which pushes her towards madness.

5.3 HAMLET AS A TRAGEDY OR PROBLEM PLAY:

The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark is one of the most popular tragedies by William Shakespeare. It has multiple features of tragedy mentioned by Aristotle in his *Poetics*. It has a tragic hero of high rank, Prince Hamlet whose action decides the fate of entire kingdom, Denmark and who traps in a situation where it is difficult for him to cope with. Hamlet possesses many qualities like he is very intelligent, religious, believes in justice, a good son, good actor, he has tremendous presence of mind to escape and spoil Claudius plan to kill him, a good fighter who wins the fight with Laertes, perfectly analyzes the human psychology. But despite all these qualities, he dies at the end because he doubts about everything even he doubts about his own sanity. His struggle to decide or choose the correct pushes him in catastrophic situations where at the end he dies and we sympathize with him. There are other innocent characters like Ophelia, Polonius, Laertes, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's death makes the play more tragic as innocents suffer without their faults and meet the tragic end. *Hamlet* is a tragedy because the want of poetic justice, for these characters and for hero makes it a painful mystery which results in a chain of death.

Hamlet is a revenge tragedy but the hero's desire and interest to know the truth is stronger than his desire to revenge. He many times postpones his revenge to kill Claudius because of his doubt about the information related with his father's death and his own religious beliefs. His inaction causes more harm than his action. He gets confused and poses a reason behind the death of many innocent characters. Indecisiveness is a tragic flaw in *Hamlet*. Hamlet does not explain why he kills Polonius, rejects Ophelia though he loves her, why he psychologically manipulates Gertrude and distances himself from his friends and love ones.

Hamlet has several tragic elements like death but still it is more related with a problem play as it deals with the madness. It is different than 19th century problem play. It is called as Shakespearean problem play. It has complex and unique features. Shakespearean problem play is not purely tragic or comic. It is a combination of both. Hence, it seems realistic. In *Hamlet* also the comic elements are introduced by Shakespeare. But the play does not have happy ending. The protagonist, Hamlet is not tragic but falls in darkness. He pretends to be mad but gradually loses his sanity. He goes through the spiritual, emotional, moral and psychological struggles. He is uncertain throughout the play. Hamlet's struggle and his confusion makes this play problem play.

5.4 CONCLUSION:

Shakespeare's play, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* is a timeless literature. Shakespeare intertwines the plot, characters, action and the dialogue with the philosophical, psychological, cultural and religious threads. He portrays the real dilemma of human beings and the intricate functioning of human mind. The more time we spend with *Hamlet*, it blurs the lines between the real and fake. Shakespeare leaves the audience with several doubts. He does not give the readymade information or opinions about any character or action rather he leaves the audience to decide everything by their own. Hence, everyone interprets the play differently as per his understanding and today also there are multiple issues on which the scholars debate like the sanity of Hamlet, the ghost's real identity, King Hamlet's murder, Gertrude's loyalty and Hamlet's love for Ophelia. Shakespeare has successfully bound the audience's curiosity with his play, *Hamlet* by leaving them with these doubts.

5.5 QUESTIONS:

- 1 Hamlet as a tragedy.
2. Discuss the theme of uncertainty and the complexity of action woven by Shakespeare in his play, *Hamlet*.
- 3 How does Shakespeare present the idea of madness in *Hamlet*?
- 4 comment on the function and nature of Hamlet's soliloquies.
- 5 critically analyze the thematic set up/characterization in *Hamlet*.

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CRITICAL STUDY OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S *THE COMEDY OF ERRORS* PART I

Unit Structure:

6.0 Objectives

6.1 A brief biography of William Shakespeare

6.4 Historical context of the play

6.5 Summary of the play

6.6 Characters

6.7 Questions

6.8 References

6.0 OBJECTIVES:

1. To introduce students to William Shakespeare and his play *The Comedy of Errors*.
 2. To examine the elements of comedy and humour in the play.
 3. To study the characters and their presentation in the play.
-

6.1 A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE:

William Shakespeare was born on 26 April 1564 at Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, England. He was an English playwright, poet and actor. He is regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's greatest dramatist. He is considered as England's national poet and the "Bard of Avon" or simply "the Bard". He has written 39 plays, 154 sonnets, three long narrative poems, and a few other verses. His plays have been translated into every major language and are performed more often than any other playwright. His works continue to be studied and reinterpreted all around the world.

Shakespeare was born and raised in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire. He married Anne Hathaway at the age of 18. He had three children: Susanna and twins Hamlet and Judith with Anne. Between 1585 and 1592, he began to emerge as a successful actor, writer, and part-owner of a playing company called the Lord Chamberlain's Men, which was later known as the King's Men. At the age of 49 he had retired to Stratford, where he died three years later.

Shakespeare created most of his works between 1589 and 1613. His early plays chiefly were comedies and histories. These plays are regarded as some of the best works produced in those genres. Thereafter till 1608 he wrote mostly tragedies, among them *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*, are considered to be among the finest works in the English language. In the last phase of his life, he wrote tragicomedies, which are also known as romances, and collaborated with other playwrights too. Shakespeare died on April 23, 1616, Stratford-upon-Avon.

6.4 HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE PLAY:

The Comedy of Errors is set in an unspecified time in ancient Greece and the Mediterranean. This historical setting offers the backdrop for the merchant and trading lifestyle dominant in the play, as well as the dispute between local regions and cities, such as between Syracuse and Ephesus. However, the play is by no means intended to be a faithful reconstruction of any ancient time period. Rather, a vague ancient Greek setting provides the jumping-off point for Shakespeare's comedy.

Shakespeare was heavily influenced by the comedies of the ancient Roman playwright Plautus, especially his play *Menaechmi*, about twins separated while young. *The Comedy of Errors* has been influential among later literature, as well, as a prime example of the genre for which it is named, a kind of light comedy often featuring mistaken identities.

6.5 SUMMARY OF THE PLAY:

Aegeon is a merchant from Syracuse. He has traveled to the city of Ephesus. The two cities are in a dispute, and the Duke of Ephesus, **Solinus**, has made an announcement that anyone from Syracuse found in Ephesus will have to pay a fine of 1000 mark or be executed. Aegeon does not have enough money to pay the fine, so Solinus prepares to execute him. Before executing him, the Duke wants to hear what has brought Aegeon to Ephesus. Aegeon explains that he and his wife had twin sons, and had another pair of twins as servants for their sons. They were all on a ship during a big storm, and suffered a shipwreck. Aegeon took one son and one servant, and tied himself to a mast for safety. His wife did the same. The ship broke into two, and Aegeon and his wife were rescued by two separate groups of sailors who went off in two different directions. Years later, Aegeon's son left Syracuse to find his long-lost twin brother and mother, and Aegeon did the same, eventually came to Ephesus in his search to find his wife and sons. Solinus feels pity on Aegeon and says that he will give him 24 hours to find someone to pay his fine. Otherwise, Aegeon will be executed.

Elsewhere in Ephesus, Aegeon's son **Antipholus of Syracuse** has recently arrived with his servant Dromio. He sends Dromio to the inn where they are staying with his money and promises to meet him after doing business with some merchants. Dromio leaves, and then the servant of Antipholus' lost brother, **Dromio of Ephesus** (the twin of Dromio of Syracuse) arrives

and tells Antipholus (whom he mistakes for his twin, **Antipholus of Ephesus**) to come home for dinner. Antipholus is confused and asks about his money. Dromio says he doesn't know what Antipholus is talking about, and Antipholus beats him. He says that he has heard of sorcerers and witches inhabiting Ephesus and concludes that some magician is controlling Dromio, making him act strangely.

At the house of Antipholus of Ephesus (the lost twin of Antipholus of Syracuse), his wife **Adriana** talks with her sister **Luciana**, upset that neither her husband nor her servant Dromio have returned. Luciana tells her to wait patiently for her husband, and advises her to cede to her husband's authority and will. Dromio of Ephesus enters and tells Adriana that Antipholus would not come home, claimed not to know her, and talked only about money. Adriana thinks that her husband is having an affair, and this is why he won't come home for dinner.

Antipholus of Syracuse runs into Dromio of Syracuse in the street and asks what he was talking about earlier (confusing him with Dromio of Ephesus). Dromio is confused and says he hasn't seen his master since he was sent to the inn. Antipholus beats Dromio in frustration. Luciana and Adriana enter, and Luciana scolds Antipholus for treating his wife poorly. Antipholus says he doesn't know who either of these women is. Dromio guesses that they are "goblins, owls, and sprites." Antipholus decides to play along with Adriana and go back to her home for dinner. They all go inside Adriana's house, leaving Dromio to watch the door and not let anyone in to disturb the meal.

Nearby this house, Antipholus of Ephesus is talking with his servant, Dromio of Ephesus, a goldsmith named **Angelo**, and a merchant named **Balthazar**. He tells Angelo that he must go to dinner with his wife and tells him to bring a gold **necklace** he has ordered to his house later. Dromio insists that Antipholus previously denied the existence of his wife, beat him, and asked him about money, but Antipholus denies that he did any of it. He invites Balthazar to dinner, and they go to the door of his house. When he knocks, though, Dromio of Syracuse refuses to let them enter. He says his name is Dromio, and Dromio of Ephesus thinks that someone has tried to steal his identity. Antipholus of Ephesus threatens to break down the door, but Balthazar cautions him against this, saying it might spread gossip about the state of his marriage. Antipholus agrees and suggests they go to have dinner with a **courtesan** he knows instead.

Later, Luciana reprimands Antipholus of Syracuse for how he is treating Adriana. Antipholus insists that he is not married to Adriana and professes his love for Luciana, much to her distress. She leaves, and a distressed Dromio of Syracuse enters. He says that an ugly, fat kitchen-maid in the house named Nell knew him by name and claimed that he was her fiancé. Antipholus again concludes that Ephesus is full of dangerous witches. He tells Dromio to see if there are any ships leaving soon, so that they can get out of Ephesus. Dromio leaves and Angelo enters. Angelo gives Antipholus of Syracuse the gold chain that was intended for Antipholus of Ephesus. Antipholus is confused but accepts the chain.

Later in the day, a merchant confronts Angelo about money that he owes him. Angelo says that he is expecting payment for a necklace from Antipholus, and will use this money to pay the merchant back. Antipholus of Ephesus then enters with Dromio of Ephesus. He tells Dromio to go buy a rope, which he will give to his wife. Angelo asks for his payment, but Antipholus insists that he has not yet received the chain. Angelo and the merchant have an officer arrest Antipholus. Dromio of Syracuse then enters and tells Antipholus that there is a ship leaving Ephesus soon. Antipholus is confused and tells Dromio to go get money from Adriana for his bail.

Back at Antipholus' house, Adriana is discussing about her husband with Luciana, who tells her about how Antipholus denied his marriage and tried to woo Luciana. Dromio of Syracuse enters and says that Antipholus has been arrested. Adriana gives him money for Antipholus' bail. Dromio goes to find Antipholus, and runs into Antipholus of Syracuse in the street. He gives him the gold, much to Antipholus' confusion. He asks how Antipholus got out of prison, and Antipholus tells him to stop fooling around. He says that all of this confusion must be the result of sorcerers in Ephesus. A courtesan enters and asks Antipholus if he has the gold chain he has promised her in return for her diamond ring. Antipholus and Dromio think she is a witch, call her "Mistress Satan," and tell her to leave. The courtesan says that she has heard Antipholus has gone mad, and now knows it to be true. She plans to go to Adriana.

Meanwhile, Antipholus of Ephesus is still under arrest. Dromio of Ephesus finds him, and he asks if Dromio has the bail money. Dromio is confused, and says he has the rope he was sent for. Antipholus is furious and beats Dromio. Adriana, Luciana, the courtesan enter with a "conjurer" named **Pinch**. Adriana thinks that Antipholus and Dromio are mad and possessed, and asks Pinch to try to perform an exorcism on them. Antipholus threatens to tear out Adriana's eyes, and Pinch ties Dromio and him up, planning to lock them in a dark room until they come to their senses. He takes them away. The courtesan says that Antipholus took a diamond ring from her and promised her a gold chain, but has not given it to her. Just then, Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse enter, with their swords drawn. They chase all the women away, thinking they are witches. Antipholus wants to leave Ephesus immediately.

Angelo apologizes to the merchant for making him wait for the money he is owed. Just then, Antipholus of Syracuse and Dromio of Syracuse enters. Antipholus is wearing the gold chain, and Angelo asks how he could deny that he received the necklace. Antipholus says he never denied it. The merchant swears that Antipholus did deny this, and the two prepare to duel. Just then, Adriana enters with Luciana and the courtesan. Adriana says that Antipholus is mad and asks for help in tying up Antipholus and Dromio. The two men flee to a nearby abbey, and the abbess comes out to see what is going on. Adriana explains that her husband is mad, but the abbess refuses to let anyone into the abbey. She asks what has befallen Antipholus to make him mad, and Adriana says it might be that he has become unfaithful. The abbess blames Adriana for this – first for not

scolding her husband, then for scolding him too much about possible infidelity. The Duke enters with Aegeon, preparing to execute him, and Adriana asks the Duke also for justice against the abbe. She explains what has happened with her husband, and the Duke sends for the abbe. A servant comes from Adriana's house and tells her that Antipholus and Dromio have escaped and attacked Pinch. Adriana says this cannot be true, as Antipholus and Dromio are in the abbey. Antipholus and Dromio of Ephesus arrive, and Antipholus asks the Duke for justice. Aegeon says he recognizes Antipholus as his son, but no one pays attention to him as Antipholus tells the Duke what has happened to him earlier in the day: he was locked out of his own house, then Angelo failed to deliver the gold necklace he promised him, then he was falsely arrested, then Dromio failed to bring him the bail money, and then he was tied up and thrown in a dark room by Pinch. He and Dromio had to gnaw the ropes that tied them up in order to escape. Adriana and Luciana deny locking Antipholus out of the house, though Angelo says he witnessed this. He says he did give Antipholus the gold chain, and the merchant agrees. Aegeon interrupts to say that Antipholus is his son, but Antipholus says he doesn't know who Aegeon is.

Finally, the abbe enters with Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse, who recognize Aegeon. The abbe also recognizes Aegeon, and identifies herself as Aemilia, his long-lost wife. She explains that she was separated from Antipholus and Dromio of Ephesus after the shipwreck and became an abbe. Everyone clarifies just what has happened during the day with the two Antipholuses and two Dromios. Antipholus of Ephesus offers to use his bail money to pay Aegeon's fine, but Duke Solinus decides to pardon Aegeon for free. Aemilia suggests everyone come to the abbey to "hear at large discoursed all our fortunes." Everyone but the two Dromios leaves, and then both Dromios follow them walking side-by-side and hand in hand as brothers.

6.6 CHARACTERS:

Aegeon:

A merchant from Syracuse, who was separated from one of his twin sons, one of his twin servants, and his wife in a shipwreck. He has come to Ephesus searching for them, in violation of a law forbidding any Syracusans from being in the town. He is due to be executed for this, but is pardoned at the last minute at the conclusion of the play.

Antipholus of Ephesus:

One of **Aegeon's** twin sons, separated from him when just a baby. He has become a wealthy merchant in Ephesus, with a wife named **Adriana** (whom he may be cheating on). He is constantly confused with his twin throughout the play, arrested for (apparently to him) no reason, and tied up and thrown in a dark room by Pinch. In his frustration, he beats his servant Dromio and threatens violence against Adriana. At the end of the

play, he prioritizes family above money, offering to pay Aegeon's fine in order to save his life.

Antipholus of Syracuse:

The other one of **Aegeon's** twins. He comes to Ephesus with his servant **Dromio of Syracuse**, in search of his long-lost mother and brother. He is greatly concerned with his money, but also with his family—he has traveled all over the Mediterranean in search of his missing relatives. He is continually confused for his twin, and resorts to the supernatural (especially witches) to explain the strange behavior of everyone in Ephesus. He is easily frustrated with Dromio, whom he beats in his frustration.

Dromio of Ephesus:

One of the twin servants of Aegeon's family, who ends up in Ephesus with Antipholus of Ephesus after the shipwreck. He is obedient but, due to all the confused identities during the play, is often made the scapegoat of various mix-ups and suffers beatings as a punishment. Like his twin, he is clever with words, puns, and riddles.

Dromio of Syracuse:

The other twin servant, who accompanies Antipholus of Syracuse to Ephesus. Like his twin, Dromio does his best to obey his master, but ends up getting beaten and scolded as a result of the mistaken identities that drive all the errors of the play. He is equally as clever and quick with words as his twin.

Angelo:

A goldsmith who makes a gold **necklace** for **Antipholus of Ephesus**. He mistakenly gives the **necklace** to **Antipholus of Syracuse** and then asks for payment from Antipholus of Ephesus. When this Antipholus denies having received the **necklace**, Angelo and the **merchant** (to whom Angelo owes money) have Antipholus of Ephesus arrested.

Luciana:

Adriana's sister, who advises her to remain subservient to her husband. She scolds **Antipholus of Syracuse** (thinking him to be Antipholus of Ephesus) for denying being married to Adriana and tells him to at least try to cover up his infidelity. Antipholus of Syracuse, however, professes his love for Luciana.

6.7 QUESTIONS:

1. Compare and contrast the characters of the Antipholus brothers.
2. Analyze how the threat of tragedy--Egeon's execution--impacts the humor in the play.

3. Compare the way the different women are portrayed in the play.
4. Discuss the role of the Dromios and their relationships to their masters.

6.8 REFERENCES:

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CRITICAL STUDY OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S THE COMEDY OF ERRORS PART II

Unit Structure:

7.0 Objectives

7.1 Major Themes in the Play

7.2 Major Symbols in the Play

7.3 Questions

7.4 References

7.0 OBJECTIVES:

1. To study important themes and other literary elements in the play.
2. To examine the elements of comedy and humour in the play.

7.1 MAJOR THEMES IN THE PLAY:

Commerce and Exchange:

Many of the characters in the play are merchants or traders, and issues of money are important from the start of the play: **Aegeon's** life depends on whether or not he will be able to come up with 1000 marks in order to pay the fine for being a Syracusan in Ephesus. And one of the first concerns of **Antipholus of Syracuse** when he arrives in Ephesus is for the safety of his money. All of this emphasis on economic issues points to the general importance of exchanges in the play. It is the exchange of several key objects – the gold chain made by **Angelo**, the **courtesan's** ring, **Antipholus of Ephesus's** bail money – that moves the plot along and creates problems for characters. Then, it is with the return of these items to their rightful owners that the play comes to a resolution in the final scene.

But it is not just objects that are exchanged in the comedy. The play's most important "exchange" is that of the identities of each Antipholus and Dromio. One could say that, for part of the play, **Adriana** exchanges husbands. As this suggests, the whole world of the play can be seen through a kind of economic logic of exchange, value, and profit: is it more profitable for Antipholus of Syracuse to play along with the person Adriana thinks him to be? How much money is a life (e.g. Aegeon's) worth? Characters in the play often seem more concerned with profit and money than with other matters. However, the play is also filled with examples of people who respect values other than monetary ones.

Antipholus of Syracuse and Aegeon are willing to travel faraway and risk their lives in order to find the missing members of their families. And Antipholus of Ephesus gladly offers to pay his father's expensive fine to save his life (though the Duke **Solinus** ends up pardoning him). Thus, while the exchange of valuable objects is central to the plot of the play, Shakespeare reveals that the center of his characters' lives is not necessarily things, but rather people, specifically family.

Marriage and Family:

The Comedy of Errors is essentially a play about a family that is split apart and then reunited at last. The family unit and the bonds of familial relationships are crucial to the play. **Antipholus of Syracuse** travels all around the Mediterranean in search of his lost brother and mother, and **Aegeon** puts his life in jeopardy by searching for his family in Ephesus. At the end of the play, Aegeon's entire family is overjoyed to meet their long-lost relatives, and the comedy concludes with **Dromio of Ephesus** and **Dromio of Syracuse** walking hand in hand, showing the importance of their brotherly bond.

Given the importance of family in the play, it is no surprise that marriage also plays a significant role. Marriage is what solidifies new family bonds and brings families together. Along with the reunions of brothers and children in the final scene, Aegeon and **Aemilia** are also importantly reunited as loving husband and wife. The play also shows, however, less than ideal examples of marriage. For most of the play, **Adriana** suspects that her husband is cheating on her, and, as she tells Aemilia, she spends most of her time chastising **Antipholus of Ephesus** for this suspected infidelity. (It is never absolutely clear whether Antipholus cheats on Adriana, but he does admit to spending a lot of time with the **courtesan**.) Additionally, this marital relationship forces Adriana into a subservient role. **Luciana** advises her to cede to her husband's will, because "a man is master of his liberty." Adriana is even blamed by Aemilia for her husband's infidelity. Antipholus occupies a more powerful position than his wife in their marriage, and frequently threatens physical violence against her. In addition to this marriage, Nell's desire for Dromio of Syracuse offers a low, comedic counterpoint to the more ideal marriage of Aemilia and Aegeon. As these two relationships show, marriage may be crucial in forming the family relationships so highly valued in the play, but in one's day-to-day life it can also be full of arguing, suspicion, fighting, and strategic maneuvering. These examples do not negate the ideal of marriage as an institution that brings families together in loving bonds, but, in comedic fashion, they do bring these high aspirations down to earth a bit.

Appearances and Identity:

Practically all of the high-jinx and mistakes that drive the comedy and plot of *The Comedy of Errors* result from the confusion of the identities of Antipholus and **Dromio of Ephesus**, and Antipholus and **Dromio of Syracuse**. Each one is constantly mixed up with his twin because of his

physical appearance, even though they act differently and insist on who they really are. The play thus shows the folly of making assumptions based on someone's appearance. In the end, everyone's true identity is revealed. This resolution, though, does not put an end to the play's deeper questioning of identity. In particular, Shakespeare's comedy prompts one to ask: where does identity come from? Is it something innate that we are born with and that is then recognized by other people? Or does the recognition of others actually help create our identity?

Each Antipholus and Dromio has a "true" identity with which they are born that determines their life to some degree. However, characters' identities are also partially formed by how other people treat them. Antipholus of Syracuse in some sense becomes Antipholus of Ephesus for a small period of time, because he is treated as such. Moreover, it is only when characters' true identities are recognized by others that they truly become themselves. **Aemilia** declares herself to be **Aegeon's** wife, and Aegeon declares Antipholus of Ephesus to be his son, but it is only when Aegeon recognizes Aemilia and Antipholus recognizes his father that these identities are completely fulfilled. Moreover, what people do can also help define who they are. The **merchant** and **courtesan** remain unnamed in the play, known only by their occupations. Similarly, Aemilia is only known as the abbess for much of her time on stage. Thus, identity in the play is a curious and complicated mix of innate qualities, where one is from (the two pairs of twins are only distinguished by their cities of origin), what one does, and how one is seen by other people.

Mistakes and Coincidences:

Shakespeare's play is called *The Comedy of Errors* for a reason: the play is filled to the brim with humorous mistakes and errors, from mistaken identities to mixed-up objects to misinterpreted puns. Characters continually make mistakes and grow more and more confused as the play progresses. While such mistakes can be seen as negative things in the lives of the play's characters, they are also in some sense beneficial to the play. It is precisely error that allows for the comedy and plot of the play, which can be seen as a continually escalating series of errors followed by one final scene of revelation and resolution. This happy ending is the defining feature of comedy as a genre. But the play can't jump directly to this resolution. It must take a wandering path from beginning to happy conclusion (in Latin, *error* literally means "a wandering"). There have to be obstacles for the characters, a plot that meanders as characters go off-course and make mistakes. These mistakes make the comedy interesting and amusing, and create the very problems that the ending can then solve.

In addition to characters' mistakes, simple coincidences are also a significant force in the plot. The play relies on the (almost implausible) coincidences of **Aemilia** having become an abbess in the city where her lost son settles, and of all the characters finding themselves in Ephesus on the same day and running into each other at just the right time to save **Aegeon's** life. All these coincidences continually baffle the characters of the play, who can find no adequate explanation for what they

see as strange, inexplicable events and behavior. So, they often turn to the supernatural. Antipholus and **Dromio of Syracuse** think that Ephesus is inhabited by witches and sorcerers in order to explain how everyone seems to know them. **Adriana** thinks that her husband is possessed, and gets **Pinch** to try to perform an exorcism on him. And the **Duke**, when he sees both pairs of twins, thinks that one pair are spirit versions of the real Antipholus and Dromio. All this talk of the supernatural, though, ends up being just one more error. The play reveals that we often use the supernatural as a catch-all explanation for what we don't understand, even though such things are more often just the result of bizarre coincidences and simple human error.

Scapegoats and Social Hierarchy:

Resorting to supernatural explanations is one way the play's characters make sense of the strange things they experience during the play. Another way is through using scapegoats. With no easy explanation, characters become frustrated and take this anger out on other people whom they irrationally blame for their troubles. In particular, Antipholus of Ephesus and **Antipholus of Syracuse** place blame on their respective servants and **Adriana**. In the world of the play, women and servants occupy lower, less privileged roles in society. Thus, Adriana and the two Dromios are prime targets for scapegoating. Both Antipholus of Ephesus and Antipholus of Syracuse beat and abuse their Dromios, and Antipholus of Ephesus threatens physical violence against Adriana multiple times.

These instances reveal the strict, oppressive social and gender hierarchies in the world of the play, as both women and servants are subject to the whims of their husbands or masters. Shakespeare, however, mostly puts this kind of scapegoating on stage simply for laughs and slapstick humor. Nevertheless, the play also delights in moments when these scapegoat figures can get a slight bit of revenge on their social superiors. Adriana is able to lock her husband out of their home, and has him tied and bound by **Pinch**. And both **Dromio of Ephesus** and **Dromio of Syracuse** are witty and quick with words, often talking back to their masters with clever riddles and jokes. While the play is a rather light comedy and is mostly interested in the comic potential of scapegoats, it can also be seen as critiquing the practice, since all of the scapegoats of the play are really not to blame, and it is ultimately foolish and mistaken for each Antipholus to take out his anger on his unfortunate social inferiors.

7.2 MAJOR SYMBOLS IN THE PLAY:

The Gold Necklace, Bail Money, and Diamond Ring:

While there are not really any symbols in the play (insofar as objects that stand in for something other than what they really are), there are several highly important objects that function as links between characters, plot points, and significant themes. The gold necklace made by **Angelo**, the **courtesan's** diamond ring, and the bail money intended for Antipholus of Ephesus are all exchanged and end up in the wrong

hands. They drive the plot of the comedy, resulting in the arrest of Antipholus of Ephesus, Antipholus' beating Dromio (for not bringing the bail money), and the courtesan's getting involved in things. As these things pass from character to character, they highlight the importance of the idea of exchange in the play (of money, objects, and also of identities), and also serve as indicators of all the mix-ups of the play: neither the necklace nor the bail money go to the right character, and the diamond ring is not returned to the courtesan as promised. The very idea of bail (giving money in return for someone's release from jail) suggests the extent to which the world of the play is governed by economics, as money can be exchanged effectively for a human being (a point driven home by **Aegeon's** needing 1000 marks to save his life). The return of all these objects to their rightful owners at the end of the play signifies at last the resolution of all the play's various errors.

7.3 QUESTIONS:

1. *Discuss the perspectives on marriage offered in The Comedy of Errors.*
2. *Discuss the role of magic in the play.*
3. *Discuss the role of setting in the play.*
4. *Discuss the part played by material things--money, jewelry--in the action.*
5. *Analyze the portrayal of authority in the master-slave relationship and in the character of the Duke of Ephesus.*
6. *Discuss the ending and the resolution of the various "problems" that face the characters.*

7.4 REFERENCES:

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SELECTED VERSE FROM THE ELIZABETHAN PERIOD: PART I

Unit Structure

8.0 Objectives

8.1 Elizabethan period

8.2 What is a sonnet?

8.2.1 Key Features of Sonnet

8.2.2 Origin and Development of Sonnet

8.3 Sir Phillip Sidney

8.4 Astrophel and Stella

8.5 Sonnet 37 "My mouth doth water and my breast doth swell".

8.6 Sonnet 39 "Come Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace"

8.7 Quick Review of Astrophel and Stella Sonnets

8.8 Summing up

8.9 Suggested Reading

8.10 Self-check exercises

8.0 OBJECTIVES

In this chapter, the learner is provided with a brief overview of the Elizabethan period and its significance in Literature. The learner will be introduced concisely to the poetic form- sonnet, its origin, development, characteristics and its types. After the brief outline of the significant information related to the poetic form and age in which it was written, the learner will be advanced to understand the famous sonneteers and their famous sonnets in this unit. Thereafter, all the learnings will be summed up in short for the learner, followed by a self-check exercise.

8.1 ELIZABETHAN PERIOD

Many historians consider the Elizabethan age to be the greatest age of English history, lasting from 1558 until 1603 and a golden period in literature. During this time as the arts flourished England experienced stability and harmony. The era is known after Queen Elizabeth-I, who reigned over England at the time and supported good literature. It was the period of the English Renaissance when English literature and poetry were

at peak with the revival of classical literature. Playwrights and poets were inspired from Italian forms and genres for instance love sonnets, pastoral poems and allegorical poems. Few examples of these forms are found in Edmund Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* and *The Faerie Queene*, Sir Philip Sidney's sonnets, Sir Walter Raleigh's lyrics. In fact, Shakespeare's innovation with the songs in his plays started a new trend in literature.

The Elizabethan period is known for its theatre and William Shakespeare is a colossal figure who has written universal themes and characters. His history plays, tragedies, comedies and sonnets are widely read and popular even in twenty first century. Few other dramatists of this age are Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Kyd, Thomas Dekker, John Fletcher and Francis Beaumont in earlier part of this age with whom drama flourished and Ben Johnson in the later part and after him drama started declining.

Other arts such as music and painting were popular at the time, and most notably, poetry blossomed, with new forms including the sonnet, the Spenserian stanza, and dramatic blank verse, as well as prose, which included historical chronicles and pamphlets. This age is also regarded as the first romantic age as the literature of this age is full of spirit of independence and creativity.

8.2 WHAT IS SONNET?

In this section, let's discuss the origin and development of the sonnet and some of the basic features of sonnets. A sonnet is a fourteen line poem with one stanza written in iambic pentameter. The sonnet is a prominent classical form that has compelled authors for ages. It is originated from the Italian term *sonetto*, which means "a tiny sound or melody." The English or Shakespearean sonnet is the most popular and finest type of sonnet, but there are several other variants in literature.

The sonnet became a fixed literary form in Renaissance Italy and Elizabethan England. The poetic form consists of fourteen lines, usually in iambic pentameter in English. In several countries of the authors who wrote them, distinct forms of sonnets arose, with differences in rhyme scheme and metrical rhythm. Within their fourteen lines, all sonnets comprise a two-part framework, with a problem and solution, question and answer, or statement and interpretation, and a volta or turn, between the two sections.

Origin and Development of the Sonnets:

A sonnet is a form of poetry that was originally founded in Italian poetry, produced at the Court of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II in Palermo, Sicily in the sixteenth century. Giacomo da Lentini, a thirteenth century poet and notary, is a man who invented the sonnet to express courtly love.

The Italian or Petrarchan sonnet, in which fourteen lines are structured in an octet (eight lines) with rhyming scheme ABBA ABBA and a sestet (six

lines) rhyming either CDECDE or CDCDCD, was the original form of the sonnet. In the early sixteenth century, Sir Thomas Wyatt brought the Petrarchan sonnet to England.

The English or Shakespearean sonnet was produced later which comprises three quatrains that rhyme ABAB CDCD EFEF and a heroic couplet that rhymes GG.

Edmund Spenser created a sonnet variant in which the quatrains are linked by their rhyme scheme: ABAB BCBC CDCD EE.

Later, the Shakespearean sonnet was adapted by Milton and was named after him as Miltonic sonnets. They frequently focused on internal struggles or conflicts rather than external issues, and they occasionally went beyond typical rhyme and length constraints.

Following that is Terza Rima's sonnet. The terzarima sonnet is named after the terzarima poetic form, which is a three-line stanza with a chain rhyme that is the carrying over of the rhyme used in a previous stanza. The terzarima sonnet's rhyme pattern is ABA BCB CDC DED, followed by a rhyming couplet that usually replicates the poem's first rhyme: AA.

The Curtal sonnet appears thereafter. The curtal sonnet is a compressed variant of the sonnet created by English poet Gerard Manley Hopkins in the nineteenth century. The curtal sonnet, unlike the majority of sonnets, does not precisely stick to the 14-line norm; instead, it preserves the general proportions of the Petrarchan sonnet by compressing two quatrains in the octet into two tercets (three-line stanzas) and the concluding sestet into a quintet (five-line stanza). The closing line of the quintet (and the sonnet as a whole) is called a "tail" or "half-line" because it is substantially shorter than the preceding lines. Therefore, the curtal sonnet can be classified as 10.5 or 11 lines long. The ABC ABC rhyme scheme is continued by DBCDC or DCBDC in the curtal sonnet. Furthermore, this sonnet form employs sprung rhythm, a sort of metre that differs from iambic pentameter in which each line begins with a stressed sound rather than an unstressed sound and often has four stressed syllables. Hopkins' "Pied Beauty" is a well-known curtal sonnet. The rhyme scheme of this sonnet is ABC ABC DBCDC.

Key features of the Sonnet:

1. All sonnets have fourteen lines, which can be divided into four portions called quatrains.
2. A rigorous rhyming scheme is required. Sonnets are composed in iambic pentameter, a poetry metre made up of alternate unstressed and stressed syllables with each line consisting of 10 beats.
3. Quatrains are the four segments that make up a sonnet. The first three quatrains each include four lines and rhyme in an alternate pattern. The concluding quatrain has only two lines, both of which rhyme.
4. Each quatrain advances the sonnet in the following way:

- a. The first quatrain should introduce the sonnet's subject and ABAB is the rhyme scheme
- b. The second quatrain should continue with the sonnet's theme with the four lines using a CDCD rhyme scheme.
- c. The third quatrain should draw the sonnet's theme to a close with EFEF rhyme scheme.
- d. The fourth is a couplet with rhyming scheme GG which gives an end and is the sonnet's conclusion.

8.3 SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

Sir Philip Sidney was an Elizabethan period poet, nobleman, scholar, and military servant who is regarded as one of the most influential people of the period. He was born in Kent, England, on November 30, 1554. Sidney studied at Oxford University's Christ Church College from 1568 to 1571, but before finishing his studies he left to explore Europe.

In 1575, Sidney returned to England and was appointed as Queen Elizabeth's adviser, a prominent position. He was transferred to Germany as a minister in 1577, and upon his return to England, he became a patron of the arts. He supported poet Edmund Spenser in particular. In the early 1580s, he remained active in politics, opposing the queen's planned marriage to the French heir and served as a Member of Parliament.

Sidney wrote several important works in the Elizabethan era, including the first Elizabethan sonnet cycle, *Astrophel and Stella*, and *Arcadia*, an epic prose romance. He is credited to popularize the sonnet form and English love poetry. His literary criticism, known as *The Defense of Poesy*, was equally well-known. He did not permit his work to be published during his lifetime, despite sharing it with close friends.

Sidney was selected as governor of the Dutch town of Flushing in 1585. In 1586, he fought against the Spanish at Zutphen and died from his wounds a few days later. On February 16, 1587, he was buried at St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

Self-Check Exercise 1

1. Surf the web and read more about the works written by Sir Philip Sidney.

8.4 ASTROPHEL AND STELLA

In this section, we will look at about *Astrophel and Stella* and its summary and analysis.

Astrophel and Stella by Philip Sidney is an English sonnet sequence including 108 sonnets and 11 songs, probably written in the 1580s. Most of the sonnets have volta or turn towards the end and is defined as a point

from where argument shifts, generally this occurred in Italian sonnets in the beginning of sestet or closing of octave. The sonnets here portray the growth and fall of a love connection. Astrophel is derived from the Greek words 'aster' and 'phil,' as well as the Latin word 'Stella,' which means star. Astrophel is the lover of the stars, and Stella is his star.

Although the poems were shared in manuscript form, it was not until 1591, five years after Sidney's death, that an official version was printed. However, this text was regarded as unreliable, and the most reliable version came from a 1598 folio of Sidney's *Arcadia*, which included an edition of *Astrophel and Stella*. The folio in charge was Sidney's sister.

Astrophel and Stella depict Astrophel's unrequited love for Stella. The sequence is assumed to be autobiographical and inspired by his relationship with Penelope Devereux, who is represented as Stella in the sequence. Sidney's sonnets are reflective and contemplative in nature as compared to what was said about him and how he claimed to value his privacy throughout his life.

Astrophel and Stella, Philip Sidney's sonnet series, follows a loose storyline filled with the intimate drama between Astrophel, the majority of the sonnets' speaker, and Stella, his unrequited beloved. Major themes that Sydney displays is various emotional connections, which is hope and despair, resentment and fondness, bodily cravings and spiritual longing. Love versus desire runs through various sonnets where Astrophel's unreciprocated love with Stella turns him to be a person whose desire is not in his control eventually breaks his platonic relationship chain. Another major theme is the difference between light and dark, which revolves around the metaphor star-lover and star.

The sequence's initial sonnets express Astrophel's concern about taking on a poetic endeavor that many have already achieved, yet he still goes on to describe the history of the first time he met Stella, what she seemed like, and how he was deeply in love with her.

Astrophel and Stella trace the growth of a romantic relationship. The protagonist and narrator Astrophel falls in love with the lovely Stella, a lady who is noble, intelligent, and his desired life partner, during the duration of the sequence of sonnets. Astrophel is the speaker in the majority of the sonnets, and Stella is the listener of his utterances.

We can understand Astrophel's inner thoughts and emotions because he is the "writer" of the sonnet sequence, but not much of Stella's. Only Stella's acts and infrequent remarks to Astrophel expose her thoughts and characteristics to us. Therefore, we are able to comprehend only one side of the romance.

Despite the fact that she does not reciprocate his affection, Stella never openly rejects him, although she does not show him any love in the first thirty or so sonnets. In the middle of the sonnet sequence Astrophel finds out that Stella marries another man but Astrophel is captivated to see her unhappy with her marriage as her personal sacrifice in it.

Stella eventually begins to reciprocate Astrophel's love, but she is never overpowered by her love for him, which Astrophel is unable to prevent. Despite her marriage vows, Astrophel tries to persuade her into making love to him near the end of the sonnet sequence. So when she is sleeping, he stole a kiss from her. Although Stella adores Astrophel, but she recognizes that the relationship cannot continue if Astrophel requires his passion to be fulfilled. Therefore, Stella ends the relationship. With the exception of Sonnet 24, it is assumed that the first thirty sonnets of the sequence were composed when "Stella" was still the unmarried Penelope Devereux. Sidney never received an overt love response from her, but she also did not express any disapproval of his love advances.

Later between the thirty-first and thirty-third sonnets, Sidney learns of Penelope's marriage to Lord Rich. With its pained "I might," the thirty-third sonnet vividly depicts Sidney's first encounter with Penelope as the now-married Lady Rich. Even though Stella is married, Astrophel is determined to continue his love for her. Even though she is unhappy in her marriage, Astrophel is envious of knowing the fact that Lord Rich has unrestricted access to Stella.

Around the sixtieth sonnet, Stella begins to reveal her feelings for Sidney. It is at this point in the story that their love affair begins to take off. Astrophel no longer just portrays Stella's beauty and his addiction to passion; he also details their actual interactions. The affair gets even more complicated once Stella declares her love for Astrophel. Astrophel's excessive passion and desire for Stella is the first major cause of tension in their relationship. Stella refuses to have a physical connection with Astrophel because she is already married. She expresses her love for him on the condition that their connection stays platonic. For a few sonnets, Astrophel is satisfied with this compromise, but his physical longing for Stella begins to overpower him. Several sonnets are devoted to this conflict: Astrophel's reasoning mind realizes that the only way to delight Stella and prolong the affair is to deny his physical desire for her, but his desire overcomes all of his rationality. As a result, he can't help but desire to be physically there with her. Astrophel kisses Stella while she sleeps in Song 2. The Song's language tells that the kiss is portrayed as a form of rape. Stella is furious at Astrophel for breaking her trust, but Astrophel is unable to satisfy his desire. Stella rejects Astrophel for the first time after the stolen kiss. She admits to loving him but says they can't be together anymore. Her absence distresses Astrophel, yet he is reassured by the thought that she still loves him. As the narrative progresses, the relationship gets more emotional and intense. Even though they are separated, they continue to love each other. Astrophel, in particular, adores her more than ever before. He confesses to harming Stella in a certain manner in Sonnet 93, and he is consumed by remorse and sadness for the next few sonnets. His conduct and emotions make it absolutely clear that the relationship is now destined to end permanently.

In Sonnet 101, Stella gets severely ill, leading Astrophel to express his love for her once more. In Song 11, he starts singing under her window in the hopes that she will reconsider her decision and live with him. Stella

refuses to leave her marriage and her reputation despite his urgings. We see her true rage and contempt for Astrophel for the first time in the sequence. so, without Stella's company, Astrophel closes the sonnet alone and lonely. Despite the sorrow of the ending, Astrophel finds some joy in knowing that he loved Stella and that she once loved him back.

Selected Verse from the
Elizabethan Period: Part I

The sequence's main theme is the impossibility of the two having a successful relationship. The title of the composition also expresses the split between the two. To continue, the title consists of one Greek name and one Latin name, creating an obvious disconnection. The use of the grammatical conjunction "and" implies that the two are a couple. Also, the names which mean "star-lover" and "star," suggest a split between the two: the stars and those who love them will always be separated.

Sidney revolutionized the art of poetry with his writings Astrophel and Stella, which featured profoundly passionate and intimate sonnets. Sidney appears to break from his supposedly private character in this work, allowing his learners access to his most private emotions and thoughts.

8.5 SONNET 37 "MY MOUTH DOTH WATER AND MY BREAST DOTH SWELL"

Text:

My mouth doth water, and my breast doth swell,
My tongue doth itch, my thoughts in labor be:
Listen then, lordings, with good ear to me,
For of my life I must a riddle tell.

Toward Aurora's court a nymph doth dwell,
Rich in all beauties which man's eye can see:
Beauties so far from reach of words, that we
Abase her praise, saying she doth excel:

Rich in the treasure of deserv'd renown,
Rich in the riches of a royal heart,
Rich in those gifts which give th'eternal crown;
Who though most rich in these and every part,
Which make the patents of true worldly bliss,
Hath no misfortune, but that Rich she is.

Critical Analysis of the sonnet 37:

Astrophel gives the learners a puzzle where it is revealed that Stella is Penelope Devereux. She is gifted with all virtues. She possesses great beauty, fame, heart, and, most importantly, virtue. Even though she is wealthy in every way, Astrophel's greatest sorrow is that she is a "Rich".

Here, in this sonnet, Lord Rich, Stella's or Penelope's husband, is the subject of the puns on the word "rich." The estate of the Rich family, which was located in Essex's eastern county, may be referred to as "Aurora's court."

FACT: This sonnet was excluded of the first printed edition of the sonnet sequence, maybe because it was too explicit, but it was included in the official folio edition.

8.6 SONNET 39 "COME SLEEP! O SLEEP, THE CERTAIN KNOT OF PEACE"

Text:

Come Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
Th' indifferent judge between the high and low.
With shield of proof shield me from out the prease
Of those fierce darts despair at me doth throw:
O make in me those civil wars to cease;
I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.
Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
A chamber deaf to noise and blind to light,
A rosy garland and a weary head:
And if these things, as being thine by right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
Livelier than elsewhere, Stella's image see.

Critical Analysis of the sonnet 39:

In this sonnet, Sidney personifies sleep. He communicates with it, he also pleads "Sleep" to come and take him away from his current state of agony. He thinks only while sleeping he can relieve his agony and stop the civil war that is raging between his heart and his mind, between his passion and

his reason. He wonders how much it will take him to get the god of Sleep to visit him, and he offers a "good tribute."

Selected Verse from the
Elizabethan Period: Part I

All he wants are comfortable cushions and a bed, and a dark silent room, if only he can compel Sleep to come. Sidney finally devises a plan to persuade Sleep to see him by claiming that when he will sleep, the image of Stella will appear in his dreams, and Sleep will be able to see it. This is the greatest honor he can bestow.

This is a sonnet in which Sidney's character converses with someone other than Stella. This sonnet's irony is quite fascinating. Sidney urges Sleep to come and save him from the misery of his love for Stella. At the same time, when he is sleeping, a picture of Stella will appear in his mind. Stella is always on his mind, whether he is sleeping or not. He prefers Stella in his fantasies since he doesn't have to deal with the fact that she isn't his.

Self-Check Exercise 2

1. Discuss the themes highlighted in the sonnets of Astrophel and Stella.
2. Surf the web and know more about the other sonnets of Astrophel and Stella.

8.7 QUICK REVIEW OF THE ASTROPHEL AND STELLA SONNETS

Astrophel is portrayed as being madly in love with Stella throughout the sequence. However, this love soon transforms into a passion he can't control, resulting in the end of their platonic relationship. One of the major themes that we observe is love versus desire. The difference between light and day as the difference between Stella being with Astrophel and not being with him, respectively, is another theme.

The poems in Astrophel and Stella can generally be classified as English sonnets. However, it's worth noting that its form changes frequently throughout the sequence of Astrophel and Stella. For example, in sonnet 37, the rhyme pattern is ABBA ABBA CDCD EE, while in sonnet 39, it is ABABABAB CDCD EE. Changing the rhyme pattern could be a technique for intensifying or advancing the plot to the story's conclusion.

8.8 SUMMING UP

Dear learner, let us sum up what we have learned in this chapter. In brief, we touched upon the Elizabethan Age and its importance. The Elizabethan Age is called as Golden Age as we see a huge literary development with the rise of genres and forms. We got introduced to a poetic form- **sonnet** and its development throughout the age. The chapter also discussed one of the famous sonneteers Sir Philip Sidney and analyzed his famous work Astrophel and Stella and analyzed in detail his two of well-known sonnets namely sonnet 37 "My mouth doth water and my breast doth swell" and sonnet 39 "Come Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace".

Some questions in the self-check exercise are provided further for the learners to ponder on the subject.

8.9 SUGGESTED READING

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8.10 SELF-CHECK EXERCISES

- Self-Check Exercise 1 Refer to the end of Section 9.3.
- Self-Check Exercise 2 Refer to the end of Section 9.6.



SELECTED VERSE FROM THE ELIZABETHAN PERIOD: PART II

Unit Structure

9.0 Objectives

9.1 Spenserian Sonnet

9.2 Edmund Spenser

9.3 The Shepheardes Calender

9.4 April Eclogue

9.5 November Eclogue

9.6 Summing Up

9.7 Suggested Reading

9.8 Self-check exercises

9.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this unit is first to introduce the learners to a type of the sonnet i.e. Spenserian sonnet and its characteristics. Then the student will be introduced to the originator of the Spenserian sonnet and a famous writer of the Elizabethan period- Edmund Spenser. As the unit progresses, the student will be acquainted with one of Spenser's first major poetic works- The Shepheardes Calender in detail and a brief note on the two eclogues prescribed in the syllabus from the same.

After completing this unit, the student will be able to recognize and differentiate the different types of sonnets. This unit gives instances from Edmund Spenser's The Shepheardes Calender.

9.1 SPENSERIAN SONNET

The Spenserian sonnet was invented by Edmund Spenser, a well-known sixteenth-century poet, and is so named the same. Spenser is well known for The Faerie Queene, but he also wrote and produced a number of sonnets. Like other great sonnets, the Spenserian sonnets incorporate features from various sonnet forms. This sonnet, like the Petrarchan sonnet, uses just five rhymes, but has a structure closer to the

Shakespearean sonnet, with three quatrains and a couplet. They are composed in iambic pentameter and rhyme with ABAB BCBC CDCD EE.

Spenser dismisses the problem/solution and question/argument structure of the sonnet, instead, he created each quatrain producing a metaphor, conflict, notion, or issue, and the last declamatory couplet offers the resolve. The "turn" in a Petrarchan sonnet occurs around the ninth line, but the realization in a Spenserian sonnet occurs in the last couplet. To make a false turn, Spenser usually utilized terms like "yet" or "but" around the ninth line, but the true resolution or revelation arrives in the final two lines.

The basic three aspects of all sonnets are that they are all fourteen lines long, written in iambic pentameter, and have a tight rhyme scheme; however, there are variations in how the sonnet can be presented.

9.2 EDMUND SPENSER

Edmund Spenser was born in London, England, in either 1552 or 1553. For his exceptionally high-quality poetry, English essayist Charles Lamb regarded Edmund Spenser as a "Poet's Poet." Now we'll discover why he was known as Poet's Poet and how extensive his labour was. He is best known today for *The Faerie Queene*, an epic allegorical poem written in 1590. This complicated, interesting, and occasionally strange poem honors the Tudor Dynasty in general and Elizabeth I in particular. Spenser is regarded as one of the greatest poets of all time, and this poem is regarded as one of the finest work in the English language. Spenser worked on *The Faerie Queene* for several years, and by 1589, three books had been completed. When Sir Walter Raleigh visited Spenser, he was deeply impacted by his work that brought him back to England. They landed in London in November 1589, and the first three books of Spenser's most renowned work were published early the following year, with an extensive homage to Queen Elizabeth I. Spenser aspired of writing the great epic. He intended to write 12 books, each on one of Aristotle's moral virtues. A knight was supposed to embody each of these virtues. As a result, the poem would incorporate aspects of chivalric romance, a manual of manners and morals, and a national epic. Although, Edward Spenser had only six books published during his lifetime.

For his largest contribution to the invention of the Spenserian stanza and his wide vocabulary, Spenser is considered as one of the most important poets in the English language. His courtship with Elizabeth Boyle resulted in the Amoretti sonnets, which he presented as an epithalamium to their marriage. In 1579, he dedicated his first volume of poetry- *The Shepheardes Calender*, to the poet Sir Philip Sidney.

Spenser worked for the Bishop of Rochester as a secretary and then the Earl of Leicester, who introduced him to other poets and artists at Queen Elizabeth's court, in addition to his literary works and then in 1580, he was appointed as a secretary to the Lord Deputy of Ireland. He authored *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, an enraged treatise in 1596.

Thereafter, in 1598, during the Nine Years' War Spenser was exiled from Ireland. In London in 1599, he died and was buried in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey.

Selected Verse from the
Elizabethan Period: Part II

In the following section, we'll go through the *Shepherd's Calendar* in detail.

9.3 THE SHEPHEARDES CALENDER

The title *The Shepherd's Calendar* is written in purposefully antiquated spellings to indicate an association to ancient literature. The *Shepherd's Calendar* (1579) was Spenser's first significant work. The collection consists of twelve eclogues, one for each month of the year, written in various styles and meters.

Before analyzing Spenser's *The Shepherd's Calendar*, let us first learn what eclogues are and what they mean.

Eclogue (*Ægloga*), is a brief pastoral dialogue poem, generally in dialogue, about rural life and shepherd community, portraying rural life as freed of the complexity and corruption of more modern society. The eclogue originally appeared in Theocritus' *Idylls* (c. 310–250 BC), who is often regarded as the founder of pastoral poetry. Virgil (70–19 BC), a great Roman poet, used the form in his ten *Eclogues*, or *Bucolics*. Early modern lyric poets were drawn to the pastoral genre, which originated with Greek and Latin poets. We can also see how Edmund Spenser's *The Shepherd's Calendar* (1579), a collection of 12 eclogues, is based on Theocritus, Virgil, and more modern writers. *The Shepherd's Calendar* by Spenser is often regarded as the first remarkable pastoral poem in English. Spenser's eclogues are rhetorically sophisticated, with a particularly archaic language and a difficult rhyme pattern.

Four of the twelve eclogues in the *Shepherd's Calendar* deal with love, with Spenser narrating his own hopeless passion for Rosalind, one is a tribute to Elysa (Elizabeth), one a lament for a maiden of great blond, four refer to conduct or religion, one describes a singing contest, and one lament the contempt with which poetry is treated. Colin Clout, a folk character created by John Skelton, is introduced in the poem, which depicts his existence as a shepherd throughout the year. Each eclogue was written for a specific month of the year, and the collection was called a "calender". Each eclogue easily stands alone as a portion individually.

We also often see, "E. K." - the identity of the omnipresent- as a prolix commentator is one of the poem's many mysteries. The introductory epistle by E. K., as well as the headnote "arguments" (summaries) and "glosses" (commentary) on each eclogue, add additional depth to a book. The multiplicity of the voices in the *Shepherd's Calendar* is indicative of Elizabethan literature. Each eclogue's first line expresses qualities of the month, and the poem as a whole has components and arguments that are repeated. Each month, Spenser produces rhyme in a new way.

The shepherd and his flocks metaphor leads to another important aspect of the text. The poem can be read as both a Christ-centered declaration of devotion and a critique of the politics of Spenser's day. For instance, in the July eclogue, Algrind teaches and acts modesty, sacrifice, and selflessness can be evaluated as an imitation of Jesus which are to be considered image of the Good Shepherd. As a result, if Spenser is a political reformer through his poetry, he also voices to what he sees as God's self-revelation in Christ.

Following we see a brief analysis of all the twelve eclogues of the calendar.

In the January eclogue, Colin, heartbroken and declined by his beloved Rosalind, compares his mood to the wintry atmosphere. February eclogue talks about Cuddie, an impudent young shepherd, complains to the elderly Thenot about the winter winds. Thenot, narrates a philosophical story to Cuddie about an old oak and a proud briar bush. Cuddie is unmoved by this tale of youth and age and ends it abruptly. In the March eclogue, two young shepherds celebrate spring as a time for love. They tell the story of Thomalin's meeting with Cupid. In April eclogue, Thenot finds Hobbinal grieving over the sorrows of his friend Colin Clout and asks Hobbinal to recite one of Colin's verses. Piers and Palinode discuss the immorality of shepherds who ignore their flocks for personal gain in the eclogue for the month of May. Palinode later laments about not having the same rights as others to enjoy the pleasures of life at the cost of being a good shepherd, to which Piers responds by telling Palinode a fable about an innocent child and a smooth-talking fox. Colin returns to see Hobbinal's calm existence in the fields in the June eclogue, where Hobbinal praises Colin's verses but denies possessing any special powers.

In July eclogue, Thomalin compares the simplicity and ingenuousness of the first shepherd, Christ, with the extravagant living of the purple-clad priests of his day. As per the August eclogue, Willy and Perigot recite alternate lines to a lively love poetry intended to lift Perigot's spirits after a failed love affair. Cuddie, their judge, then reads Willy and Perigot, one of Colin's impassioned laments to Rosalind. Diggon Davie returns to the country in September eclogue with news of the horrors he encountered on his travels to the cities, where he discovered everything to be filled with corruption and greed. His tone is aggressive, and his mindset is dismal. Cuddie questioned the value of writing in October dialogue. He appears to be undervalued even when his performance is great. Piers, his elder, wiser friend, urges Cuddie, "The praise is better than the price." Piers also mentions Virgil, the Roman poet, while lamenting how Colin alone may soar to the heavens in his poem, but he is a victim of love. Colin offers a lament for Dido, a beautiful lady who died young, in the November eclogue. He talks out of despair at first, pleads the muses and all of nature to weep with him. Then his mood improves, and he is delighted to learn that the lady "is now placed in heaven's height," where she "lives in bliss with the good gods." In the December eclogue, Colin vividly recalls his youthful days, the spring of his youth, when he climbed trees in hunt of raven eggs, shook nuts from walnut trees, and developed and mastered the

art of song from the good, old shepherd Wrenock. His poetic talents were withered by the heartbreaking steam of love throughout his summer years. Colin sees himself aged now and is ready to depart from this world, and so he bids farewell to his art, flocks, and friends.

The following are the characters (Shepherds) in the Shepherdes Calendar:

Colin, The Clout, is a shepherd who has feelings for Rosalinde but does not get returned. Therefore, Colin destroys his pipe, which he had hoped to use to play love tunes that would win Rosalinde's love.

Rosalinde, a rustic girl, adored by Colin. Colin becomes dejected and melancholic as a result of Rosalinde's inhumane treatment of his emotions. She is the subject of his poetry, yet he eventually dismisses her.

Thenot, a wiser and older shepherd who has no longer any interest in worldly pleasures and looks unattractive.

Cuddie, a young shepherd, is admired as a poet, but he recognises that he lacks Colin's talent. He teases Thenot about his growing age.

Hobbinoll, is a shepherd and Colin's friend who tries to encourage and acknowledge Colin's poetic abilities. Hobbinoll embodies the ideas of rural serenity, peace, and reflection.

Piers, a shepherd who represents Protestantism.

Palinode, a shepherd who represents Catholicism. Both

Both Piers and Palinode get into a debate.

Diggon Davie, a shepherd who is well-traveled.

Morell, a shepherd-clergyman who is extremely proud of himself.

Thomalin, a shepherd who accuses Morell of arrogance and tries to prove his point in a debate.

The Shepherdes Calender although was the debut work but it astonishes readers with its political and personal vigor and vision. Spenser became a recognized national poet almost immediately after its publication.

So that was a deep study and a quick note on the work's characters. Let us now look at the two eclogues given in the syllabus, April and November.

9.4 APRIL ECLOGUE

The April eclogue primarily focuses on the poet's position in the state. This eclogue depicts the poet's professional and political courting of Queen Elysa, as described in the Argument, and is composed in homage and appreciation of Queen Elizabeth, the most gracious sovereign. Hobbinoll and Thenott, two shepherdes, are just the speakers in the eclogue, where Hobbinoll laments Colin's awful tragedy in love, regretting

that his companion has abandoned his art and turned away from him to Rosalind. Thenot consoles him by proposing an idea that he sing a Colin's song. Hobbinol agrees and recites a paean to Elysa, the Shepherd Queen. Elysa is a heavenly goddess. Colin's song of Elysa, which Colin produced sometime in honour of her Majesty, whom he abruptly names Elysa, is clearly the highlight of the eclogue. Perhaps it's a stretch to say that such allegorical fables were part of a long-running, hidden opposition to Elizabeth's growing hold on public discourse as her reign proceeded, but they are, in some respects, a response to censorship. The reciting of the verse affirms to poet's superior poetic mastery and talent. This performance convinces Thenot of Colin's ability, and Thenot and Hobbinol both feel that Colin made a mistake by sacrificing his talent to forbidden love.

The eclogue's dual structure of discourse and song, however, indicates a composite concept of the poet and the sovereign. On the one hand, April presents a triumphant story about Colin's use of art to glorify his sovereign, portraying an idealistic poet-monarch relationship that probably helps Spenser advertise his address to the queen and highlights the role of poets can play. On the other hand, April also presents a tragic story about the poet's unrequited love for Rosalind limiting this image, moderating the ideal image via lamenting. In the middle of this extravagant flattery, he highlights Queen's virginity and her marriage to England—an implicit dismissal of marriage to a foreign government.

The April eclogue draws attention as a pivotal starting work of The Shepheardes Calender and of English poetry because of its intricate artistic design, its divided presentation at the core of sixteenth-century literature, and its significance within a long transmission in history.

9.5 NOVEMBER ECLOGUE

In the Argument, E.K. is the one to give November special status. This eclogue is described as "the finest poetry in the sequence" because it deals with the "divine mystery of death and rebirth." November, in particular, demonstrates Spenser's ability to write in the pastoral style of funeral elegy. Theocritus' Idylls, an elegy for the dead shepherd Daphnis, initiates this tradition. But this eclogue is strikingly similar to Marot's elegy mourning the death of Queen Louise of France. These elegies, as a practice, follow a similar two-part structure: first sadness over the loss of a beloved person, followed by solace via the person as a climax.

In the eclogue, the shepherd Thenot urges Colin Clout to sing one of his renowned songs, but Colin denies it. Thenot then demands a song commemorating the recent death of Queen Dido, which Colin obliges. Colin laments the tragic death of Dido, a charming young woman, in this eclogue. Colin performs a fifteen-stanza death elegy in which he mourns first and then invites the muses and all of nature to mourn with him. Later, while nearing the death elegy we see a sudden shift in his tone where he witnesses her journey into the afterlife in the lines- 'I see thee blessed soule, I see, / Walke in the Elisian fieldes so free,'(178-9). He

appears pleased when he learns that Dido has been elevated to the heights of heaven, where she enjoys the company of the heavenly gods. Finally, in the final stanza, Thenot praises Colin's song.

Selected Verse from the
Elizabethan Period: Part II

Colin's elegy on Dido, written in November eclogue, "stand[s] out as securing an English identity in European Renaissance poetry."

9.6 SUMMING UP

Let's sum up what we studied in this chapter: we learnt about one of the most important varieties of sonnets- the Spenserian sonnet. Apart from that, we studied the poet's life and works. We also studied and discussed his debut work, the *Shepheardes Calender*, in depth, as well as two eclogues that were specified in the syllabus. Finally, a Self-check exercise is offered for self-examination of the unit's content.

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9.8 SELF-CHECK

1. Surf the web and know more about the eclogues by Virgil and Theocritus
2. Explore Spenser's sonnet sequence *Amoretti* and understand how the Spenserian stanzas are different from other types of sonnets.
3. Discuss the significance of Colin, the main shepherd throughout the *Shepheardes Calender*.



SELECTED VERSE FROM THE ELIZABETHAN PERIOD: PART III

Unit Structure

10.0 Objectives

10.1 What is Shakespearean Sonnet?

10.2 William Shakespeare

10.3 Sonnet 116 "Let me not to the marriage of true minds"

10.4 Sonnet 138 "When my love swears that she is made of truth"

10.5 Summing up

10.6 Suggested Reading

10.7 Self-check exercises

10.0 OBJECTIVES

In continuation to the previous units, we now see the most significant type of the sonnet i.e. the English or Shakespearean Sonnet. The learners will have some insight into the writer William Shakespeare and his works. Afterward, selected sonnets by Shakespeare are read and analyzed. By the end of this unit, the reader will be acquainted with Shakespearean type and its difference from the original form and Shakespeare's life and sonnets.

10.1 SHAKESPEAREAN SONNET

Sonnets originated from the Italian Renaissance, nearly three centuries before Shakespeare began writing them in England. Shakespeare is considered one of the most well-known sonneteers and poets in the English language. Now let us understand the origin of the Shakespearean Sonnet and know how it is different from other types of sonnets which we studied in the previous units.

Shakespearean Sonnet is a variation of the sonnet form. This form was developed in England during the Elizabethan period hence, it is sometimes referred to as Elizabethan sonnets or English Sonnets. This form is different and famous for its uniqueness. The form comprises three quatrains and a couplet— three quatrains illustrate the subject or a problem and a rhyming couplet concludes or provides a solution to the subject of a sonnet. The rhyme scheme that the English or Shakespearean Sonnet follows is ABAB CDCD EFEF GG.

The characteristics of Shakespearean Sonnets:

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- It contains fourteen lines
- Fourteen lines are divided into four subgroups which contain three quatrains and a couplet
- The second and fourth lines of each quatrain and both the lines of a couplet rhyme
- Each of the fourteen lines is written in iambic pentameter and there are ten syllables per line.

His expertise in the form made the literary historians title the subgenre after him.

Although Shakespeare's works are most famous and considered to be classics, there were many other prominent poets and writers of the day like John Milton and John Donne who too wrote sonnets. Now, next, we will see the difference in structure and focus between the Shakespearean sonnets and other types of sonnets.

Difference between a Shakespearean sonnet and Petrarchan sonnet

Here, we will observe both 16th Century England popular forms- Petrarchan and Shakespearean sonnets which have been adopted by English writers over the ages. While both types of sonnets include 14 lines and are written in iambic pentameter, their structure and focus differ significantly.

The structure is the most noticeable difference for a learner. So, let's have a look at that.

Francesco Petrarch, a 14th-century Italian poet, is known for inventing the Petrarchan sonnet. Its 14 lines are divided into two sections: an "octave" of eight lines and a "sestet" of six lines. The octave has only two rhymes, with an ABBA ABBA pattern. The rhyme system of the sestet varies, although it usually comprises two or three rhymes in patterns like CDECDE and CDCDCD. Whereas, the Shakespearean sonnet, also known as the English sonnet, was developed by the Earl of Surrey, Henry Howard, and his contemporaries, but later readers called it after Shakespeare because he wrote extensively and well in the form. So, in this type, there are three quatrains (four-line groups) and one couplet (a pair of lines) among the 14 lines. The concluding couplet rhymes GG, and the three quatrains rhyme ABAB CDCD EFEF.

Now that we've identified the differences in structure, let's look at the differences in the focus these sonnets put on. Petrarchan sonnets are generally written as love sonnets which are from the perspective of a man desiring a woman who will reciprocate his feelings. The octave of the sonnet sets up a situation/problem or narrates an incident, which the sestet subsequently resolves or comments on. The "turn" or "volta" is the tone

shift between the octave and sestet. Shakespearean sonnets, on the other hand, frequently use three quatrains to reflect on a given scenario in different ways, while they occasionally use the Petrarchan octave-sestet division of content instead. The concluding couplet frequently includes a turn or volta with a shift in viewpoint or makes a humorous response about the preceding content.

Difference between a Shakespearean sonnet and Spenserian sonnet

Let us see how the Spenserian sonnet is unlike the Shakespearean sonnet. The Spenserian sonnet is a sonnet structure named after Edmund Spenser, a 16th-century English poet who first used it in his 1595 collection *Amoretti*. The Shakespearean sonnet and the Spenserian sonnet are very similar. The fundamental distinction is the rhyme scheme: although the Shakespearean rhyme scheme provides a new rhyme in each quatrain, the Spenserian sonnet uses a chain rhyme: ABAB BCBC CDCD EE. Spenserian sonnets are typically written in iambic pentameter, just like Petrarchan and Shakespearean sonnets.

10.2 WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

William Shakespeare was an English playwright widely regarded as one of the foremost English-language authors of all time and has contributions in sonnets too. His plays have been performed all over the world for audiences of all ages and is regarded as the most well-known playwright in the world. William Shakespeare has been called as "The Bard of Avon" as he is widely acclaimed writer in the world. Shakespeare was both a performer and the founder of the Globe Theatre, which was built in London by Shakespeare's playing company in 1599. Despite the fact that he is the world's finest writer, nothing much is known about his life. However, we do know that he wrote tragedies, comedies, and historical works, sonnets and poems.

The Lord Chamberlain's Men, a company owned by a group of players who became London's main company after producing Shakespeare's play in 1594 and most of his plays were performed on this stage in London. In the same year 1594, the first recorded quartos of Shakespeare's plays were published. Researchers know at least 37 plays were written by William Shakespeare, the many of which are identified as comedies, histories, or tragedies. The history trilogy "King Henry VI" is the earliest play produced around 1589 and 1591. The last play, "The Two Noble Kinsmen," was written in collaboration, presumably with John Fletcher. Shakespeare then went on to comedies, which were known for their comic moments and stories that linked with one another. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night* are the most renowned. Two tragedies, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Julius Caesar*, complement Shakespeare's comedy era. *Romeo and Juliet* was published in 1597, while *Julius Caesar* was published in 1599.

Shakespeare engaged the latter part of his writing career to tragedies and "problem" plays. He composed works such as Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Coriolanus, and Macbeth during this period, which is widely regarded as the playwright's best. These are the works that are currently being produced on stage and in film. During Shakespeare's lifetime, just a few of his plays were published in quarto versions. However, his whole collection of works was published as the First Folio in 1623, several years after his death.

Shakespeare is credited with two volumes of poetry and more than 150 sonnets. Although Shakespeare was a poet throughout his life, it is believed that he shifted to poetry in particular during the plague years of 1593 and 1594, when London's theatres were forced to close. During those years, Shakespeare published two volumes of narrative poems, Venus and Adonis and The Rape of Lucrece. Both volumes dealt with the issues of overwhelming lust and the guilt that comes with it. Shakespeare's sonnets were a collection of more than 150 compositions published with no evidence of when each work was written. The sonnets are usually assumed to be part of his personal diary that was never intended to be read publicly but was however published.

Shakespeare's sonnets were composed between 1593 and 1601, though "The Sonnets of Shakespeare", the edition was published in 1609. The collection contains 154 sonnets, all of which are written in the form of three quatrains and a Shakespearean couplet. Shakespeare's sonnets were primarily dedicated to the "Fair Youth" – or "Young Man" – and the "Dark Lady". The "Young Man" is addressed in the first section of Shakespeare's sonnet series (sonnets 1–126), whereas the "Dark Lady" is addressed in sonnets 127–154. Almost all of Shakespeare's sonnets deal with the complexities of life and romanticize beauty and love with the use of poetry.

Shakespeare's sonnets effectively represent the poet's emotions, provoking community conjecture about his views on religion, love, marriage, and life.

Now, in the next section let us have a look at the sonnets that are part of the syllabus.

10.3 Sonnet 116 "Let me not to the marriage of true minds"

TEXT:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,

That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

Critical Analysis of the sonnet 116:

Shakespeare's sonnet 116 is often regarded as the ultimate idea, of "What is love?" The sonnet language is deep and meaningful yet descriptive in language. And, like with all of Shakespeare's sonnets, he manages to condense all of these thoughts and ideas into only fourteen lines in sonnet 116. Love is given the identity of an everlasting power that is unaffected by aging, death, or even the cycle of life. Love does not deteriorate, unlike physical beings.

Love is not love if it changes with new situations or if it breaks when someone attempts to demolish it. It's infinitely unchanging and observes storms but is never affected by them. It is a guiding star when one lost can be found. Love does not fade away with the passing of the days and weeks, and does not even end with their deaths, but rather continues until the world dies. Shakespeare uses a wide range of literary devices throughout the sonnet to portray the timeless essence of love, and he concludes by putting everything on his insights, claiming that if he is incorrect, no one has ever written anything, and no one has ever loved.

Time, love, and the quality of relationships are all themes that Shakespeare explores. He delves into the meaning of true love. He compares love to a star that is always present and never fades, using a metaphor. Time is also incorporated into Shakespeare's sonnet. He emphasizes that time has no boundaries and that even if the people in a relationship change, the love remains constant. The rhyme scheme of this sonnet is ABAB CDCD EFEF GG and is written in iambic pentameter.

10.4 SONNET 138 "WHEN MY LOVE SWEARS THAT SHE IS MADE OF TRUTH"

Text:

When my love swears that she is made of truth
I do believe her, though I know she lies,
That she might think me some untutor'd youth,
Unlearned in the world's false subtleties.

Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
Although she knows my days are past the best,
Simply I credit her false speaking tongue:
On both sides thus is simple truth suppress'd.
But wherefore says she not she is unjust?
And wherefore say not I that I am old?
O, love's best habit is in seeming trust,
And age in love loves not to have years told:
Therefore I lie with her and she with me,
And in our faults by lies we flatter'd be.

Critical Analysis of the Sonnet 138:

'Sonnet 138' is one of the sonnets from William Shakespeare's collection of 154 sonnets. In 1599, it was issued in *The Passionate Pilgrim*, along with a few other sonnets. This sonnet is a part of the Dark Lady sonnet sequence. They are about the speaker who is assumed to be William Shakespeare himself and his connection with his mistress the Dark Lady. The complicated relationship between the two has been further analyzed in this poem. Rather than the affection they should share, they seek solace in one another's lies.

Sonnet 138' is a sonnet by William Shakespeare describing the speaker's false relationship with the Dark Lady. The speaker opens 'Sonnet 138' by expressing that he believes the Dark Lady when she tells him that she is honest. Despite this, he is aware that she is lying on a profound level. This portrays him as a gullible man, which he believes is advantageous to him. When he's not, she'll assume he's inexperienced and young. He is, in fact, aging, as she is well aware.

The speaker goes on to ask why the two can't admit that they're lying to each other. It appears to be an important aspect of their bond. He decides that the best course of action is to pretend to trust one another while continuing to lie. Regardless of how odd and complex things are, the two find solace in one other's deception. The author explores issues of truth/lies and relationships throughout this poem. Their relationship is based on deception but, oddly, they're both aware of the lies. Mutual lying appears to be the factor that holds them together. He is well aware that the Dark Lady has been disloyal to him, just as she is well aware that he is elderly and growing old. According to the speaker, their relationship would fall apart if they didn't lie.

Sonnet 138 is a typical Shakespearean sonnet by William Shakespeare that suggests there are fourteen lines in total, divided into two quatrains (four-line sets) and one sestet (six-line sets). A large number of Shakespeare's sonnets rhyme with ABABCDCDEFEFGG and iambic pentameter is used throughout the poem. Overall, Shakespeare's Sonnets are dramatic, at times unsettling, and at times perplexing in their meanings. Their primary

focus, as sonnets, is 'love,' but they also address time, change, age, lust, absence, betrayal, and the difficult gap between ideal and reality when it comes to the person you love.

William Shakespeare left an everlasting effect on the world. Shakespeare's works continue to impact people, both young and old, even today. Over the course of his 28-year career, he wrote 37 plays, 154 sonnets, two big epic poems, and several other verses.

10.5 SUMMING UP

Let us summarize everything we learned in this chapter- we got introduced to one of the most significant types of sonnet- the Shakespearean sonnet and we looked at its features. Besides that, the differences between the Petrarchan sonnet, Spenserian sonnet, and Shakespearean sonnet were highlighted. Then we looked at the classic writer of the times, the Bard of Avon, William Shakespeare, and his works. Further, we studied and analyzed two of his sonnets prescribed in the syllabus. In the end, a Self-check exercise is provided to self-examine the subject of this unit.

10.6 REFERENCES

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10.7 SELF-CHECK EXERCISE

1. Discuss the differences between all the three types of sonnets- Petrarchan sonnet, Spenserian sonnet, and Shakespearean sonnet.
2. Surf and read more about both the volumes of Shakespeare's Sonnets.



SELECTED VERSE FROM THE JACOBAN PERIOD PART I

Unit Structure

11.0 Objectives

11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 The Metaphysical Poetry

11.1.2 Introduction to the Poet John Donne

11.2 Poem- “A Valediction Forbidding Mourning” (Text)

11.2.1 Summary

11.2.2 Critical Analysis

11.3 Poem- “Death, Be Not Proud”

11.3.1 Summary

11.3.2 Critical Analysis

11.4 Conclusion

11.5 Important questions.

11.0 OBJECTIVE:

The primary objective of this unit is to introduce the students to the metaphysical poetry and metaphysical poets especially John Donne. The unit also introduces students to two poems by John Donne- “A Valediction Forbidding Mourning” and Holy Sonnet 10- “Death, be not Proud”.

11.1 INTRODUCTION:

11.1.1 The Metaphysical Poetry

The term “Metaphysical” was borrowed from Dryden’s phrase about Donne in *Essay in Satire* where he said that “He affects the metaphysics”. Later on it was first applied to poetry by Dr. Johnson. Initially, this term was used to convey contempt as it signified the habitual deviation from naturalness of thought and style to novelty and quaintness. As per Dr. Johnson, Metaphysical poets were men of learning who tried to show their learning. He believed that although their thoughts were new, they weren’t natural. In their poetry, “heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together”.

Metaphysical style was established in the seventeenth century by John Donne. He soon found a lot of followers of this style. They were John Cleveland, Sir John Suckling, Richard Crashaw, Henry Vaughan, George Herbert, Abraham Cowley and Andrew Marvell.

Some of the characteristics of Metaphysical poems were the use of far-fetched images, use of novel thought and expressions, affectation and hyperbole, and dramatic realism. Metaphysical poets were known for their usage of an extended metaphor known as conceit. A conceit is a highly elaborate or extended metaphor in which an unlikely, far-fetched or strained comparison is made between two dissimilar things. While making use of metaphysical conceits, they linked two disparate areas of experience. Therefore, a metaphysical conceit joined the parts of a fractured world rather than just yoking together contradictory things or invoking strangeness. One example of this use of far-fetched image can be seen in "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning" where John Donne compares lovers to two legs of a compass. Here, Donne makes comparison of a romantic image using a mathematical instrument. This kind of comparison was something which was not thought of till that time.

Use of novel thought and expression was another characteristic of Metaphysical poems. Wit was the salient feature of metaphysical poetry. The metaphysical poets tried to explore the logical connection between abstract and concrete, the remote and the near in rendering their experience of emotional reality. Metaphysical poems were not a sole display of emotion but a combination of emotion and intellect. It was a combination of sense perception and reflection at the same time. They substituted subtlety of thought for splendour of sound and imagery.

Use of affectation and hyperbole can also be seen in metaphysical poems. The use of hyperbole is not a forced one. It adds to the beauty of the poem. One instance of use of hyperbole can be seen in Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" where the speaker says that he can spend a hundred years praising his lover's eyes, two hundred for each breast, thirty thousand to the rest and an age for every part of hers.

Dramatic realism is an important feature of Metaphysical poems. There is a clarity which can often be found in these poems. In Donne's poem often use of direct speech, colloquial vigour and general air of dramatic realism can be found. The metaphysical poets often depicted scenes of everyday life.

11.1.2 INTRODUCTION TO THE POET- JOHN DONNE

John Donne was a seventeenth century poet, who is popular for being considered the founder of the Metaphysical Poetry. Poets like Richard Crashaw, Andrew Marvell, George Herbert and John Cleveland also belonged to the group known as Metaphysical poets.

John Donne was born in London, England in the year 1572. He was born into a Roman Catholic family but throughout his life, his relationship with religion has been quite tumultuous. But often, religion can be seen as one

of the centres of much of his poetry. Donne had studied in the prestigious institutions like Oxford and Cambridge but did not take any degree. Later, he studied law at Lincoln Inn and participated in its literary culture there. In 1598 Donne was appointed private secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton. In 1601, Donne secretly married Anne More, the sixteen-year-old niece of Lady Egerton. As a result of this, Donne was also briefly imprisoned. For many years, the couple had to rely on friends and family members for financial support. Donne spent the next 14 years unsuccessfully seeking public office, and writing poetry as well as polemical prose tracts and paradoxes such as *Pseudo-Martyr*, and *Biathanatos*. In *Pseudo-Martyr*, published in 1610, Donne argued that Roman Catholics could support James I without compromising their faith. In 1615 he became the royal chaplain to James. His wife died in 1617 and he became the dean of St. Paul's cathedral in 1621. He became famous as an eloquent preacher and spent the next decade preaching and writing. He died in 1631.

Donne had no interest in making his poems generally available and considered publishing them beneath his dignity as a gentleman. Therefore most of his works were circulated as manuscripts among his friends and patrons. This also makes it difficult to date his works. From the end of 17th century, his poems did not enjoy a wide audience. The revival of his works can be attributed to T.S. Eliot who celebrated him as a proto modernist. His works include love poems, religious poems, sonnets, Latin translations, satires, elegies and epigrams. His works are characterised by paradoxes, ironies, dislocations and abrupt openings. Some of the famous poems by him are 'The Canonization', 'A Valediction forbidding Mourning', 'The Sun Rising', 'Batter my Heart, three person'd God', 'The Ecstasy'.

Donne can be said to be a person of deep contradictions. As a man of church spirituality can be found throughout his poems but at the same time he possessed a carnal lust for life, sensation and experience. Thus, he can be called both a religious poet and an erotic poet. In his poems Donne can be seen mixing both physical and spiritual. His writings are replete with symbols. One example of this is the legs of compass symbolising two lovers in "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning".

11.2 POEM

A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

11.2.1 SUMMARY

The following lines are spoken by the speaker when he is forced to spend some time apart from his lover. The speaker begins the first stanza of the poem with an image of death. He mentions that death comes peacefully to virtuous men due to their good nature. Their souls leave body with such a mild whisper that even the friends sitting near them would not be able to recognise if they have died or not.

Similarly, the speaker asks his lover to part with him without making much noise or display of emotions like creating floods of tears or tempests out of sighs. He believes that such display of emotion would be like treating his love in a profane manner as the common people would come to know of it.

Movement of Earth causes fears as men keep thinking what it meant or did, but the movement of heavenly bodies do not cause any damage. Similarly, the speaker believes that they must part peacefully.

Only dull ordinary/ earthly lovers cannot accept separation as it removes their object of interest which in the first place caused the love. Ordinary lovers crave for the physical presence of each other, but their love is beyond such feelings.

Their love is so refined that they themselves do not know what that is. Their love is so inter-assured of mind that they need not worry about missing physical features like eyes, lips or hands.

He continues to say that their souls are not two but one and although he must part with his lover, this separation is not going to bring about a rift in their relationship as their love is expandable the way gold can be expanded by beating it to thinness.

If it all they have to be seen as two different entities, he believes that they can be considered as two legs of a compass where his lover is the fixed foot and appears that it is not moving although it rotates when the other foot moves.

The fixed foot sits at the centre and lets the other leg to roam around in order to make a perfect circle. It leans and supports the other leg in every way possible. It leans when the circle is being made and becomes straight when the other foot comes home after making the circle.

It is the firmness of this foot which makes the circle perfect and makes the other foot/ speaker end from where it began.

11.2.2 CRITICAL ANALYSIS

“A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” is a metaphysical poem written by John Donne. It is believed that he wrote this poem in 1611 or 1612 when he had to part with his wife Anne for a trip to Continental Europe. This poem was first published in 1633 collection *Songs and Sonnets*.

The central theme of the poem is spiritual love. In this poem it can be seen that the speaker explaining to his beloved how their love can withstand the temporary separation as their love is not material in nature unlike the love of common people. The speaker convinces his beloved to not do a display of their emotions when they would be separated as such a spectacle would be equivalent to demeaning their love in front of ordinary people. The poet is trying to make a comparison between physical love and spiritual love. Other minor themes represented in this poem are of love, separation and acceptance.

Certain comparisons are made by the speaker in this poem. He believes that their separation should be as calm and quiet as the death of virtuous men. He also compares his love to the movement of heavenly bodies and also to the metal gold which expands when beaten to thinness. An example of metaphysical conceit (far-fetched comparison between two completely dissimilar objects) can be seen when he compares himself and his beloved as the two legs of a compass. The beloved is considered to be the fixed foot which constantly supports him when he travels. The use of

alliteration can be seen in the line “Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show” where the consonant sound /f/ is repeated and /m/ sound is repeated in “And makes me end where I begun”. The speaker also makes use of hyperbole when he talks of tear floods and sigh tempests. The poem contains nine stanzas with the rhyme scheme abab.

11.3 POEM

Holy Sonnets: Death, be not proud

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

11.3.1 SUMMARY

In this poem the speaker has personified Death and he addresses death throughout the poem. The speaker asks Death to not be proud. Although many people had called Death mighty and powerful, the speaker does not believe that. Thus, the speaker believes that Death does not have any reason to be proud and arrogant. The speaker further continues to say that Death believes that it has the power to kill people whereas in reality it does not have that. He mocks Death by addressing him as ‘poor Death’ and mentions that Death can never kill him (reference to the Christian belief that even if the physical body dies, his spirit would not die). Here, the speaker makes a personal attack on Death by saying that it cannot kill him. By saying so, the speaker is trying to break the illusion that Death has regarding his power over the life of living beings.

The speaker compares rest and sleep as a glimpse of Death and deems them pleasurable. Just like sleep is found pleasurable after a day of work,

Death would also be pleasurable due to the similarity between them. Hence he believes that death should not be feared and it would be more pleasurable as it might give us a prolonged sleep. The speaker presents Death as a welcome visitor when he says that best men are taken away by Death at a younger age so that they would not have to suffer for long on this Earth and their bones can rest and their souls would receive deliverance.

Next, the speaker takes a jibe at Death by saying that it is not as mighty as it thinks itself to be as it is a slave to fate, chance, kings and desperate men. Death is driven by fate and chance. It also keeps company with lowly companions like poison, war and sickness. Death is said to be in company of poison, war and sickness as it is through poison, war or sickness that people die/ confront Death. Death needs their help to have his power over living beings. He further asks Death what is he so proud of when all he does is make men sleep. As per the speaker, poppy or charms can actually make us sleep better than Death itself so Death need not gloat about its power.

The speaker delivers his final blow on Death by saying that death is like a short sleep and past that sleep we shall wake up eternally. Thus Death would not exist anymore and it shall die.

11.3.2 CRITICAL ANALYSIS

“Holy Sonnet 10” also known as “Death, be not Proud” and was published in 1633 in Donne’s *Holy Sonnets*. Usually, death is represented in a position of power in literature but in this poem, the speaker represents Death as powerless due to his religious belief of afterlife. In this poem, death is not the end of life but rather the beginning of a new life in eternity. In the sonnet it can be seen that the speaker mocks Death and says that it’s not as powerful as it thinks it to be. The speaker defends his argument using many justifications. The poem argues against the fear of Death. Unlike something to be feared, Death is represented here as a welcome guest as it would lead to eternal awakening. This idea clearly shows the Christian belief of life after death. Since the confidence of the speaker while mocking Death relies heavily on the fact that there is an afterlife where Death would not have any power, this poem can also be considered as a poem about faith/belief.

In this poem the poet can be seen making use of the literary device apostrophe (a speaker directly addressing someone who is not present or cannot respond in reality) when it addresses Death. The use of alliteration can be seen in the line “And better than thy stroke; why swell’st thou then”. The last line of the poem can be seen as an instance of irony when the speaker says that “Death thou shalt die”. Throughout the poem, Death has been personified and addressed directly. The poem has been written in iambic pentameter. The poem has borrowed features of both Petrarchan and Shakespearian sonnet (a sonnet is a fourteen-line poem written in iambic pentameter) and it has the rhyme scheme abbaabbacddcee.

11.4 CONCLUSION

John Donne is regarded as the leading Metaphysical poet of English Literature. Originality was one of the most important features of his poetry. His originality was not limited to his thoughts and ideas but extended to his usage of diction. We find unification of sensibility in the writings of Donne as we see a fusion of thoughts and feelings. A combination of passion and thoughts can be seen in his poems. “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” is an example of that. Use of conceit is another element seen in Donne’s writing where two completely dissimilar things are compared. Brevity and wit are also found in the poems of Donne.

In the poem “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”, the speaker asks his beloved to not mourn their separation as their love is of spiritual in nature and physical separation is not going to affect it. He makes use of many conceits to prove this point. In the poem “Death, be not Proud”, the speaker mocks Death. Usually Death is feared by everyone. But in this poem, the speaker mocks Death and proves his philosophy regarding why he believes that death is not so powerful.

11.5 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

1. In the initial lines of the poem “A Valediction Forbidding Mourning” how does the speaker say that their separation should be?
2. Explain the central message of the poem “A Valediction Forbidding Mourning”?
3. How does the poet make use of the compass metaphor in the poem “A Valediction Forbidding Mourning”?
4. Why does the poet feel that death is proud and arrogant in the poem “Death, be not Proud” ?
5. How does the poet portray Death?
6. Why does the poet feel that Death is a welcome guest?
7. What does the poet mean by “Death, thou shalt die”? Explain.



SELECTED VERSE FROM THE JACOBAN PERIOD PART II

Unit Structure

12.0 Objective

12.1 Introduction

12.1.1 introduction to the Poet-George Herbert

12.2 Poem- “Pulley”

12.2.1 Summary

12.2.2 Critical Analysis

12.3 Poem-“Love”

12.3.1 Summary

12.3.2 Critical Analysis

12.6. Conclusion

12.7. Important Questions

12.0 OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of this unit is to introduce the students to metaphysical poets especially George Herbert and Andrew Marvell. The unit also introduces students to the poems of George Herbert- “The Pulley”, “Love”- and Andrew Marvell’s “The Coronet”, “On a Dew Drop”.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

12.1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE POET-GEORGE HERBERT

George Herbert was an English religious poet, orator and priest of Church of England. He was one amongst the Metaphysical poets. He was born on 3rd April 1593 at Montgomery Castle to a wealthy Welsh family. At a young age itself he believed that the best theme for poems would be his love for God. This theme can be seen constantly being repeated in his future writings. He was educated at Westminster School and at Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1620, he was elected as orator of the University. He served in the Parliament of England in 1624 and for a brief period in 1925. He rarely published his works during his academic career. He resigned as an orator in 1627 and became rector at Bemerton in 1630. At this time, he became friend with Nicholas Ferrar who had founded a

religious community at nearby Gidding. Before his death, he gave his works to Ferrar and asking him to publish or destroy it as per his discretion. The works were published with the title *The Temple: Sacred and Private Ejaculations* in 1633. He died due to consumption in 1633.

The Temple is considered as his major work and it consists of over one hundred and fifty poems revolving around Church and religious themes. Some of the famous poems of his collection are “The Church Porch”, “The Pulley”, “Easter Wings” and “The Altar”

12.2 POEM

The Pulley

When God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by,
“Let us,” said he, “pour on him all we can.
Let the world’s riches, which dispersèd lie,
Contract into a span.”
So strength first made a way;
Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honour, pleasure.
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that, alone of all his treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay.

“For if I should,” said he,
“Bestow this jewel also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts instead of me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature;
So both should losers be.

“Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness;
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast.”

12.2.2 SUMMARY

When God was creating man, he had a glass filled with blessing. He thought that he would pour in all his blessings on human beings and let all world riches be bestowed upon him.

Amongst all his blessings, strength was the first blessing given by God. It was followed by beauty, wisdom, honour and pleasure. When he had poured out almost all the blessings, he stopped and saw that only “rest” was left at the bottom of the glass.

Then he said that if he gives even the gift of “rest” to mankind, they would adore only the gifts given to them and not God. This would result in mankind losing touch with their creator. They would start adoring Nature and not the God of Nature (Creator). As a result, both humans and God become losers as the purpose of creation then remains unfulfilled.

Ultimately, God decides that let humans have all other gifts with them but feel discontent and restless. He wants them to be rich and weary so that if not God’s goodness, at least this weariness would bring humans closer to God.

12.2.3 CRITICAL ANALYSIS

“The Pulley” was a poem first published by George Herbert in his collection known as *The Temple*. The poem “The Pulley” also often appears under the name “Rest” or “The Gifts of God”. This poem is a metaphysical religious poem. The metaphysical conceit used in this poem is a mechanical device- the pulley. Like the pulley creates force and leverage, the lack of rest in human beings acts as leverage for pulling human beings towards God. The speaker here can be seen justifying the action of God of not giving the gift of rest to human beings as he believes that if human beings were endowed with all the gifts, they would forget their creator. So the decision of God to not give away the gift of rest to human beings is justified as it brings human beings closer to God.

An omniscient speaker describes the whole poem. Although the speaker is unidentified, it can be assumed that it is the struggles of George Herbert with faith and his own understanding of God which has been reflected in the poem. The poem adopts a three part syllogistic approach where the first part raises an issue, second part works on it and the third part gives a solution to it. The literary devices like alliteration, metaphor and imagery are used in this poem. Pun is used in the line “Rest in the bottom lay” where the word rest could mean rest of the gifts or the gift of rest. Alliteration is used in the poem in the following lines “When God at first made man” (repetition of /m/ sound),” But keep them with repining restlessness” (repetition of /r/ sound). The use of metaphor is done when the quality of rest is compared to a jewel. The figure of speech inversion has been used in “So both should losers be” where the sentence “so both should be losers” is inverted for poetic effect. The poem consists of four stanzas with the rhyme scheme ababa.

12.3 POEM

Love

LOVE bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
 Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
 From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
 If I lack'd anything.

'A guest,' I answer'd, 'worthy to be here.'
 Love said, 'You shall be he.'
'I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
 I cannot look on Thee.'
Love took my hand and smiling did reply,
 'Who made the eyes but I?'

'Truth, Lord; but I have marr'd them: let my shame
 Go where it doth deserve.'
'And know you not,' says Love, 'Who bore the blame?'
 'My dear, then I will serve.'
'You must sit down,' says Love, 'and taste my meat.'
 So I did sit and eat.

12.3.1 SUMMARY

In this poem Love is personified as God. The speaker/the guest says that God welcomed him to the feast but still his soul drew back because he was conscious of his unworthiness (guilty of his dust and original sin). God saw the speaker's hesitance and asked him sweetly if he needed anything.

The speaker answers by saying that he feels unworthy to be a guest there in the presence of God since he has been unkind and ungrateful. He even feels that he cannot even look at God as he is ashamed of his actions. God tries to reassure the speaker by taking his hand and telling him that it is God himself who has made his eyes. So he need not worry regarding being unworthy.

The speaker agrees with God and says that he has defiled his eyes and due to that shame, he deserves to go to hell. God then reminds him that it is for the sins of mankind that God had died on cross and expiated for them. This means that God has suffered for the sins of mankind as he loves them. He then asks the guest to sit and eat his meat (relish the dishes being served in the feast). In the end, the speaker does as told.

12.3.2 CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The poem "Love" was published in George Herbert's collection *The Temple* in 1633. This poem can be considered as one of his spiritual autobiographies. The poem can be read at two levels- A dialogue between a guest and a host or in the form of a dialogue between the speaker and

God. The feast to which the speaker/ his soul is invited is the one which God would hold in Heaven and he himself would serve the guests. In this poem, God is represented as Love and the speaker tries to show that God is an immense source of Love and he always has love for human beings although they have committed many sins. We can see that the speaker feels unworthy to sit at the table of God or even look at his face due to his sins. But God reassures him that since he has repented for his sins, he sure has a place at God's table and he equally has the right to enjoy the feast at the table. The poem clearly shows God's capacity for forgiveness.

The poem consists of four stanzas and is written in iambic pentameter. It has the rhyme scheme ababcc with a religious tone.

12.6 CONCLUSION

George Herbert in his poem "The Pulley" speaks about what God did in order to bring mankind closer to God. God withholds the gift of rest so that human beings would remember God throughout their period of restlessness and thus bringing them closer to God. The poet tries to justify this action of God. The poem "Love" is a testimony to the love that God has towards mankind. The saviour suffered for the sins of all human beings. If human beings repented for the sins they had committed, they would always find a place for them in God's feast. The magnanimity of God is represented in this poem. Both the poems are religious in nature.

12.7 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

1. Justify the title of the poem "The Pulley".
2. Why doesn't God give men the gift of rest?
3. Why does the speaker feel unworthy to be invited to the feast in the poem "Love"?
4. How does God reassure the speaker of his worthiness?
5. What is the central theme of the poem "Love"?



SELECTED VERSE FROM THE JACOBAN PERIOD PART III

Unit Structure

13.0 Objective

13.1 Introduction

13.1.1 Introduction to the poet- Andrew Marvell

13.1.2. Poem-“The Coronet”

13.1.3 Summary

13.1.4 Critical analysis

13.2.1 Poem- “On a Drop of Dew”

13.2.2 Summary

13.2.3 Critical Analysis

13.3. Conclusion

13.4. Important Questions

13.0 OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of this unit is to introduce the students to metaphysical poets especially Andrew Marvell. The unit will introduce students to the poems of Andrew Marvell, “The Coronet” and “On a Dew Drop”.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

13.1.1 Introduction to the Poet -Andrew Marvell

Andrew Marvell is known as one of the best Metaphysical poets whose political reputation had overshadowed his poetry till twentieth century. He was born on 31st March 1621 at Winestead, Yorkshire, England. He studied at Hull grammar school and at Trinity College, Cambridge later. Later, he went abroad and worked as a tutor. He wrote the works “The Garden” and “Upon Appleton House” while he was working as a tutor to Mary, daughter of Lord Fairfax, the Parliamentary General, Yorkshire. He became assistant to Jon Milton as Latin secretary in foreign office in 1657. He was elected Member of Parliament for Hull in 1659 and continued in office until his death. He has written some political verse satires namely *The Last Instructions to a Painter* and *The Rehearsal Transpros’d*. One of

the most poems by Andrew Marvell is *To His Coy Mistress*. His poems in general at times resemble those of Cavalier poets and at times those of Puritan Platonist. It was only in the twentieth century that he came to be considered as one of the notable poets of his century. He died in 1678.

Selected Verse from the
Jacobean Period Part III

13.1.2 POEM

The Coronet

When for the thorns with which I long, too long,
With many a piercing wound,
My Saviour's head have crowned,
I seek with garlands to redress that wrong:
Through every garden, every mead,
I gather flowers (my fruits are only flowers),
Dismantling all the fragrant towers
That once adorned my shepherdess's head.
And now when I have summed up all my store,
Thinking (so I myself deceive)
So rich a chaplet thence to weave
As never yet the King of Glory wore:
Alas, I find the serpent old
That, twining in his speckled breast,
About the flowers disguised does fold,
With wreaths of fame and interest.
Ah, foolish man, that wouldst debase with them,
And mortal glory, Heaven's diadem!
But Thou who only couldst the serpent tame,
Either his slippery knots at once untie;
And disentangle all his winding snare;
Or shatter too with him my curious frame,
And let these wither, so that he may die,
Though set with skill and chosen out with care:
That they, while Thou on both their spoils dost tread,
May crown thy feet, that could not crown thy head.

13.1.3 SUMMARY

The poem begins by the speaker saying that it has been a long time since his saviour has been wearing the crown of thorns (a reference to Christ) and he seeks to redress that wrong with garlands (poetry). For redressing,

he goes through every garden and mead to find the best flowers (words). He also dismantles the best fragrant flowers which had once adored his shepherdesses head.

And once the best flowers have been collected, the speaker decides to make a chaplet like none other. But at that moment, he finds the serpent (temptation) hidden in between the flowers and realizes how foolish it had been of him to think like that as it would be like debasing Heaven's diadem using mortal glory. The speaker understands that writing poetry for crowning Christ would be like falling prey to temptations of fame and interest.

The poet believes that only his saviour/Christ can tame the serpent, untie his slippery knots, disentangle winding snare and shatter along with him the speaker's curious frame. Although the flowers were chosen with much skill and care, the speaker feels that it is only appropriate to let them wither as along with that the serpent would also die. Hence, he asks the saviour to tread on both of them so that ultimately the flowers which could not adore his head would be able to adore his feet.

13.1.4 CRITICAL ANALYSIS

"The Coronet" is a religious poem. The poem uses the metaphor of making a garland to represent the writing of poem for God. The poem uses references to crucifixion of Christ. The poem depicts the guilt of the speaker since the saviour/ Christ had to suffer due to the sins of mankind, including that of the speaker. So he decides to create a crown of flowers (poetry) for Christ. It is this guilt which leads him to write this poem in order to crown Christ. Later he realizes that his attempt to crown Christ is maligned by his temptation to become famous and asks Christ to crush that temptation of his.

The poet makes use of metaphor when he compares his poetry with the coronet. Instances of symbolism can be seen as "the serpent" is the symbol of temptation of fame. "My saviour" is a reference to Christ. The use of imagery can also be seen when "an old serpent entangled between flowers" is mentioned.

13.2.1 POEM

On a Drop of Dew

See how the orient dew,
Shed from the bosom of the morn
 Into the blowing roses,
Yet careless of its mansion new,
For the clear region where 'twas born
 Round in itself incloses:
And in its little globe's extent,

Frames as it can its native element.

How it the purple flow'r does slight,

Scarce touching where it lies,

But gazing back upon the skies,

Shines with a mournful light,

Like its own tear,

Because so long divided from the sphere.

Restless it rolls and unsecure,

Trembling lest it grow impure,

Till the warm sun pity its pain,

And to the skies exhale it back again.

So the soul, that drop, that ray

Of the clear fountain of eternal day,

Could it within the human flow'r be seen,

Remembering still its former height,

Shuns the sweet leaves and blossoms green,

And recollecting its own light,

Does, in its pure and circling thoughts, express

The greater heaven in an heaven less.

In how coy a figure wound,

Every way it turns away:

So the world excluding round,

Yet receiving in the day,

Dark beneath, but bright above,

Here disdaining, there in love.

How loose and easy hence to go,

How girt and ready to ascend,

Moving but on a point below,

It all about does upwards bend.

Such did the manna's sacred dew distill,

White and entire, though congealed and chill,

Congeaed on earth : but does, dissolving, run

Into the glories of th' almighty sun.

13.2.2 SUMMARY

Throughout this poem, dew drop is being compared to soul of human beings. The dew has been shed from the bosom of the morning into the blowing roses but it is not interested in its new abode. The round shape of the dew drop represents its perfection and completeness since it has originated from the heaven above.

Since it has come from heaven, it remains here as a tear drop shining in mournful light. It constantly looks at heaven in the hope of getting back there and also fears that it might become impure by being here. At last the sun takes pity on it and it goes back to heaven by shunning sweet leaves and blossoms green through the process of evaporation.

It leaves behind this world and moves towards the world above. It excludes the world and allows the heavenly light to fall upon itself. It looks like its dark below and bright above. It disdains the present world and is ready to move upwards with love and grit. Like the Manna, the heavenly food from heaven, which appeared on Earth and as soon as the Israelite had consumed as much as needed it went back to heaven, the dew drop would also go to heaven.

13.2.3 CRITICAL ANALYSIS

“On a drop of dew” is a poem about the journey of a dew drop after descending from sky and its wait to go back. The speaker compares the dew drop to the soul of human beings. Throughout the poem we can see the dew drop being indifferent to its surroundings and waiting to ascend upwards. Similarly, human soul which lives on Earth continuously yearns to go back to heaven (its place of origin). The ascending of dew drop to the world above through evaporation can be compared to the soul going back to its origin. In the last stanza, dew drop is compared to Manna which after fulfilling its purpose returns to heaven. In the same way, the human soul also returns to heaven after fulfilling its purpose in this world. The whole poem is based on the philosophical idea that human soul comes to this world from heaven and that it continuously yearns to go to heaven to reunite with its Creator.

The use of alliteration can be seen in the lines “restless it rolls”, “pity its pain”, “shuns the sweet leaves”, “greater heaven than heaven less”, “dark beneath, but bright above”, “scared dew distil”, “concealed and chill”, “does, dissolving, run”. In the line “like its own tear” simile is used when the poet is comparing the dew drop to the tear of the soul. In the initial lines, morning is personified when it is said that the dew drop sheds from the bosom of the morn. The whole poem is full of symbolism where the dew drop symbolises man’s soul, skies above symbolise the heaven and the rose petals symbolise the worldly pleasures.

13.3 CONCLUSION

George Herbert in his poem “The Pulley” speaks about what God did in order to bring mankind closer to God. God withholds the gift of rest so

that human beings would remember God throughout their period of restlessness and thus bringing them closer to God. The poet tries to justify this action of God. The poem “Love” is a testimony to the love that God has towards mankind. The saviour suffered for the sins of all human beings. If human beings repented for the sins they had committed, they would always find a place for them in God’s feast. The magnanimity of God is represented in this poem. Both the poems are religious in nature.

In the poem “Coronet” by Andrew Marvell, the speaker tries to right the wrongs done by mankind by making a coronet for Christ but later realizes that this action of his is motivated by temptation for fame and as a result of that, he asks God to crush his temptation. In the poem “On a drop of dew”, the poet talks about the souls longing to go back to its original place of abode.

13.4 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

1. What does the metaphor of Coronet stand for?
2. How does the speaker plan to redress the wrong done to his saviour?
3. Why does the speaker want Christ to tread on the flowers chosen by him?
4. Describe some of the symbolism used in this poem
5. What is the dew drop compared to in the poem “On a Drop of Dew”?
6. Why is the dew drop indifferent to the present world and what is it waiting for?
7. What is the main theme of the poem “On a Drop of Dew”?
8. What would happen to the dew drop in the end?

