Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon
Open University

Bachelor of Arts
UGEN-102
Literature in English 1550-1750

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BLOCK

1

ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBEAN POETRY

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BLOCK INTRODUCTION

Block I consists of two units.

Units-1 discusses two sonnets of William Shakespeare-Sonnet 18; *Shall I Compare Thee Summer's Day* and Sonnet 65; *Since Brass Nor Stone*. Shakespeare belongs to the 16th century, who wrote sonnets, long narrative poems and plays. The theme of Shakespearean sonnets are *time, love, beauty* and *youth.*

Unit-2 discusses John Milton's sonnet *On His Blindness*. It is a petrarchan sonnet. *On His Blindness* centers on Milton's faith in God as he is losing his eye-sight. The poem is sonnet that uses figurative language to express Milton's fear, frustrations and acceptance.

UNIT-1 WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE SONNET 18 : SHALL I COMPARE

Structure

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to William Shakespeare was an English poet, playwright, and actor, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English literature and the greatest dramatist of the world. He is often called the **"Bard of Avon"**. His works, including collaborations, consist of approximately 37 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems and a few other verses, some of the uncertain authorship.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through his life and literary works, you will be able to know Shakespeare as a prolific writer, poet, and dramatist during the Elizabethan age.

In this unit you will learn about :

- Sonnet as a form of English Poetry
- Shakespeare as a Sonneteer
- Two Sonnets, i.e. Sonnet no.18 and Sonnet No.65 out of the total 154 Sonnets Written by William Shakespeare.
- Chief features of Shakespearean Sonnet.

1.2 WHAT IS SONNET?

A **sonnet** is a poem of fourteen lines which originated in Italy; Giacomo da Lentinu is credited with its invention. The term *sonnet* is derived from the Italian word *sonetto* (from Old provencal *sonnet* a little poem, from *son* song and from Latin *sonus* a sound.

As a literary form, the sonnet originated in Italy with the famous Renaissance poet Petrarch. In the Petrarchan form, the sonnet is divided into two parts an octave i.e. eight lines and a sestet six lines with a pause in between. First, the Octave forms the "proposition", which describes a "problem", or "question", followed by a sestet (two tercets), which proposes a "resolution". Typically, the ninth line initiates what is called the "turn", or "volta" which signals the move from proposition to resolution. Each line in the Octave is interlocked by cleverly works out rhyme-scheme which is abbaabba,and the sestet is cdecde.

It is written in iambic pentameter in which there are ten syllables feet in which the first is unstraescot and the second's strascol. There are five meter whose is talked pentameter.

In England, Thomas Wyatt wrote the first sonnet. Wyatt followed the Petrarchan form. The Petrarchan rhyme-scheme invented the English form of the sonnet. Shakespeare used the new form which is known as Shakespearean Sonnet. In English, Shakespearean sonnet is divided into

three quatrains, with a concluding couplet of two lines. The rhyme-scheme, in general, is abab cdcd efef gg with subtle variations according to the requirements of thought and emotion.

1.3 SHAKESPEARE AS A SONNETEER

Shakespeare's sonnets have enjoyed immense popularity for their transcendent beauty and exquisite verbal melody. Shakespeare's wrote is in sonnets which deal attitude towards life, which gives unity to the diversity of themes. The themes are passionate love, aching jealousy, musings on the human fate, a meditation on the passage of time on earth, etc. From every point of view and in every sense these sonnets show the poetic genius of the writer. The variety of themes, the lyrical appeal, the striking images and pictures, the wealth of conceits, the felicity of the language and the melody of the verse, all are the richest poetic treasures of English literature. The rhyme scheme of Shakeaspeare's sonnets are *abab cdcd efef gg*.

The whole sonnet sequence written by Shakespeare is divided into two main groups, one consisting of sonnets (1-126); presumably addressed to Mr. W. H. and the other consisting of-sonnets (127-152), our thematic addressed to the "Dark Lady" on thematic ba ba .But sonnets may be divided into many subgroups like "marriage," "friendship," "love," "self-love," "the ravages of time," "immortality and death," "lust," "professional rivalry," etc. However, the most dominant themes are Shakespeare's devotion to his patron-cum-friend, his hopeless passion for his mistress and the betrayal of both his friendship and his friend and his love by the mistress respectively.

Majority of sonnets are addressed to his young friend who is urged to many reprimanded for sensual faults, warned against flatterers and rival poet and promised immortality in verse. It is significant that Shakespeare relegated the theme of love to a secondary place (only 28 sonnets). Why did Shakespeare attach such importance to the theme of male friendship? They certainly wear autobiographical personal reason. He might really have experienced such deep passionate feelings for a friend. But yet by assigning worship and love, a secondary place, Shakespeare broke the long convention. The satiric tone is a dominant feature of the sonnet addressed to the Dark Lady. The beloved's main appeal for the poet is her naturalness. She is not the heroine of the conventional sonnets, encumbered with the attributes of ideal beauty.

Sonnets embody Shakespeare's total vision of life. They are memorable also for their intensity of emotion, then spontaneity and their musical effect. His sonnets have the simplicity of expression and are free from the bombastic and rhetoric. In short, the sonnets of Shakespeare are highly romantic poems, which touch the high water mark of English lyricism.

Shekespeare is an esolerni sunneter as he never maintaied the name of his beleaved dark lady nor his friend Mr. W.H.

1.4 WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE : LIFE AND WORKS

William Shakespeare was born and brought up in Stratford- Avon, Warwickshire. At the age of 18, he married Anne Hathway, with whom he had three children. From 1585 to1592, he began a successful career in London as an actor, writer, and part-owner of a playing company called the Lord Chamberlain's men.

Shakespeare produced most of his known works between 1589 and 1613. His 37 plays were primarily tragedies, trazi, comedies and historical plasy are regarded as some of the best works produced in drama. He wrote 17 comedies include *The Merchant of Venice* and *Much ado About Nothing.* Among 10 history plays are *Henry V* and *Richard III.* Until about 1608, he wrote mainly tragedies such as *Hamlet, Othello, and King Lear and Macbeth*, all considered to be among the finest works in the English litrature.

In the last phase of his life, he wrote tragicomedies (also known a romance) and collaborated with other playwrights. Shakespeare also wrote 4 poems, and a famous collection of Sonnets which was first published in 1609.

At the 49 yeas, he stoped writing to Stratford, where he died three years later. He died on 23 April 1616 and was buried in Holy Trinity Church. Throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, Shakespeare's works have been continually adapted and rediscovered by new movements in scholarship and performance. His plays remain popular and are studied, performed, and reinterpreted through various cultural and political contexts around the world.

1.5 SONNET NO. 18, "SHALL I COMPARE TO THEE A SUMMER'S DAY"

Text

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed,
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed:
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st,
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

1.5.1 SUMMARY OF THE SONNET

Sonnet no. 18 "*Shall I compare thee to a summer's day*" is one of the most acclaimed of all 154 sonnets written by William Shakespeare. It is the typical Shakespearean sonnet first publised in the year 1609.

William Shakespeare opens the poem with a question addressing his friend: "Shall I compare thee to a Summer's day?" The speaker is in doubt whether he should compare the young man's beauty with that of summer or not. And then he drops the idea as he believes that his friend is too perfect to be compared with the summer. He emphasizes that his dear friend is more lovely and temperate than the summer.

The speaker says that everything changes in time. Even the most beautiful things fade and lose their charm. This degradation happens by chance or by the rule of nature which remains unmodified. Though the beauty of things declines with time, the beauty of his beloved friend will not degrade.

The speaker here personifies death. He opines that although death has always had an upper hand over life, the beauty of his friend will live in his poem (eternal lines) through eternity. The death will never be able to lay hands on his beloved as he is immortal.

At the end of the sonnet, William Shakespeare makes a prediction that this poem about his beloved's beauty will be acclaimed throughout the ages till men live on this earth. As long as life will go on, his poem will be read by men and women and through his poem, his love will also live.

1.5.2 CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF THE SONNET NO. 18

This is one of the best sonnets of Shakespeare. It is addressed to a young friend of the poet. Here the poet celebrates the beauty of his friend. The tradition of praising masculine beauty in verse was derived from Greek and Latin poetry and it became a fashion in English poetry after *'The Renaissance'*. The poet contrasts the ideal beauty of platonic conception embodied in his friend with the transient beauty of nature. The poet thinks that poetry is eternal and poetry will immortalize the beauty of his friend.

The sonnet shows a greatly enhanced sensibility and control. The rose metaphor is cleverly humanized in the phrase, *"darling buds of May"*. Summer's lease adds the concept of the property so that its association with flowers seems inevitable. The eye of heaven introduces the correspondence between personality and the higher spheres with the equal case. The eternal summer will be created by the poet's eternal lines in his poems. Even death will not be able to make him its victim. The poet will celebrate the beauty of his friend in his writing. All future remains will read about him and thus the beauty of his friend will be eternal.

1.5.3 ANALYSIS OF THE SONNET NO.18

Sonnet 18 '*Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day'* is devoted to praising a friend or lover, traditionally known as the 'fair youth', the sonnet itself a guarantee that this person's beauty will be sustained. Even death will be silenced because the lines of verse will be read by future generations, when speaker, poet, and lover are no more, keeping the fair image alive through the power of verse.

The opening line is almost a tease, reflecting the speaker's uncertainty as he attempts to compare his lover with a summer's day. The rhetorical question is posed for both speaker and reader and even the metrical stance of this first line is open to conjecture. Is it pure iambic pentameter? This comparison will not be straight forward.

This image of the perfect English summer's day is then surpassed as the second line reveals that the lover is more lovely and more temperate. *Lovely* is still quite commonly used in England and carries the same meaning (attractive, nice, beautiful) whilst *temperate* in Shakespeare's time meant gentle-natured, restrained, moderate and composed.

The second line refers directly to the lover with the use of the second person pronoun *Thou,* now archaic. As the sonnet progresses, however, lines 3 - 8 concentrate on the ups and downs of the weather, and are distanced, taken along on a steady iambic rhythm (except for line 5,).

Winds blow, rain clouds all the season seems all too short - that's true for today as it was in Shakespeare's time - and people tend to moan when it's too hot, and grumble when it's overcast. The speaker is suggesting that for most people, summer will pass all too quickly and they will grow old, as is natural, their beauty fading with the passing of the season.

Lines 9 - 12 turn the argument for aging on its head. The speaker states with a renewed assurance that *'thy eternal summer shall not fade'* and that his lover shall stay fair and even cheat death and Time by becoming eternal.

Lines 13 - 14 reinforce the idea that the speaker's (the poet's) poem will guarantee the lover remain young, the written word becoming breath, vital energy, ensuring life continues.

With repetition, assonance, alliteration and internal and end rhyme, the reader is certainly treated to a range of device that creates texture, music, and interest.

Note: The language of these lines (*rough, shake, too short, Sometimes, too hot, often, dimmed, declines, chance, changing, untrimmed.)* are Assonance and Repetition. There are interesting combinations within each line, which add to the texture and sound scape: *Rough/buds, shake/May,*

hot/heaven, eye/shines, often/gold/complexion, fair from fair, sometimes/declines, chance/nature/changing, nature/course.

In the meantime, the vagaries of the English summer weather are called up again and again as the speaker attempts to put everything into perspective. Finally, the lover's beauty, metaphorically an *eternal summer,* will be preserved forever in the poet's immortal lines.

And those final two lines, 13 and 14, are harmony itself. Following twelve lines without any punctuated caesura (a pause or break in the delivery of the line), line 13 has a 6/4 caesura and the last line a 4/6. The humble comma sorts out the syntax, leaving everything in balance, giving life.

This sonnet is the first in which the poet has mentioned the longevity of the youth's beauty is eternal. Another important theme here is the power of the speaker's poem to defy time – the immortality of art.

Sonnet 18 is an English or Shakespearean sonnet, 14 lines in length, made up of 3 quatrains and a couplet. It has a regular rhyme scheme: *abab cdcd efef gg.* All the end rhymes are full, the exceptions being a *temperate/date*.

1.6 POETIC DEVICES

Eternity is the general theme of the poem. The tone of the sonnet is endearing, deep devotion for a lover and the poet is trying to convince the readers of the eternal beauty of his young friend.

Shakespearean sonnet format, Sonnet, 'Shall I Compare to thee summer's day' has 14 lines of iambic pentameter with a rhymed couplet at the end. Consisting of three quatrains, it has a rhyme scheme of abab cdcd efef gg like all the other Shakespearean sonnets.

Figurative language is used throughout the sonnet to give an in-depth view of the speaker's feelings and love for his beloved. Metaphor is the main literary device used in sonnet 18. The poet has compared his beloved's beauty with that of the summer in different ways. He has also personified objects of nature and death for poetic effect.

The poem reflects the rhetorical tradition of an Italian or Petrarchan sonnet. Petrarchan sonnets typically discussed the love and beauty of a beloved, often an unattainable love, but not always. It also contains a Volta, or shift in the poem's subject matter, beginning with the third quatrain.

- **Language**

The language of the poem is simple and direct.

- **Tone /Mood**

The mood is that of romance and affection while the tone is that of love and admiration, and it's also that of flattery.

- **Rhetorical question**

The title of the poem, which also started the first line of the poem, is a rhetorical question.

- **Personification**

This can be seen in line 9 where death is given a human attribute of boasting and bragging.

- **Metaphor**

"Sometimes too hot the eye of the heaven shines." This line provides the danger of one considering it as a personification, but no, it *says "the eye of heaven shines"* in which the seeing ability of the eye is been compared to the shining ability of the sun. *"Too hot the sun/eye of heaven sees"* would have personified that line. Also in the poem, love and beauty are compared to summer (eternal summer).

- **Imagery**

The poem is embellished with images laced in the lyrics of romance. 'Eyes, gold complexion, buds, hotness', etc.

- **Repetition**

The words, "fair" and "summer" are repeated in the poem.

1.7 GLOSSARY

- temperate : not extreme
- Darling *:* dearly loved
- lease : a contract granting use or hath all too short a date
- dim *:* made less bright
- decline*:* grow worse
- fade *:* vigor
- possession *:* the act of having and controlling property
- brag : show off
- wander : go via an indirect route
- eternal *:* continuing forever
- breathe*:* be live

1.8 SUMMING UP

The sonnet, Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day attempts to justify the speaker's beloved's beauty by comparing it to a summer's day, and comes to the conclusion that his beloved is better after listing some of the summer's negative qualities. While summer is short and occasionally too hot, his beloved has a beauty that is everlasting. In the last couplet, the poetic persona clearly illustrates that his object of admiration will live on as long as the poem survives and is been read by people.

1.9 SONNET NO. 65 : "SINCE BRASS, NOR STONE, NOR EARTH, NOR BOUNDLESS SEA"

Text

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
But sad mortality o'ersways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?
O how shall summer's honey breath hold out,
Against the wrackful siege of batt'ring days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
Nor gates of steel so strong but time decays?
O fearful meditation, where alack,
Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid?
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back,
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?
O none, unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

1.9.1 SUMMARY OF THE SONNET NO. 65

This sonnet is an influential poem on the aspect of Time's destruction. Shakespeare says in this sonnet that time is the powerful destructive force that spoils everything. The stones, brass, and steels which are often considered as the strongest of all objects are too unable to protect themselves from the fearful attack of time. The poet is greatly desperate thinking how his beloved could survive in this situation where every strong, powerful thing are unable to keep standing in front of the time.

Mortality rules over the universe and everything is perishable in this world, so it is only through the timeless art of writing that emotion and beauty can be preserved.

1.9.2 CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF THE SONNET NO. 65

In the Sonnet, “Since brass nor stone”, William Shakespeare presents 'time' as a great 'destroyer' and 'creator' and; 'mortality' as a 'powerful giant' who exists in all human and natural things including brass, stone, the earth and even the sea and make them vanished with course of time.

According to the poet, Time is the most powerful destructive force which spoils everything. Nothing can face the attack of time. Time devours youth and beauty mercilessly. They have no power to protect themselves from the attack of time as they are so and delicate like flowers. The poet is extremely afraid of looking at the actions being done by time against human beings and the natural things. The stones and steels which are often considered as the strongest of all objects are also unable to protect themselves from the fearful attack of time. The poet is greatly desperate thinking how his beloved could survive in this situation where every strong, powerful things are unable to keep standing in front of the time. "How, how could my dear live?", being worried the poet questions himself. He feels no one can resist this and it force to decay everything. There is no strong hand that can hold back the swift foot of time and nobody is in the whole Universe who can forbid the time's spoil of beauty. Thus the poet is caught by intense despair and it leads him to a nostalgic feeling.
In the last couplet, the poet searches for a medium through which his beloved could be immortalized by defeating the sad mortality and the fearful destructive giant i.e. time.

Finally, he discovers that it is a verse that can serve as a miracle in fulfilling the intense desire of the poet. Then, he feels great happiness, joy and he gets very much excited for being able to find out the proper way to make his dear friend and the sweet memories alive forever through his writings. His grief, worries, despair that made him suffered in the past have suddenly vanished while he has succeeded in immortalize his beloved and the memories of their lives than expected since many years back in the past.

1.9.3 ANALYSIS OF THE SONNET

The opening quatrain of William Shakespeare’s sonnet “Since Brass Nor Stone”, the poet asks how beauty can resist that power in nature, which destroys brass, stone, earth, and the sea since beauty is less durable and powerful than any of those. The earth and sea together cannot withstand death, the dismal ***(“sad”)*** state that overpowers everything in nature. In the third line, mortality becomes ***“this rage”***— violent anger, even a kind of madness, that opposes a most fragile supplicant, beauty. If the earth itself is no match for this force, beauty seems to have no hope of lasting, since its strength is no more than a flower.

The second quatrain repeats the opening question, beauty now characterized by another of nature's insubstantial and temporary forms, ***summer's honey breath,*** which the poet sees as the victim of an assault by a ***"wreckful siege"*** in the form of ***battering days. The earth*** alluded to in the opening line is represented here as ***rocks impregnable,*** and brass has been replaced by ***gates of steel.*** Neither of these substantial forms can withstand time's battering and corrosive force. Though asking a question, the speaker implies that any resistance to time is doomed and, further, that natural things are in a constant battle with a force that nothing survives, least of all something as evanescent as summer's breath.

The third quatrain begins with an expostulation that expresses the poet's feelings as he confronts the prospect of time's onslaught: ***O fearful meditation!*** Even flight is futile, for beauty, now represented as a jewel, cannot escape being encased finally and forever in ***Time's chest.*** Time is then characterized as the swift runner whose foot cannot be held back. No outside force—no ***hand***—can or will reach out and rescue beauty from time's onward thrust. At the close of the third quatrain, beauty is not only a doomed supplicant but also a helpless victim of time's plundering. At this point, the poet appears to have accepted the inevitable annihilation of beauty by time's relentless onslaught.

The final couplet offers hope, however—the written word. Mere ink, imbued with the poet's love, offers the only defenses against Time's annihilating power, for the poet's words have the miraculous ability to reflect beauty's splendor in a timeless state.

In this sonnet, until the couplet, Shakespeare uses harsh words like 'rage', 'wreckful battering'' and 'stout'. When describing beauty , he uses the soft word like 'honey breath' and 'plea'. In the couplet, Shakespeare's optimism shows and he uses softer words such as shine and miracles. After line 11, in lines12 -14, Shakespeare's attitude changes from skeptical to hopeful.

1.10 POETIC DEVICES

This sonnet has three quatrains, followed by a final rhyming couplet. It follows the typical rhyme scheme of the form, *abab cdcd efef gg* and is composed in iambic pentameter, a type of poetic meter based on five pairs of metrically weak/strong syllabic positions.

- Quatrain1 : Problem
- Quatrain 2 : Development
- Quatrain 3 : Development
- Heroic Couplet : Solution

Alliteration : "Steel so strong" (Line 8)

Antithesis : "How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea, (Line3)

Whose action is no stronger than a flower" (Line 4)

Metaphor : "Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid?" (Line 10)

Assonance "hand can" (Line 11)

The word ' summer' is **personified** (Line 5)

Consonance : 'Hand can hold his' (Line 11)

Hyperbole : 'Whose action is no stronger than a flower' (Line 4)

Diction : 'wreckful siege' (Line 6)

'Impregnable' (Line7)

Euphony : 'How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,' (Line3)

'O how shall summer's honey breath hold out' (Line 5)

Euphony, Personification, *Forcefully imagery or flowery imagery, Diction* Hyperbole, Contrast and Metaphor have been used beautifully in this sonnet.

Imagery: The words that reflect different imageries need to figure out.

- "Brass," "stone" "boundless sea" – Visual imagery(can be observed)
- "Sad Mortality", "Wreckful siege of battering days," "Times decays" –conceptual

  Imagery (can be visualized)
- "Summer's honey breath" Conceptual and can pertain to touch which means one can feel the warm air of Summer.
- "Rocks impregnable, gates of steel so strong" – Literal imagery which explains a fact
- "Times's best jewel", Times's chest—metaphorical usage which represents two different meanings.

Shakespeare skillfully places conceptual, visual and literal imagery side by side bringing harmony all through the sonnet. The use of poetic devices in this sonnet has assisted in realizing the theme.

1.11 GLOSSARY

- *boundless:* seemingly limitless in amount, number, degree, or extent
- *Plea:* appeal

- *Rage* : a vehement desire or passion.
- *wrackful: ruinous,* harmful, causing damage
- *Siege: a long tedious period*
- *impregnable* Impossible to capture or enter by force

1.12 SUMMING UP

It is a beautiful sonnet in which William Shakespeare tries to depict the power of mortality and time. This sonnet mediates on the theme that nothing can withstand time's ravages. He has beautifully personified 'mortality' as a 'ferocious giant' and 'time' as a great 'destroyer' and 'creator' of all human and natural things. The victory of creative writings over time and mortality is presented in an interesting manner in this sonnet. Because of the universality and superb portrayal of the theme, the "Sonnet 65" composed by William Shakespeare has placed among the great sonnets of the world.

1.13 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Q1. What is Sonnet? Contrast between Petrarchan Sonnet and Shakespearean Sonnet.

Answer : Refer to Section 1.2

Q2. Discuss William Shakespeare as a sonnet writer.

Answer : Refer to Section 1.3

Q3. Discuss summary of the sonnet, 'Shall I compare to thee Summer's day'.

Answer : Refer toSection 1.5.1

Q4. Discuss the poetic devices of the sonnet 'Shall I compare to thee Summer's day'.

Answer : Refer to Section 1.6

Q5. Analysis of the sonnet, *'Since brass, nor stone'.*

Answer : Refer to Section 1.9.3

Q 6. Write a critical appreciation of the sonnet, 'Shall I compare to thee summer's day'.

Answer : Refer to Section 1.5.2

1.14 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT-2 JOHN MILTON : ON HIS BLINDNESS

Structure

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you with John Milton was an English poet, polemicist, a man of letters and civil servant for the Commonwealth of England under its Council of State and later under Oliver Cromwell. He wrote at a time of religious flux and political upheaval and is best known for his epic poem Paradise Lost (1667), written in blank verse. He is remembered as the greatest English writer of the 17th century.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through his life and literary works, you will be able to know John Milton as a poet, pamphleteer, and historian and the most significant English prolific writer.

In this unit, you will learn about :

- Define the Italian sonnet form a practiced by Milton.
- Analysis the poem 'On His Blindness'
- Milton's Philosophy of Life

2.2 PETRARCHAN SONNET

The Italian poet Petrarch (1304-1374), a Roman Catholic priest, popularized the Petrarch's sonnets. Each sonnet consists of an eight-line stanza (octave) and a six-line stanza (sestet). The first stanza presents a theme, and the second stanza develops it. The Rhyming scheme of the sonnet is ABBA ABBA CDE CDE. This form is also called an Italian sonnet.

2.3 MILTON WAS AS A POET OF RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION

John Milton's work reflects the influence of both the *Reformation* and the *Renaissance.* The Renaissance and the Reformation had their impact on England in the sixteenth century Milton's poetry is the first and the last example of the happy and effortless harmonization of the two mutually antagonistic enthusiasms which stirred the England of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In Milton's poetry, the **Reformation** element is found as his soft and steady Puritanism. (*Puritans were those who "protested" against even the Protestants who in their turn had protested against the Pope and the Popish religion.)*

Milton was born in a Puritan family. His schooling and surroundings, his social and political affiliations, and a number of other factors combined to instill in him a love of Puritan ideology and way of life. However, he was a man of too strong an individuality to accept any formal "ism" in its totality. He was a deeply religious man, and even at the age of twenty-three he could write :

All is, if I have grace to use it so;

As ever in my great Task Master's eye.

His version of Puritanism was tinged by his love of the classics, the love of nature, the love of beauty, and Renaissance humanism insisting on the world of man, and love of "the human face divine." Milton emphasizes the spirit rather than the conduct. Milton believed that ***"the Spirit which is given to us is a more certain guide than Scripture."*** In his pamphlet Of True Religion he states that along with external Scripture, there is an internal Scripture, ***"the Holy Spirit written in the Hearts of believers".*** , He tried to reconstruct the Puritan creed on the basis of the humanistic ideology of the Renaissance.

The Renaissance in England gave rise to a large number of tendencies. It brought in its wake love and appreciation of the literature of ancient Greece and Rome, keen love of beauty and art, and a new stress on human life and pursuits. Milton is obviously affected by all these ramifications of the spirit of the Renaissance.

The Renaissance elements show themselves in Milton in two ways:

(i) The classical framework for most of his major poetical works

(ii) Secondly, humanize, Hellenize, refine, and somewhat secularize his Puritanism and mitigate its severity.

Almost all of Milton's poetic works are embodiments of the Renaissance and the Reformation elements.

Milton only, succeeded in producing living and beautiful poems incorrect classical forms. And into these classical forms, he poured the intensest spirit of the Protestant movement*." In fact, Milton's Puritanism (a product of the Reformation) and his Hellenism (a product of the Renaissance) were more closely harmonized in his genius than the formulary division of theme and form would suggest.* Milton was neither a godless pagan nor a Puritan formalist nor was he both simultaneously. He imbibed the true spirit of both tendencies and wrote under the unified impact of both.

Milton's mind was shaped and moulded by the influence of the Renaissance and the Reformation. On the one hand, he drank deep of classical poetry and philosophy and inherited all the culture and humanism of the Renaissance, and on the other, he had a deeply religious temperament and was a profound student of the Bible and the literature of the scripture.

Thus, Milton's mind was the best fruits of classical scholarship and Biblical learning. He was a lover of art and music, and possessed what may be called an all-round culture of the mind.

Besides, he was full of moral and religious earnestness and possessed all the piety and devotion of a true Christian. He was, however free from the intensely narrow outlook of a fierce Puritan. He combined in himself the humanism of the Renaissance with the spiritual fervor of Puritanism. These two influences molded all his poetic work.

2.4 JOHN MILTON : LIFE AND LITERARY WORKS

John Milton was born in Bread Street, London on 9 December 1608, the son of composer John and his wife Sarah Jeffrey. As a child, John Milton attended St. Paul's School, and in his lifetime, he learned Latin, Greek, Italian, Hebrew, French, and Spanish. He attended Christ's College, Cambridge, graduating in 1629 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. He completed his master's degree from Cambridge University in 1632.

Upon receiving his degree, he went to Horton, Berkshire. He had good relations with Edward King and he wrote his popular poem "*Lycidas*" for him. From 1635 onwards, Milton did self-directed studies for six years; he read philosophy, politics, history, literature, science, and theology in order to make him ready for a poetic career. Due to this intensive study, Milton is considered as one of the most learned English poets. On his return to England from France, the Bishops' Wars and armed conflict further intensified and Milton started writing against episcopacy to serve the parliamentary cause and Puritans.

In 1642, Milton got married to a 16-year-old girl, Mary Powell. However, she divoresd left him due to financial issues. During his mid-thirties, Milton's eyesight gradually deteriorated and he became blind in 1652. A widower and blind Milton got married again to Katherine Woodcock in 1656, but she passed away soon. Then, he married a third time to Elizabeth Mynshull in 1662.

Milton died of kidney failure on November in 1674 in Buckinghamshire, England, shortly after finishing the works, *Paradise Regained,* and *Samson Agonistes.* He was buried at St. Giles, Cripplegate Church, Fore street , London.

John Milton's Literary Works

Milton composed his great piece of work *Paradise Lost* (a magnum opus and an epic poem) as a blind poet during the period 1658-1664. Several critics are of the that this poem reflects the personal despair of Milton due to the failure of the Revolution.

In 1671, Milton published, *Paradise Regained* a sequel to *Paradise Lost*. In addition, he published a tragedy *Samson Agonistes* alongside that sequel in 1671. In 1673, Milton republished his 1645 poem's collection accompanied by Latin prolusions and collections of his letters from his Cambridge days.

In his prose works, he advocated for the abolition of the Church of England and the execution of King Charles I. After the restoration of King Charles-II in 1660, he supported in his works a political philosophy, which opposed tyranny and religion that is state-sanctioned. He derived his philosophy from the English civil wars.

John Milton's Style and Popular Poems

Since Milton was famous for his unique style of blank verse and sonnets, he won the praise of the romantic poets for his skills. However, they did not accept his religious views. William Wordsworth opens his popular sonnet with "***Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour John"*** *John Keats* was also a great admirer of Miltonic verse and advocated that, "***Miltonic verse cannot be written but in an artful or rather artist's humour"***

Keats also felt that his epic poem "*Hyperion*" was filled with several Miltonic inversions. During that time, poetic blank verse was thought to be a unique form of poetry rather than in drama verse.

In addition to the induction of stylish innovation of Milton, he also influenced later poets. Specifically, Thomas Hardy and George Eliot of the Victorian Age were greatly inspired by his poetry. Similarly, Milton was a great influence to Ezra Pound and T.S Eliot – two of the most famous 20th century critics. Milton gave paramount importance to liberty of conscience and the Scriptures for guidance in faith- related matters. John Milton wrote 24 sonnets. This may seem like a small literary output, but his sonnets revolutionized the form.

Among the popular poems of Milton are—

- "*Arcades*" (a masque he wrote to give praise to Alice Spencer's Character)
- "*How Soon Hath Time*",(a poem that talks about how fleeting time),
- "*At a Solemn Music*", (a poem that describes the feelings and emotions brought about when listening to a solemn music.),
- "*An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatic Poet, W. Shakespeare*";
- "*Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*";
- "*Lycidas*";
- "*On His Blindness*";
- " *Samson Agonists*";
- "*Paradise Lost*";
- "*Paradise Regained*";
- "*On His Deceased Wife*";
- "*On Shakespeare*"; and
- "O Nightingale".

During the years of the English Civil War, Milton worked under Oliver Cromwell to create pamphlets advocating for religious freedom, divorce and the freedom of the press. He also served in Cromwell's government as secretary for foreign languages. It was in 1651-52 that Milton became completely blind. Milton was arrested in 1660 after Charles II came to the throne and lived out the rest of his life in the country, secluded from the world, working on his epic poem, *Paradise Lost*. This poem would serve as his legacy, and come to be considered among the greatest poems ever written. Milton's works would come to inspire many poets of the future, including Percy Bysshe Shelley, William Blake, and William Wordsworth.

2.5 MILTON'S 'ON HIS BLINDNESS'

Text

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

2.5.1 SUMMARY OF THE POEM 'ON HIS BLINDNESS'

The poem 'On His Blindness' is an autobiographical poem. In his poem milton is struggling to understand what God expects of him now that he is losing his eye-sight. He's upset about wasting that one Talent which is death to hide, which is a biblical reference to the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14:30) in which two people invest their talents (in parable talents means coins) While the third person, just hide his talent in a hole and is punished. Here the poet feels that God expects him to use his taletns for writing poetry in a way that honors him. When the poet despair that he can no longer serve his master actively (due to blindness) the sonnet takes turn to give him the strength to accept his physical weakness with a consoling throught that **"They also serve who stand and wait."**

2.5.2 CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF THE SONNET "ON HIS BLINDNESS"

The sonnet, On His Blindness, is an exploration of a moral dilemma faced by John Milton, and conveyed through his speaker, as he was forced to come to terms with his blindness. Milton's speaker is faced with the impossibility of continuing his works. Works, which are often

considered to be the same as Milton's, types of writing, or not serving God due to his blindness. He is unable to continue as he had been, and he asks, receives, and answer to his inner query.

Stanza 1 The poet starts the poem with 'When' thus he introduces his idea in the very beginning. According to him, he often thinks that half of his life or sight or intelligence has been spent in serving humanity, but now he has lost his eyesight and so his other half-life is dark now and wide i.e. challenging as well.

The one talent (of writing) which he had is useless now because without eyesight he cannot write. Thus, it is just a load from the God that has been bestowed on him. The poet laments over the loss of his eyesight and wonders what this talent means for him now as without eyesight he cannot use it.

Stanza 2

In these lines, the lament of poets turns into desire and wonder. He says that he desired to serve his Maker but because of this blindness, he cannot do so. He wonders if God still wants to serve Him in spite of the fact that his sight is gone. The poet says that this foolish thought often haunts him.

Stanza 3 In these lines, the poet says that when such foolish thoughts come into his mind, the patience at once comes to reply that the work of man does not please God, but the 'who best bear his mild yoke' i.e. the one who remains patient and content with what he has is most liked by Him.

God has a huge Kingdom and there are thousands of angels who remain in motion to carry God's order. They never take rest. The poet compares them with those who have the talent and use it to serve God. On the other hand, there are some other angels also who serve Him just by standing and waiting before God. According to him, their service is equally valuable to God as that of the first category of angels.

The poet compares himself with the later Angels who just keep patience. Thus, in the end, the poet is quite satisfied as he is also serving God just by keeping patience.

2.5.3 ANALYSIS OF THE SONNET "ON HIS BLINDNESS"

- *When I consider how my light is spent*
  Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,

The poem begins with the speaker's consideration of how he has spent the years of his life, represented as his "light." This light, as well as being a metaphor for life, is also a literal representation of the days of Milton's life in which he could see. The second line expands on that, explaining that before even half of the speaker's life had passed, he is forced to live in a world that is "dark… and wide." Since Milton went

blind at 42, he'd had the opportunity to use his writing skills, his "talents" in the employee of Oliver Cromwell. He had risen to what was, more than likely, the peak of his possible achievement, the highest position a writer in England could hope to gain. He did not know at the time that his greatest works would be written while he was blind. His "talents" come into play in the next lines, which are some of the trickiest in the whole piece.

- *And that one talent which is death to hide*
  Lodg'd with me useless, though my soul more bent
  To serve therewith my Maker, and present
  My true account, lest he returning chide,

Milton speaks of his "talent," this talent, his skills with words and love for writing, was his entire life. His livelihood and self-worth depended on it. This word "talent" is the most important in understanding these lines. As a biblical scholar, Milton was familiar with the texts of the Bible and chose to reference, *The Parable of Talents* from Matthew 25, here. When Milton refers to the talent he is relating the loss of his ability to read and write to the servant in Matthew 25 who buries the money given to him by God in the desert rather than investing it wisely. It is *"death"* to Milton to have hidden, through no choice of his own in this case, his talents beneath his blindness. The next lines begin to speak to Milton's devotion to God. He explains that his talents are still hidden even *"though [his] soul [is] more bent"* to serve God and present his accounts through writing. He wants nothing more than to do right by God, and serve him. In this context, *"account"* refers to both his records in writing and money (once more connecting his dilemma to that in *The Parable of Talents*). He must do all he can for God, *"lest he returning chide."* So that if God returns, he will not chide, or admonish, Milton for not taking advantage of the gifts that God has given him.

- *"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"*

  I fondly ask.

At this point, Milton is finishing the sentence that he began at the beginning of the poem with the word, "When." In short, he asks, *"does God require those without light to labor?"* He wants to know whether when he is not able to continue his work, due to his blindness, will God still require work of him.

- *But Patience, to prevent*
  That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
  Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
  Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
  Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed
  And post o'er land and ocean without rest:
  They also serve who only stand and wait."

Milton continues on, invoking the personification of Patience in the next line. Patience appears as a pacifying force to *"prevent that murmur"* in which the speaker would question God (as described above). Patience replies to the speaker's internal question, and the remainder of the poem is that response.

Patience explains that God does not need special gifts or works from man, such as Milton's writings, but loves best those who "Bear his mild yoke." This complicated phrase references a *"yoke,"* or a wooden frame, that used to be placed around the neck and shoulders of plowing animals. This would allow the animals to be directed around the field. Essentially, those who give over their lives to God and accept that he is in control of their fate are loved best. That is what God requires, not *"gifts"* or "work."

Patience comes to the final point of the poem in the next three lines.

- *Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state*

  Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed

  And post o'er land and ocean without rest:

  They also serve who only stand and wait."

Patience compares God to a king, saying that his *"state is kingly"* with *"thousands at his bidding."* These people, in the state that is the world, are part of the unlimited resources of the king, God. They *"post"* (or move quickly) over *"Land and Ocean"* without pausing for rest. The poem ends with the answer to the speaker's unasked question, that those who are unable to rush over land and ocean, like Milton, also serve God.

2.6 POETIC DEVICES

The poem has a number of Biblical references that depict Milton's stern belief in God. The sonnet is in Petrarchan style rhyming scheme of the sonnet is ABBA ABBA CDE CDE. This form is also called an Italian sonnet. It is written in iambic pentameter, and it is separated into one octave, the first eight lines, and one sestet, of the remaining six lines.

- **Pun** Light' here refers to his eyesight as well as his life before getting blind.

- **Alliteration** : A number of times alliteration is used in the poem.

  e.g.**d**ays in this **d**ark, **W**orld and **W**ide, **t**hat one **t**alent, **m**y

  soul **m**ore, **m**y **M**aker, **l**abor, **l**ight, **p**atience

  to **p**revent, **b**est **b**ear, **s**erve who only **s**tand.

- **Hyperbole** : It is an exaggerated statement. e.g. thousands at his bidding speed.

- **Metaphor** *though my soul more bent/To serve therewith my Maker* (Lines 3-4)

  The author compares his soul to his mind.

- **Personification/ Metaphor** ''Patience' is here personified as having human characteristics. "'*But Patience, to prevent/ That murmur, soon replies' Lines 8-9*

- **Paradox**: '*They also serve who only stand and wait'*

- **Meter**

All lines in the poem are in iambic pentameter, a line has five pairs of unstressed and stressed syllables, for a total of ten syllables.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5
When **I** | con **SID** | er **HOW.**| my **LIFE** | is **SPENT**

1.....….2..... 3.....4…….....5
Ere Half |my **Days**|in **This**| dark **World**|and **WIDE**

2.7 GLOSSARY

- *how my light is spent*

This clause presents a double meaning: (a) how I spend my days, (b) how it is that my sight is used up.

- **Ere half my days :** Before half my life is over. Milton was completely blind by 1652, the year he turned 44.
- **Talent:** his skills with words and love for writing
- **Useless:** Unused.
- **Therewith:** By that means, by that talent; with it
- **Account:** Record of accomplishment; worth
- **Exact:** Demand, require
- **Patience :** Milton personifies patience, capitalizing it and having it speak.
- **God ------Gifts :**God is sufficient unto Himself. He requires nothing outside of Himself to exist and be happy.
- **Yoke:** Burden
- **Post:** Travel

2.8 SUMMING UP

John Milton is considered one of the greatest English Poet of the Puritanage. He was the chief representative of English Classicism.

Milton's sonnet belongs to the Petrarchan Tradition consisting to devisions into an octave and sestent.

The poem, On His Blindness is an autobiographical sonnet in which Milton reflects on his ***faith in God*** as he is losing his sight. It is a sonnet believed to have been written before 1764, after the poet, John Milton, had gone completely blind.The poem is a sonnet that uses figurative language to express Milton's fear, frustration, and acceptance.

2.9 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Q1. Discuss Petrarchan sonnet?

Ans : Refer to Section 2.2

Q2. Summary of the sonnet, 'On His Blindness'.

Ans : Refer to Section 2.5.1

Q3. Write critical appreciation of the sonnet, 'On His Blindness'.

Ans : Refer to Section 2.5.2

Q4. Discuss Poetic Devices with Reference to the sonnet, "On his Blindness"

Ans : Refer to Section 2.6

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Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon
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Bachelor of Arts

UGEN-102

Literature in English 1550-1750

BLOCK

2

NEO-CLASSICAL POETRY

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BLOCK INTRODUCTION

In Block-I we discussed a few poems of Shakespeare and Milton. Shakespeare wrote towards the end of the 16th century while Milton wrote in the 17th century in the classical Christian tradition.

In this Block-II, we will study to poets, John Dryden and Alexander Pope.

Unit-3 turns to the 18th century neo-classical poet John Dryden. We have for your course, the poem *The Indian Emperor; Ah, Fading Joy……...Slumbers Call*.

Unit-4 discusses Alexander Pope, a prolific neo-classical poet during the Augustan age. He is the best known for his satirical and discursive poetry. We have included for your history Pope's *From An Essay On Man Epistle II.*

UNIT-3 JOHN DRYDEN : SONG FROM THE INDIAN EMPEROR : AH, FADING JOY…. SLUMBER CALL

Stucture

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to John Dryden was an English poet, literary critic, translator, and playwright who was made England's first Poet Laureate in 1668. He is seen as dominating the literary life of Restoration England to such a point that the period came to be known in literary circles as the Age of Dryden.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through his life and literary works, you will be able :

- to know John Dryden was the greatest English poet and playwright of the seventeenth century.
- to a detailed analysis of the poem

3.2 JOHN DRYDEN : AS A NEO CLASSICAL CRITIC

Dryden was the major literary figure in both literature and criticism during the Restoration and later 17th century, and the most influential critic of the whole century.

Being a writer as well as a critic, Dryden always wrote criticism to some practical end concerning his own works. Much of his critical work is to be found in the preface to his own works. Besides, he was a professional writer. He was not a nobleman writing for his pleasure: he had to live from his work and in the age, he wrote in this meant that he had to find some patron or other to take him under his protection. He had to flatter, and this explains not only the nature of his writing but also sometimes that of his criticism. Sometimes his reasoning is flawed by this need to flatter. Dryden had an interest in the general issues of criticism rather than in a close reading of particular texts He wants to rely on both authority and common sense and often seems at a loss when the two seem to go against each other.

Dryden a neoclassical critic, meditates on the neoclassical rules, which he feels to be right in the main, but then he also wants to find a critical justification for the great tradition of English poetry, which lay beyond those rules. It is to his credit that he thought over the principles of French neoclassicism and did not apply them mechanically to the English letters.

According to T.S. Eliot, Dryden's great work consists not so much in the originality of his principles as in having realized the need to affirm the native tradition, as opposed to the overwhelming French influence. His best-known work, the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy,* partly reflects this tension in Dryden's commitments. Its dialogue form has often been criticized as inconclusive, but actually, as in most dialogues, there is a spokesman more weighty than the others. Dryden carries about his task with efficiency, stating his own ideas, but leaving some leeway for the difference of opinion.

Dryden believes, who did not follow the rules, but are nevertheless obviously superior to any "regular" writer. In Dryden, then, we find a "liberal" neo classicist, although he is most coherent when he is dealing with that which can be understood and reduced to rule. His relaxation is to a great extent both a refusal to believe in the universal application in the neoclassic principles and an inability to provide new and more comprehensive principles. Because his most cogent statement on the rules (following Rapin) is that

Dryden is not a great analyst of texts nor an important literary historian, but some of his works are significant steps in the development of both directions in criticism. Dryden's importance as a critic comes from his place in history at the start of the long neoclassical era, whose

principles he helped determine; he contributed a great deal to raise the standards of criticism and to define the role of the discipline.

3.3 JOHN DRYDEN LIFE AND WORKS

Dryden (19 August 1631 – 12 May 1700) was born in the village rectory of Aldwincle near Thrapston in Northamptonshire. He was the eldest of fourteen children born to Erasmus Dryden and wife Mary PickeringDryden lived in the nearby village of Titchmarsh where it is likely that he received his first education. In 1644, he was sent to Westminster.

As a humanist public school, Westminster maintained a curriculum, which trained pupils in the art of rhetoric and the presentation of arguments for both sides of a given issue. This is a skill, which would remain with Dryden and influence his later writing and thinking, as much of it displays these dialectical patterns. The Westminster curriculum included weekly translation assignments, which developed Dryden's capacity for assimilation. This was also to be exhibited in his later works. His years at Westminster were not uneventful, and his first published poem, an elegy with a strong royalist feel at the death of his schoolmate Henry,

In 1650 Dryden went up to Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1654 he obtained his BA, graduating top of the list for Trinity that year. In June of the same year, Dryden's father died, leaving him some land which generated a little income, but not enough to live on.Returning to London during the protectorate, Dryden obtained work with Oliver Cromwell's Secretary of State, John Thurloe. At Cromwell's funeral on 23 November 1658 Dryden processed with the Puritan poets John Milton and Andrrew Marvell.

Shortly thereafter he published his first important poem, *Heroic Stanzas* (1659), a eulogy on Cromwell's death, which is cautious and prudent in its emotional display. In 1660 Dryden celebrated the Restoration of the monarchy and the return of Charles II with Astraea Redux, an authentic royalist panegyric, In this work, the interregnum is illustrated as a time of anarchy, and Charles is seen as the restorer of peace and order.

On 1 December 1663 Dryden married the royalist sister of Sir Robert Howard—Lady Elizabeth. Dryden's works occasionally contain outbursts against the married state but also celebrations of the same. Thus, little is known of the intimate side of his marriage. Lady Elizabeth bore three sons and outlived her husband.

Dryden died on 12 May 1700 and was initially buried in St. Anne's cemetery in Soho, before being exhumed and reburied in Westminster Abbey ten days later. He was the subject of poetic eulogies, such as *Luctus Brittannici: or the Tears of the British Muses; for the Death of John Dryden, Esq.* (London, 1700), and The Nine Muses. A Royal Society of

Arts blue plaque commemorates Dryden at 43 Gerrard Street in London's Chinatown. He lived at 137 long Acre from 1682 to 1686 and at 43 Gerrard Street from 1686 until his death. In his will, he left The George Inn at Northampton to trustees, to form a school for the children of the poor of the town. This became John Dryden's School, later The Orange School.

Literary Works

His first play was the prose comedy of humours. A Wild Gallant (1663), a wholly unremarkable piece, followed by the tragicomedy The Rival Ladies (1664), and The Indian Queen (1664). In 1665, the theatres were closed down because of the plague that raged in London, and the King's court relocated to Oxford. There, Dryden finally established a reputation as a playwright with The Indian Emperor 1665, a heroic drama.

Dryden began a fruitful period of both critical and dramatic writing. His plays from this period include the comedy secret Love (1667), the heroic drama Tyrannic Love (1669).

Essay of Dramatic Poesy (1668), followed by A Defence of an essay (1668). John Dryden wrote the greatest heroic play of the century, The Conquest of Granada (1670, 1671), and the greatest tragicomedy, Marriage A-la-Mode (1671). He wrote the greatest tragedy of the Restoration, All for Love (1677), the greatest comitragedy, Don Sebastian (1689), and one of the greatest comedies, Amphitryon (1690). As a writer of prose, he developed a lucid professional style, relying essentially on patterns and rhythms of everyday speech. As a critic, he developed a combination of methods—historical, analytical, evaluative, dialogic—that proved to enable to neoclassical theory. As a translator, he developed an easy manner of what he called paraphrase that produced brilliant versions of Homer, Lucretius, Horace, Ovid, Juvenal, Persius, Giovanni Boccaccio, Geoffrey Chaucer, and above all Virgil. His translation of The Aeneid remains the best ever produced in English. As a poet, he perfected the heroic couplet, sprinkling it with judicious enjambments, triplets, and metric variations and bequeathing it to Alexander Pope to work upon it his own magic.

Dryden the poet is best known today as a satirist, although he wrote only two great original satires, Mac Flecknoe (1682) and The Medall (1682). His most famous poem, Absalom and Achitophel (1681), while it contains several brilliant satiric portraits, unlike satire comes to a final resolution, albeit tragic for both David and his son. Dryden's other great poems—Annus Mirabilis(1667), Religio Laici (1682), The Hind and the Panther (1687), Anne Killigrew(1686), Alexander's Feast (1697), and "To My Honour'd Kinsman" (1700)—are not satires either. And he contributed a wonderful body of occasional poems: panegyrics, odes, elegies, prologues, and epilogues

3.4 JOHN DRYDEN'S SONG FROM THE INDIAN EMPEROR : AH, FADING JOY ….. SLUMBERS CALL

Text

Ah, fading joy, how quickly art thou past!

Yet we thy ruin haste.

As if the cares of human life were few,

We seek out new:

And follow fate, which would too fast pursue.

See how on every bough the birds express

In their sweet notes their happiness.

They all enjoy and nothing spare;

But on their mother nature lay their care.

Why then should man, the lord of all below,

Such troubles choose to know

As none of all his subjects undergo?

Hark, hark, the waters fall, fall, fall,

And with a murmuring sound

Dash, dash upon the ground,

To gentle slumbers call.

3.4.1 CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF THE POEM

This song, "Ah, fading joy, ….. Slumbers call" has been taken from an English Restoration era stage play a rhymed heroic tragedy drama, "*The Indian Emperor*" Act IV Scene 3 written by John Dryden. The play deals with the Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire under Hernan Cortes. In his play, Dryden presents the type of conflict between love and honour that is typical of his serious drama.

In Act IV, " A Pleasant grotto" is Vasquez, Pizarro and other Spaniards, lying carelessly unarmed and by them many Indian women, one of which sings the following song," a pastoral lyric which argues for a

“careless’ imitation of nature. This song focuses on natural beauty and its importance in life.

“See how on every bough the birds express

In their sweet notes their happiness.

They all enjoy and nothing spare;

But on their mother nature lay their care.”

In the closing lines, with their music of the “fountain of life” and with their intoxicating rhythms of a lust presumably satiated, the soldiers’ happiness is made contrast subtly with the unsatisfied passion and unhappiness that kept Cortez awake both in body and spirit.

“Why then should man, the lord of all below,

Such troubles choose to know

As none of all his subjects undergo?”

The contrast between Cortez and his men is but one of several attempts in this song to highlight the meaning of Cortez’s ultimate triumph over primitive passion and to define dramatically and morally the importance to civilization of his perferct conquest. Indeed the, informing the theme of conquest, the war between passion and reason, is illustrated .

“Hark, hark, the waters fall, fall, fall,

And with a murmuring sound

Dash, dash upon the ground,

To gentle slumbers call.”

It is declamatory and lyric song reveals that the melodies consist primarily of adjacent intervals. Another characteristic of this song is frequent use of melodic word painting and other effective devices. The latter devices are employed to emphasize the emotional idea lying behind a word or group of words and usually consist of chromatic or "false" intervals. This song also emphasizes the affective quality of certain exclamatory words by setting them off with rests, for example, the words "Ah" from "Ah fading joy" and "Hark" from "Hark, hark, hark, the storm grows loud." The word painting devices are of two types: those, which imitate various sounds of man on words signifying suffering or sorrow, and those, which imply motion or direction. The lyric is in triple meter and frequently abound in the use of dance rhythms.

The purpose of this song “Ah, fading joy, how quickly art thou past!” is to give comfort moods of melancholy and despair, as well as to simultaneously distract both the characters on stage and the audience itself. It is known as a "divertive" song.

John Dryden indicates that he realized the value of lyrics in increasing the emotional intensity of a dramatic situation. The kind of song, which was an integral part of the play to fill the gap in the development of the plot.

Note

Soldiers, in Act IV, Scene 3, have sung the song "Ah, fading joy, how quickly art thou past!" of Pelham Humfrey (London 1647 – Windsor 14 July 1674, was an English composer.) He was the first of the new generation of English composers at the beginning of the Restoration to rise to prominence.

3.5 GLOSSARY

fading- to disappear slowly

Thou --- you

Thy : (Determiner) –archaic or dialect form 'your'

Haste – speed in doing something, hurry

Ruin --very badly damaged state of being destroyed

Quickly – fast, in a short time

fate: Destiny

Spare –extra or excessive

bough – one of the main branches of a tree

Hark - listen or notice, pay attention

Murmuring –to say something in a low quiet voice

Dash-- An act of going somewhere suddenly and quickly

Slumber - sleep

3.6 SUMMING UP

Dryden was the dominant literary figure and influence of his **age**. He established the heroic couplet as a standard form of English poetry by **writing** successful satires, religious pieces, fables, epigrams, compliments, prologues, and plays with it; he also introduced the alexandrine and triplet into the form.

3.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Q1. Discuss John Dryden as a neoclassical critic.

Ans : Refer to Section 3.2

Q2. Discuss John Dryden's literary works.

Ans : Refer to Section 3.3

Q.3 Write a critical appreciation of the Poem, Ah, Fading Joy ….. Slumber Call

Ans : Refer to Section 3.4.1

Q.4 Write John Dryden's biography in your own words

Ans : Refer to Section 3.3

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UNIT-4 ALEXANDER POPE : FROM AN ESSAY ON MAN, EPISTLE II

Sturcture

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to Alexander Pope was the greatest English poet of the English Augustan age, the early eighteenth century. He is best known for his satirical and discursive poetry. Pope's work demonstrates masterful use of the heroic couplet. He is also noted for his satiric attacks on his contemporaries and his translations of Homer. An Essay on Man (1734) - Pope's best-known and most frequently quoted poem.

4.1 OBJECTIVES

On this unit we shall discuss pope's life and literary epistled work and his famous work. At the end of this unit you will be able to :

- know Alexander pope as protific poet and satirist of 18th century. Describe an out line of the full poem and present a detail inter pretation of the poem "From Essay on Man Epistle II."
- To know about the salient features of Epistle.
- To understand the poetic devices employed by Pope.

4.2 WHAT IS EPISTLE?

Epistle, a composition in prose or poetry is written in the form of a letter to a particular person or group. In literature, there are two basic traditions of verse epistles, one derived from Horace's *Epistles* and the other from Ovid's *Epistulae heroidum* (better known as *Heroides*). The tradition based on Horace addresses moral and philosophical themes and has been the most popular form since the Renaissance. The form that developed from Ovid deals with romantic and sentimental subjects; it was more popular than the Horatian form during the European Middle Ages. Well-known examples of the Horatian form are the letters of Paul the Apostle (the Pauline epistles incorporated into the Bible), which greatly aided the growth of Christianity into a world religion, and such works as Alexander Pope's "An Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot." Other writers who have used the form include Ben Johnson, John Dryden, and William Congreve, as well as W.H. Auden and Louis MacNeice more recently.

4.3 ALEXANDER POPE AS A SATIRIST

Pope's nature, as Lowell has pointed out, "*delighted more in detecting the blemish, than in enjoying the charm*." Pope was a moralist besides, and he tried by his poetry to improve the morals of the society. He exposed its evils and whenever he found them, he held them up to ridicule and satire.

Pope was pre-eminently a satirist. His satire was more intellectual than emotional. There is hardly any emotion in his satirical poetry. He faithfully portrayed the follies and frivolities of the fashionable people of his time, and while doing so, he added a little venom to his ink. His satire sometimes comes in the most unexpected places and acquires vivid force.

Pope wrote many satires against individuals and though they are deadly and sharp, they are marked by bitterness and malice. Pope's satire is thin and it confines itself to person, it has no relation to the greater world beyond his clique, and its voice, both sharp and querulous rises sometimes to a shriek of feeble acuity.

His satire is intellectual and is full of wit and epigram. His portrait of Addison as Atticus, though unjust and prompted by malice, is a brilliant piece of satire. *"As an intellectual observer and describer of personal weaknesses, Pope stands by himself in English verse."* (Lowell)

His satires breathe the spirit of a coterie of which he was the guiding spirit. He was capable of tender affection and he was not constitutionally a bad heart or a misanthrope like Swift. He was tender only to his friends and associates; to others, he was exceptionally bitter. There were two Popes, in Hugh Walker's words, as it were; he was as passionate in his love as in his hate.

Acrimony is an important trait of his satires. Pope is deliberately bitter or at best ominously reserved. Bitter animosity, sharp personal rancour has imparted to his satires their unmistakable vigour and effect as well as a settled ferocity, as in characterizations of Harvey and Mary Wortley Montague in *Epistle to Arbuthnot.*

His satires, however personal they may be, are often faithful copies of the vices of men. As a stern realist, he held the mirror up to society and his theme was *"civilization illumined by animosity."* Although his canvas was narrow, his insight was deep and penetrating. Pope would live by the perfection of the form in his satires. As a verbal artist, he is almost unchallenged. There are an extraordinary fitness and exactitude in his language, which wounds with an irresistible force. "*Thought is turned over and over till it is brought to a finish."* Packing words and lines with the maximum idea were found by him to produce a greater and surer effect in satire than an elaborate attack, a pinch more stinging than a blow. Not that there is no blow in him, but where he pinches he seems to achieve the maximum effect rather than where he comes out with an open and devastating blow. He uses very simple and ordinarily monosyllabic Saxon words, but he can use them with consummate skill. He knows where to stimulate and intensify attention, where to let it repose, where again to focus it.

4.5 ALEXANDER POPE : LIFE AND LITERARY WORKS

Alexander Pope was born in London, May 21, 1688—the year of The Glorious Revolution. His father (also Alexander, 1646–1717) was a successful linen merchant in the Strand. The poet's mother, Edith (1643–1733), was the daughter of William Turner, Esquire, of York. Both parents were Catholics. They lived in London until a state law relocated Catholics 10 miles away from London or Westminster. He went on to two Roman Catholic schools in London. In 1700, his family moved to a small estate at Popeswood in Binfield Berkshire, close to the Royal Windsor Forest.

Pope's formal education ended at this time, and from then on the mostly educated himself by reading the works of classical writers such as the satirists Horace and Juvenal, the epic poets Homer and Virgil, as well as English authors such as Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, and John Dryden. He also studied many languages and read works by English, French, Italian, Latin, and Greek poets. After five years of study, Pope came into contact with figures from the London literary society such as

William Wycherley, William Congreve, Samuel Garth, William Trumbull, and William Walsh.

At Binfield, he also began to make many important friends. One of them was John Caryll, the future dedicatee of The Rape of the lock was twenty years older than the poet was and had made many acquaintances in the London literary world. He introduced the young Pope to the aging playwright William Wycherley and to William Walsh, a minor poet, who helped Pope revise his first major work, *The Pastorals*. He also met the Blount sisters, Teresa and Martha both of whom would remain lifelong friends.

From the age of 12, he suffered numerous health problems, including Pott's disease (a form of tuberculosis that affects the spine), which deformed his body and stunted his growth, leaving him with a severe hunchback. His tuberculosis infection caused other health problems, including respiratory difficulties, high fevers, inflamed eyes, and abdominal pain. Alexander Pope was already removed from society because he was Catholic; his poor health only alienated him further. Although he never married, he had many female friends to whom he wrote witty letters, including Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Allegedly, his lifelong friend Martha Blount was his lover

Around 1711, Pope made friends with Tory writers Jonathan Swift, Thomas Parnell and John Arbuthnot, who together formed the satirical Scriblerus Club. The aim of the club was to satirize ignorance and pedantry in the form of the fictional scholar Martinus Scriblerus. He also made friends with Whig writers Joseph Addison and Richard Steele.

In March 1713, *Windsor Forest* was published to great acclaim. During Pope's friendship with Joseph Addison, he contributed to Addison's play Cato, as well as writing for *'The Guardian'* and *'The Spectator'*. Around this time, he began the work of translating the Iliad, which was a painstaking process – publication began in 1715 and did not end until 1720.

Pope lived in his parents' house in Mawson Row, Chiswick, between 1716 and 1719; the red brick building is now the Mawson Arms, commemorating him with a blue plaque.

The money made from his translation of Homer allowed Pope to move in 1719 to a villa at Twickenham, where he created his now famous grotto and gardens. The serendipitous discovery of a spring during the subterranean retreat's excavations enabled it to be filled with the relaxing sound of trickling water, which would quietly echo around the chambers. Although the house and gardens have long since been demolished, much of this grotto still survives. The grotto now lies beneath Radnor House Independent Co-ed School, and is occasionally opened to the public.

Literary works

- 1709: Pastorals

- 1711: An Essay on Criticism
- 1712: Messiah (from the Book of Isaiah, and later translates into Latin by Samuel Johnson
- 1712: The rape of Lock (enlarged in 1714)
- 1713: Windsor Forest
- 1715: The Temple of Fame: A Vision
- 1715–1720: Translation of the Iliad
- 1717: Eloisa to Abelard
- 1717: Three Hours After Marriage, with others
- 1717: Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady
- 1723–1725: The Works of Shakespeare,in Six Volumes
- 1725–1726: Translation of the Odyssey
- 1727: Peri Bathous, Or the Art of Sinking in Poetry
- 1728: The Dunciad
- 1733–1734: Essay on Man
- 1735: The Prologue to the Satires(Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot and Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel)

Other works

- 1700: Ode on Solitude
- 1713: Ode for Musick
- 1717: The Court Ballad
- 1731: An Epistle to the Right Honourable Richard Earl of Burlington
- 1733: The Impertinent, or A Visit to the Court
- 1736: Bounce to Fop
- 1737: The First Ode of the Fourth Book of Horace
- 1738: The First Epistle of the First Book of Horace

4.5 ALEXANDER POPE'S POEM "FROM ESSAY ON THE MAN" EPISTLE II

Text

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;

The proper study of mankind is man.

Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,
A being darkly wise, and rudely great:
With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,
With too much weakness for the stoic's pride,
He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;
In doubt to deem himself a god, or beast;
In doubt his mind or body to prefer;
Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err;
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
Whether he thinks too little, or too much:
Chaos of thought and passion, all confus'd;
Still by himself abus'd, or disabus'd;
Created half to rise, and half to fall;
Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd:
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!

4.5.1 SUMMARY OF POEM 'FROM ESSAY ON MAN', EPISTLE II

Epistle II argues that man should not pry into God's affairs but study himself, especially his nature, powers, limits, and frailties. The poem is an attempt to "vindicate the ways of God to Man".

It addressed to Lord Bolingbroke. Pope presents an idea on his view of the Universe; he says that no matter how imperfect, complex, inscrutable and disturbing the Universe appears to be, it functions in a rational fashion according to the natural laws. The natural laws consider the Universe as a whole a perfect work of God. To humans, it appears to be evil and imperfect in many ways; however, Pope points out that this is due to our limited mindset and limited intellectual capacity.

The poem is an affirmative poem of faith. Life seems to be chaotic and confusing to man when he is in the center of it, but according to Pope, it is really divinely ordered. The limited intelligence of man can only take in tiny portions of this order and can experience only partial truths, hence man must rely on hope which then leads into faith. Man must be aware of his existence in the Universe and what he brings to it, in terms of riches, power, and fame. It is man's duty to strive to be good regardless of other situations.

4.5.2 CRITICAL APPRECITATION OF THE POEM 'FROM AN ESSAY ON MAN', EPISTLE II

An Essay on Man is a poem published by Alexander Pope in 1733-1734. It is an effort to rationalize or rather "vindicate the ways of God to man" Pope states that his task is to describe man's place in the "universal system" and to "*vindicate the ways of God to man"*. Ten sections written in heroic couplet are united under four epistles dedicated to Lord Bolingbroke. Each of them concerns different topics: the sense of existence, God's Providence, good vs. evil, the duties of governments, etc. By and large, this is a fragmentary philosophical, political, ethical, but not religious poem.

In the introduction, Pope wrote this work was to "vindicate the ways of God to man." Another important statement is that a man is fated to be born, to do something not very useful for the universe and to die.

The author's contemplations are on the nature of a human being and recognition of the existence of a Supreme Power. He claims that everything in this universe is perfectly structured being meticulously hierarchically harmonized. It functions constantly and uninterruptedly and will do it eternally in accordance with natural laws. A human is somewhere below the angels but above the animals and plants. Different creatures have their own type of communication, which is unfamiliar to humanity. We can only try to understand the universal world order of things by means of our own language and feelings. But being imperfect, we nevertheless are suitable for this ideal system.

"An Essay on Man," being well-structured and carefully thought out, has its own history. Alexander Pope's Poem refers to the Enlightenment era, the age of Reason and Science. Philosophers of that time rejected the ideas of the Middle Ages and Renaissance by establishing their own points of view. The author synthesized the key ideas and thoughts of the eighteenth-century greatest minds. He did enormous work and was highly praised and criticized as well.

4.5.3 ANALYSIS OF THE POEM 'FROM AN ESSAY ON MAN', EPISTLE II (1-18)

An Essay on Man is the second epistle, a long argumentative poem. The second epistle shows a man with respect to himself as an individual. The poet argues and justifies the ways of God to man. He maintains that man must not indulge in finding faults with God or his schemes. He advises man to limit himself to a study of his own nature. The second epistle adds to the interpretive challenges presented in the first epistle. At its outset, Pope commands man to ***"Know then thyself".*** Although he actually intends for man to better understand his place in the universe, the classical meaning of "Know thyself" is that man should look inwards for truth rather than outwards.

"Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;

The proper study of mankind is man.

Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,

A being darkly wise, and rudely great:

With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,"

The poet advises the man not to indulge in the vain pursuit of examining and judging God's ways. He says that a study of man's own self is the proper study for man. According to the poet, Man stands on the isthmus of divinity and bestiality. Man is a strange mixture of wisdom and folly, greatness and pettiness. Though he has the wisdom to be truly great he seldom exhibits that.

- ***"Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,***

A being darkly wise, and rudely great:

With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,

With too much weakness for the stoic's pride,"

It is his most didactic poem written in the antithetical mode, and presenting man's position in the universal scheme of things, distills the essence of Pope's belief that man is a mingled creation comprising the *poles opposites*.

Since Pope had declared in the informatory lines that man should study him. When one begins to examine man, one realizes that man resembles the geographical and topographical concept of the isthmus. What Pope implies is that man is the connecting link, the vacuum between the lowest and highest forms of beings. He hovers between the opposite extremes, of divinity and bestiality, between lust-fulness and spirituality, between passion and reality.

The entire poem is in effect a description of these opposite qualities which render a man a paradoxical existence. Although he possesses the hknowledge and even wisdom, as the adjective ***"darkly"*** points out, he is often beset with ignorance and folly.

Although man possesses greatness and nobility, he often loses his humanity and behaves rudely acrimoniously and even violently.

According to Pope's philosophy, each man has a *"ruling passion"* that subordinates the others. In contrast with the accepted eighteenth-century views of the passions, Pope's doctrine of the ***"ruling passion"*** is quite original. It seems clear that with this idea, Pope tries to explain why certain individual behaves in distinct ways, seemingly governed by a particular desire. He does not, however, make this explicit in the poem.

The poem is not solely Christian, however; it makes an assumption that man has fallen and must seek his own salvation.

- ***He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest;***

In doubt to deem himself a god, or beast;

In doubt his mind or body to prefer;

Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err;

Alike in ignorance, his reason such,

Whether he thinks too little, or too much:

He oscillates between a state of doubt to act or a state of staying at rest, thus he always remains caught in a conflict. Due to his paradoxical nature, man fails to understand whether he should think himself a god or a beast. Man's birth is nothing but the beginning of his end. He reasons only to stand deceived.

- ***Chaos of thought and passion, all confus'd;***

Still by himself abus'd, or disabus'd;

Created half to rise, and half to fall;

Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;

Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd:

The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!

Pulled in opposite directions by his intellect and heart, man remains confused. He becomes his own friend and his own enemy depending on whether he acts wisely or unwisely. It is a man who attains victory and it is he only who fails. He is a great Lord of things as he has mastered material things, yet he is vulnerable to fall prey to these things. Being the sole judge of truth, he tends to commit errors. The conflicting pulls of man's powers and frailties make him a laughing stock and he remains a riddle of the world.

4.6 POETIC DEVICES

An Essay on Man is a philosophical and didactic poem written in the antithetical mode. This poem has balanced rhyming heroic couplets comprises four epistles. It was published between 1732 and 1734. Pope intended this poem to be the centerpiece of a proposed system of ethics that was to be put forth in poetic form. In keeping with the poem's didactic tone—that is to say, Alexander Pope is trying to teach us something—Pope uses appropriately authoritative language to get his point across.

Pope's ***satirical*** position, here and in The ***Essay on Man***, is that of Horatian ***satire***: an amused view of the foibles of fallible humanity, offered from the perspective of a detached observer of excellent taste.

- **Antithesis:** "***Know then thyself , presume not God to scan";*** because both parts of the statement which appear in balanced form, reinforce the idea that the knowledge of man is to

be achieved by the person himself by looking into himself . The normal word order should have been 'don't presume God to scan' rather than 'presume not God to scan' .

- **Epigram: *"The proper study of mankind is man."***At first glance it would appear that knowledge of entire mankind may be gleaned by observing a single man, But on thinking more deeply, we realize that the commonest and the deepest qualities of mankind—such as emotion, ambition, revenge-fulness in everyman.

- **Metaphor: "*Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state*,"** Pope derives his metaphor of isthmus from the medieval concept of the great chain of being, linking every kind of creature, a concept which was very popular from the time of Shakespeare to the time of Pope. The position has been compared to the Geographical narrow piece of land which joins two larger land masses. The comparison is not made explicit.

- **Antithesis:*"Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err;"*** since the balanced structure reinforces same idea of man being subject to many weaknesses, Even though he takes birth he has to inevitable die and even if he tries to reason he is almost certain to make errors.

- **Antithesis: *"Created half to rise, and half to fall";***The two balanced structures reinforce the same idea of man not achieving polar extremes. He is middle kind of creature.He rises for the first half the first period of time, and fails during the second half of time.

- **Epigram: *"Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;".*** The statement should appear to be absurd because man who is the lord of nature can hardly be a 'prey' yet on thinking more deeply, we realize that although man may have subjugated some aspects of nature, he is still a victim of fortune as well as of other unpredictable aspects of nature such as floods and drought.

- **Epigram: *"Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd*:"** A judge of truth, especially it is he in the only judge of truth is unlikely to be full of errors. Therefore this statement would appear to be absurd. But on thinking more deeply we realize that the nature of man is such that his reasoning is often fallacious as even the philosopher David Hume is shown.

- ***Anti Climax The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!*** since there is a sudden fall from 'glory', 'riddle' and 'jest'.

4.7 GLOSSARY

- presume – to be arrogant to examine closely;

- scan – to examine closely;
- isthmus – a narrow strip of land with water on either side;
- darkly wise – foolishly wise;
- rudely great – great and yet mean;
- stoic – a person who is not disturbed by pain or not excited by joy;
- hangs between – neither a god nor a beast;
- in doubt – not sure;
- 'doubt …. prefer' – pulled apart by rival forces of the body and the mind;
- 'born … die' – once he is born, he can not escape death;
- reasoning – able to think logically;
- alike – same (remaining equally ignorant);
- chaos – completely confused;
- abused – deceived, misled;
- disabused – self enlightened;
- half to rise – to succeed partially;
- Great Lord – the crown of creation;
- sole – man is the only being gifted with powers to know the truth from untruth;
- glory – crown;
- jest – laughing stock; \
- riddle – puzzle.

Note: isthmus of a middle state :Pope derives his metaphor of isthmus from the medieval concept of the great chain of being, linking every kind of creature, a concept which was very popular from the time of Shakespeare to the time of Pope.

4.8 SUMMING UP

Pope says that man has learned about nature and God's creation through science; consequently, science has given manpower, but having become intoxicated by this power, man has begun to think that he is "imitating God". In response, Pope declares the species of man to be a

"fool", absent of knowledge and plagued by "ignorance" in spite of all the progress achieved through science.

Alexander Pope argues that humanity should make a study of itself, and not debase the spiritual essence of the world with earthly science, since the two are diametrically opposed to one another: A man should "presume not God to scan". He used poetry as a great instrument of moral improvement and believed that satire was his most effective weapon to destroy corrupt customs and to expose the wicked.

4.9 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Q1. Write a summary of the poem From an essay on Man', Epistle II

Ans : Refer to Section 4.5.1

Q2. Mention literary works of Alexander Pope.

Ans : Refer to Section 4.4

Q3. Explain the following lines with reference to the poem. "*He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest In doubt to deem himself a god, or beast*;".

Ans : Refer to Section 4.5.3

Q4. Discuss the poetic devices with reference to the poem 'From an essay on Man'. Epistle II

Ans : Refer to Section 4.6

Q5. Explain Epistle in your own words.

Ans : Refer to Section 4.2

Q6. Write a critical appreciation of the poem 'From an essay on Man',Epistle II

Ans : Refer to Section 4.5.2

Q7. Analyze the poem 'From an essay on Man',Epistle II (1-18) in your own word.

Ans : Refer to Section 4.5.3

Q8. Discuss Alexander Pope as a Satirist?

Ans : Refer to Section 4.3

Q9. Write a brief biographical sketch of Alexander Pope.

Ans : Refer to Section 4.4

Q10. Explain the lines with reference to the poem, 'From an essay on Man' Epistle II

Ans : Refer to 4.5.3

"Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,

A being darkly wise, and rudely great:

With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,

With too much weakness for the stoic's pride,"

4.10 FURHTER READING

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Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon
Open University

Bachelor of Arts

UGEN-102

Literature in English 1550-1750

BLOCK

3

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BLOCK INTRODUCTION

This block consists of following three units.

Unit-5 discusses Francis Bacon, the father of English essay, is the first great English essayist who enjoys a glorious reputation. His essays introduce a new form of composition into English literature. We have for your course, the essays, *Of Studies, Of Truth, Of Friendship.*

Unit-6 discusses Joseph Addison as an English essayist of the 18th century and his essay *Sir Roger at Home.*

Unit-7 discusses Richard Steele as an English essayist of 18th century and his famous essay of the Club. The Spectator adopted a fictional method of presentation through a *Spectator Club,* whose imaginary members extolled the authors own ideas about society.

UNIT-5 FRANCIS BACON : OF STUDIES, OF TRUTH, OF FRIENDSHIP

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to Sir Francis Bacon, one of the greatest writers of Renaissance do. He was a great English statesman,

politician and philosopher. The great classical poet Alexander Pope regarded him as “the wisest, the brightest and the meanest of mankind”. Bacon can rightly be called as the "Father of English Essay" as Hugh Walker says “Bacon is the first English essayist”. Bacon borrowed the general conception of his essays from the French writer and philosopher Montaigne. In this unit we will take up of his three essays, namely “Of Studies”, “Of Truth” and “Of Friendship and through study of these essays, analyze Francis Bacon as an Essayist, and a philosopher.

5.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- know about the life and works of Sir Francis Bacon.
- You will also analyze and understand Bacon as an Essayist and a Philosopher.
- You will be also know about his prose style.
- Describe a detailed summaryof three essays.

5.2 WHAT IS “AN ESSAY”?

The word, Essay is derived from the French word '**essai'**, which means “to attempt,” or “to try.” An essay is a short form of **literary** composition based on a single subject matter, and often gives the personal opinion of the author. A famous English essayist, Aldous Huxley defines essay as, “a **literary** device for saying almost everything about almost anything.” It can be said that **"prose composition with a focused subject of discussion"** or a **"long, systematic discourse”.**

5.2.1 FUNCTION OF ESSAYS

The function of an essay depends upon the subject matter, whether the writer wants to inform, persuade, explain, or entertain. In fact, the essay increases the analytical and intellectual abilities of the writer as well as readers. It evaluates and tests the writing skills of a writer, and organizes his or her thinking to respond personally or critically to an issue. Through an essay, a writer presents his argument in a more sophisticated manner. In addition, it encourages students to develop concepts and skills, such as analysis, comparison and contrast, clarity, exposition, conciseness, and persuasion.

5.3 FRANCIS BACON : LIFE AND WORKS

Bacon was English philosopher and writer best known as the founder of the modern English Essayist. He was an English statesman

who served as Attorney General, and as Lord Chancellor of England. His works are credited with developing the scientific method, and remained influential through the scientific revolution.

Bacon was born on 22 January 1561 at York House near the Strand in London. He was educated at home in his early years owing to poor health, which would plague him throughout his life. He received tuition from John Walsall, a graduate of Oxford with a strong leaning toward Puritanism. He went up to Trinity College at the University of Cambridge on 5 April 1573 at the age of 12, living for three years there, together with his older brother Anthony Bacon under the personal tutelage of Dr John Walsall, Future Archbishop of Canterbury. Bacon's education was conducted largely in Latin and followed the medieval curriculum. He was also educated at the University of Poitiers. It was also at Cambridge that Bacon first met Queen Elizabeth who was impressed by his precocious intellect, and was accustomed to calling him "The Young lord keeper". His studies brought him to the belief that the methods and results of science as then practised were erroneous. His reverence for Aristotle conflicted with his rejection of Aristotelian philosophy, which seemed to him barren, disputatious and wrong in its objectives. He became known as a liberal-minded reformer, eager to amend and simplify the law. Though a friend of the crown, he opposed feudal privileges and dictatorial powers. He also spoke against religious persecution. On 9 April 1626, Francis Bacon died of Pneumonia.

5.4 FRANCIS BACON : AS AN ESSAYIST

As a man of letters, Bacon is popularly known for his prose style. His way of writing, no doubt, a number of qualities with that of Elizabethan and Jacobean writers; but it also had, at that same time , some special features of its own. Thus, it remains for the main part of the aphoristic with the result that Bacon is the most quotable writers of the world. His essays are remarkable for their brevity. His sentences are short and rapid but they are forceful. Dean Church obverses “They come down like hammer.” Bacon evolved a prose style that proved for the first time that English can also be used to express fine thoughts in simple sentences. Bacon, in fact, wrote more than one style and suits his style to his subject.

In his earlier essays the sentences are sketch and incomplete manner but in later essays there is warmth and clarity. Most of the words read like proverbs “*For a lie faces God and shrinks from Man”*. *(Of Truth) “It is strange desire to seek power and loss liberty or, over other and to loss power over a man’s self” (Of Great Pleasure).*

Thus, there is not a single essay which does not contain such window of human heart. His sentences are over-packed with meaning and they are often telegraphic in nature But the aphoristic statement of his essays depends on such expression such as “balance” and anti thesis” which marked the structure of his sentences. In his essays, “**Of Studies”** there is three –fold balances: *“Studies serves for the delight, for ornament*

and for ability." Some books are tasted, other to be swallowed, and a few are to be chewed and digested". "Studies make a full man, conferences a ready man and writing an exact man". Thus, his style is clearly rhetorical; and he has the power to attract its readers even though he cannot convince them.

Bacon also uses his extensive use of images, metaphors, as well as similes. Bacon draws his imagery even from the human life or from the common fact of nature. He gives striking metaphors and similes to prove his points. As he says in "Of Studies" ---distilled books are like distilled water flashy things". His similes are most of the time apt, vivid and different. Classical mythology, biblical astronomy, philosophy, natural observation, domestic aspects are pressed to communicate with the meaning.

Bacon expressed his thoughts in a few words or sentences. His essays are to be read slowly and carefully, not because the words are obscure but because the thought expressed in them is compact and condense. In his essays **"Of Truth",** Bacon brought the ideas for man's natural love for lie. The poetic figure of speech is brought out in the statement. *"Certainly it is heaven upon Earth, to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence and turn on truth."* Bacon's words are without wit and humour in ordinary sense of meaning- but the capable of creating humour to please his readers: *"**By pains comes to greater pain.",through indignities man rise to dignities'.(Of Great Place).*** Though there are some Latinism words in his essays but which are difficult to follow yet they do not lead to obscurity. His essays are distinctive and aphoristic full of learned quotations and allusions. Thus it can be said that Francis Bacon was, indeed a great artist who expressed his thoughts and feelings in his own style.

5.5 FRANCIS BACON : "A MAN OF RENAISSANCE"

Since the term "Renaissance man" refers to a man who deliberately cultivated numerous talents, Bacon is a true man of the Renaissance in this respect. Thinkers in the Renaissance believed that God had gifted humans with great potential and that people had a serious obligation to cultivate that potential and use it wisely and well.

As a philosopher and scientific thinker, Bacon sought to promote the responsible use of reason, which he considered one of the most important gifts God had given to him. The thinkers of the Renaissance almost University prized reason Francis Bacon was no exception.

At the same time, Bacon and others Renaissance thinkers believed that reason was fully compatible with Christian Faith; they considered Christianity reasonably religion. Francis Bacon (like many other Renaissance thinkers) sought to show how truths discovered by Ancient Greeks and Romans were compatible with Christian truth.

Francis Bacon was a typical Renaissance thinker in his emphasis on Ethics and Morality. He says "truth should not be simply known, but should also be practised, especially in one's dealings with other persons". It is not surprising then, his essays deals with topics "civil and moral". Yet despite his tendency to prize truth and reason, Bacon was under no illusions about human nature. For instance, in his essay "Of Truth", he makes his belief that humans have natural tendencies to want to wilful and lie. Francis Bacon was a typical Renaissance thinker in the range of his intellectual ambitions. He gave serious thought to different kinds of topics. He was also fulfilled a wide variety of social roles. In all these ways, then Francis Bacon might reasonably be called a "man of Renaissance."

5.6 FRANCIS BACON : PROSE STYLE

The style of Francis Bacon's prose in his essays is generally aphoristic, direct, and brief, all of which emphasize the practicality of his writings and encourage active reader participation. For example, in his essay *Of Truth*, Bacon writes in direct terms, "A mixture of a lie doeth ever add pleasure", meaning that will like our truths softened by untruths. Likewise, in *Of Studies*, he writes,"Crafty men condemn studies, simple men admire them; and wise men use them". These sentences have the feel of aphorism, pithy and memorable truths stated in a few words.

His essays begin with either a catchy phrase or a question. We can also see the use of figurative language in his essays. His essays include aptness of the similes, the witty turn of phrases and the compact expression of weighty thoughts. Metaphors can be found in his essays. For example- In *Of Studies,* he compares "our natural abilities to the growth of a plant. As a plant needs pruning, our natural qualities are guided by studies". Bacon's style is also cohesive, moving logically from point to point. Bacon's essays mix the Greeks and Latin phrases, quotations as he had comprehensive knowledge of the classics. Bacon uses a smooth transition touching one subject after another in an abrupt manner and sentences are fluid. It is descriptive, using Figure of speech.

5.7 ALLUSIONS IN BACON'S ESSAY

Allusion is a reference in a literary work to a person, place, or thing in history or another work of literature. Allusions are often indirect or brief references to well-known characters or events. Allusions are often used to summarize broad, complex ideas or emotions in one quick, powerful image. For example, The essays of Bacon are full of illustrations, allusions, and quotations, some of these quotations being from Latin sources. These allusions and quotations show Bacon's love of learning. The essay witness to Bacon's learned mind in the extensive use of quotations and allusions drawn from various sources, classical fables, the Bible, History, the ancient Greek and the Roman writers. Bacon employs allusions to and quotations in order to explain his point. These allusions

are having a great impact to enrich his essays. So, Bacon shows mastery of the principles of prose by using allusions in his essays. These allusions lend to his ideas greater weight and serve to make his point more strong and vivid.

In the essay, *Of Truth,* we have allusions to Pilate, Lucian.

Lucretius, and Montaigne with quotations from the last two. He also gives us a quotation from the Bible in this essay. These allusions and quotations enrich this essay and make it more interesting. In the allusion to Pilate, the Jews accused Jesus Christ before the Roman Governor of Judea, for perverting the nation and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ, a king. The charge was false as Jesus said;

"My kingdom is not of this world, to this end was I born and for this cause came I unto the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice"

Pilate did not wait to be told that the truth was what Jesus spoke. Pilate looked upon Christ as a harmless lunatic or enthusiastic, and was anxious to release him, but was forced to sentence him to death by the cries of the infuriated Jewish mob. Actually, by using this allusion Bacon wants to emphasis the reality that certain people do not bother to find the truth and they sometimes hide it even they know and find great pleasure in changing their opinion frequently because they desire unlimited freedom to act and think which would not be possible if they had to believe in fixed principle. Bacon's utterances through allusions are thoughtful, insightful, lively, witty and meaningful to the core that enrich the essay and cause his essays to be packed with astounding wit.

In the essay, *Of Marriage and Single Life*, we have a reference to *Ulysses* and a quotation from Thales, an ancient Greek philosopher. Bacon elaborates in the essay that loving husband should be serious, conventional and loyal. So, he uses the allusion of Ulysses for the greater impact of this idea and to support his argument. Here, the allusion used by Bacon relates to Penelope, who is the wife of Ulysses, the King of Ithaca and the Greek hero in the Trojan War. She must have grown middle aged by the time Ulysses returned to her after 20 years, at the end of his wanderings and adventures. The allusion here is to the circumstances of Ulysses refusing to marry and live with the goddess Calypso, though she offered to make him immortal like. This allusion more clearly illustrates the topic to the reader that men of a serious bent of mind usually follow conventions and are steady in their love for their wives.

The essay, *Of Friendship,* contains a large number of allusions which illustrate Bacon's argument that even great men, who have strong and firm minds, need friends to whom they can open their hearts. There are a number of allusions to philosophers also in the same essay. In the essay "Of Friendship", for example, the argument is set in motion by a quotation by Aristotle. This is followed by Bacon's own comment upon it, which leads to a further elaboration of the meaning of solitude.Certain

allusions are being used in the essay "Of Friendship" such as reference to Comineus, Pythagoras, Epimenides, Numa,
Empedocles and Apollonius. In "Of Friendship" Bacon uses the allusions related to kings and princesses to give a great impact of the relation of friendship. Great men, kings and dictators formed friendship. Sylla, the dictator of Rome, made Pompey, his friend and placed confidence in him, though later on Pompey turned against him and brought about his fall. Julius Caesar had Decimus Brutus as his friend though he was deceived by his man and was brought by him to his fall. Augustus, the Roman Emperor, made Agrippa, as his friend, though Agrippa played foul tricks on his friend and deceived him. In spite of these examples of defalcation of friends, it cannot be denied that the love for friendship has been felt by kings and princess, and in the absence of friends life has been intolerable. Bacon wants to give the importance of friendship through the examples from history to produce an immense impact on the readers.

In the Essay, *Of Revenge,* Bacon uses the allusions of Cosmus, Prophet Job (Ayub A.S) and Julius Caesar. Bacon is giving another reference of his contemporary, he says that the Duke says God orders us to forgive our enemies but never orders us to forgive our friends. If your friends hurt you than you should definitely take revenge.Bacon emphasis on the importance of taking revenge. Bacon uses allusions to make them fit the occasion. At times the allusions not only support the argument, but are themselves elucidated by the argument. Bacon thus employs allusions and quotations in order to explain his point. They serve to make an impact more scholarly and enrich it while lending weight to his idea.

5.8 FRANCIS BACON'S : OF STUDIES

TEXT

Of Studies

STUDIES serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight, is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment, and disposition of business. For expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best, from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humor of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are

perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need proyning, by study; and studies themselves, do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books, else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit: and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know, that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtile; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend. Abeunt studia in mores. Nay, there is no stond or impediment in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies; like as diseases of the body, may have appropriate exercises. Bowling is good for the stone and reins; shooting for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for

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

5.8.1 OF STUDIES : SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

Of Studies is the first essay of the first collection of ten essays of Francis Bacon which was published in 1597. But it was revised for the edition of 1612. More than dozen new sentences were added and some words were also altered. *Of Studies* is typically Baconian essay with an astonishing terseness, freshness of illustrations, logical analysis, highly Latinized vocabulary, worldly wisdom and Renaissance enlightenment. Bacon through a statement begins his argument to validate the usefulness and advantage of study in our life.

Thus he puts forward the three basic purposes of studies**:** *"Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability"*. He later expands his sentence to bring lucidity and clearness. Studies fill us delight and aesthetic pleasure when we remain private and solitary. While we discourse, our studies add decoration to our speech. Further, the men of study can decide best on the right lines in business and politics. Bacon deprecates too much studies and the scholar's habit to make his judgment from his reading instead of using his independent views.

Bacon is a consummate artist of Renaissance spirit. Thus he knows the expanse of knowledge and utility of studies. He advocates a scientific enquiry of studies. Through an exquisite metaphor drawn from Botany he compares human mind to a growing plant. As the growing plants need to be pruned and watered and manured for optimum development, the new growing conscience of us are to be tutored, mounded, oriented and devised by studies. But it is experience which ultimately matures our perception and leads us to perfection:

"They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants that need proyning by study".

Next Bacon considers what persons despise studies and what people praise them and what people make practical use of them. The crafty men condemn studies; simple men admire them while the wise men make ultimate use of it. But it should be remembered that the inquisitive mind and keen observation cultivate the real wisdom. Bacon advises his readers to apply studies to 'weigh and consider' rather than useless

contradictions and grandiloquence. In *The Advancement of Learning* Bacon makes systematic classifications of studies and considers different modes to be employed with different kinds of books: *"Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested"*.

The books according to its value and utility are to be devised into various modes of articulations. The worthy classical pragmatic sort are to be adorned by expertise reading with diligence while the meaner sort of books or less important books are to be read in summary or by deputy. Again the global span of knowledge is revealed in his analysis of various subjects and their beneficent categories. The scholarly mind of Bacon here makes the subtle observation:

"Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtle; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend". Studies do not shape a perfect man without the needed conference and writing. *"And therefore if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth' not"*. Bacon further tells us that our studies pass into our character *(Abeunt studia in mores)*. Rightly so the constitution of our moral disposition is the outcome of our learning and experience.

Every defect of the mind, Bacon says, may be cured by a proper choice of reading. Bacon here draws a parallel between the physical exercise and intellectual exercise. As different games, sports, exercises beget growth and development, the different branches of studies cures the in capability of logic, wondering of wit, lack of distinguish etc. Bacon emphatically concludes that every defect of the mind may have a special receipt and remedial assurance.

Of Studies contains almost all the techniques of Bacon's essay writing and the world of his mind. It is full of wisdom, teachings and didacticism. In style, the essay is epigrammatic proverbial form, of balance and force. It is full of warmth and colour, profound wit and knowledge, experience and observation.

5.9 SUMMING UP

The main focus of Bacon's essay rests on explaining to the reader the importance of study and knowledge in terms of practical application towards the individual and its society. Highlighting the importance of studies, Bacon's essay illustrates the role studies play in an individual's daily life. For Bacon, study is always related to the application of knowledge in practical life. At the beginning of his essay, his first analysis is an exposition on the purpose or uses that different individuals can have by approaching study- *"…for delight, ornament, and for ability"*. Bacon describes the three main purposes of study including studying for gaining delight, studies done for ornamenting one's life and studying in order to

improve one's ability. Study as an activity, in whatever form, brings us joy and enhances our thinking, speaking and writing ability adding charm to our personality.

Francis Bacon says that learned and well-read men can execute plans effectively, and manage their daily affairs with expertise and lead a healthy and stable life. He further states that reading makes a full man; conference leads to a ready man while writing makes an exact man. While throwing light on the advantages and usefulness of studies, Bacon also puts forward some demerits of study as he thinks that studying for a prolonged period of the time may lead to laziness. *"To spend too much time in the study is sloth"* He also condemns the act of studying from books solely without learning from nature around. *"Crafty men condemn studies"*

The benefits of Bacon are final approach. The essay "Of Studies" further asserts the benefits by considering this act as a medicine for the defects of human mind and the source of enhancing one's wit. The benefits in terms of defining a "Man" by its ability to read, write or confer and in terms of being the medicine for any *"impediment in the wit*" and by giving "receipts" to "every defect the mind".

While discussing the importance of studying in an individual's life, the essayist informs his readers about the benefits of reading good books. For Bacon, some books are only to be tested; others are to swallow while some books are meant for chewing and digesting properly. Therefore, the readers must choose wisely before studying any books to enhance his/ her knowledge about the world around. Bacon concludes his essays by suggesting that studies assist an individual in removing the defects of his/her mind as every problem of the human mind carries special importance for the individual and the world. Francis Bacon says that learned and well-read men can execute plans effectively, and manage their daily affairs with expertise and lead a healthy and stable life. He further states that reading makes a full man; conference leads to a ready man while writing makes an exact man. While throwing light on the advantages and usefulness of studies, Bacon also puts forward some demerits of study as he thinks that studying for a prolonged period of the time may lead to laziness. "To spend too much time in the study is sloth" He also condemns the act of studying from books solely without learning from nature around. *"Crafty men condemn studies"*

Bacon's essay "Of Studies" is enriched with intellectual wisdom, pragmatic approach and practical knowledge; therefore, it is considered to be the most beneficial essay for the students and the young individuals. From reading books to writing papers, study plays a vital role in a man's life making him learned, witty and experienced. Adopting a didactic approach, the essay informs the readers about the benefits and uses of studies in one's life. Although the essay is devoid of any emotions and colourful expression, it is nevertheless, a wonderful effort of teaching the readers about the importance of studying. The essay is regarded as Bacon's masterpiece enriched with stylized Latin vocabulary, fresh and

new ideas, logical and relevant themes and wisdom of the world. For these reasons, the essays are still popular among the individuals of all ages.

5.10 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Q1. What is an essay?

Ans : Refer to Section 5.2

Q2. Summarize the essay "Of Studies" in your own words.

Ans : Refer to Section 5.81

Q3. Discuss the prose style of Bacon with reference to his essay "Of Studies"

Ans : Refer to Section 5.6

Q4. Discuss a brief Life and works of Francis Bacon.

Ans : Refer to Section 5.3

Q5. *To spend too much time in the study is sloth Explain* with Reference to context.

Ans : Refer to Section 5.8.1 and 5.9

Q6. *Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested*. Explain with Reference to context.

Ans : Refer to Section 5.8.1

5.11 OF TRUTH

TEXT

WHAT is truth? said jesting Pilate,and would not stay for an answer. Certainly there be, that delight in giddiness, and count it a bondage to fix a belief; affecting free-will in thinking, as well as in acting. And though the sects of philosophers of that kind be gone, yet there remain certain discoursing wits, which are of the same veins, though there be not so much blood in them, as was in those of the ancients. But it is not only the difficulty and labor, which men take in finding out of truth, nor again, that when it is found, it imposeth upon men's thoughts, that doth bring lies in favor; but a natural, though corrupt love, of the lie itself. One of the later school of the Grecians, examineth the matter, and is at a stand, to think what should be in it, that men should love lies; where neither they make for pleasure, as with poets, nor for advan-

tage, as with the merchant; but for the lie's sake. But I cannot tell; this same truth, is a naked, and open day-light, that doth not show the masks, and mummeries, and triumphs, of the world, half so stately and daintily as candle-lights. Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that showeth best by day; but it will not rise to the price of a diamond, or carbuncle, that showeth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt, that if there were taken out of men's minds, vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds, of a number of men, poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves?

One of the fathers, in great severity, called poesy vinum daemonum, because it fireth the imagination; and yet, it is but with the shadow of a lie. But it is not the lie that passeth through the mind, but the lie that sinketh in, and settleth in it, that doth the hurt; such as we spake of before. But howsoever these things are thus in men's depraved judgments, and affections, yet truth, which only doth judge itself, teacheth that the inquiry of truth, which is the love-making, or wooing of it, the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature. The first creature of God, in the works of the days, was the light of the sense; the last, was the light of reason; and his sabbath work ever since, is the illumination of his Spirit. First he breathed light, upon the face of the matter or chaos; then he breathed light, into the face of man; and still he breatheth and inspireth light, into the face of his chosen. The poet, that beautified the sect, that was otherwise inferior to the rest, saith yet excellently well: It is a pleasure, to stand upon the shore, and to see ships tossed upon the sea; a pleasure, to stand in the window of a castle, and to see a battle, and the adventures thereof below: but no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth (a hill not to be commanded, and where the air is always clear and serene), and to see the errors, and wanderings, and mists, and tempests, in the vale

below; so always that this prospect be with pity, and not with swelling, or pride. Certainly, it is heaven upon earth, to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth.

To pass from theological, and philosophical truth, to the truth of civil business; it will be acknowledged, even by those that practise it not, that clear, and round dealing, is the honor of man's nature; and that mixture of falsehoods, is like alloy in coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better, but it embaseth it. For these winding, and crooked courses, are the goings of the serpent; which goeth basely upon the belly, and not upon the feet. There is no vice, that doth so cover a man with shame, as to be found false and perfidious. And therefore Montaigne saith prettily, when he inquired the reason, why the word of the lie should be such a disgrace, and such an odious charge? Saith he, If it be well weighed, to say that a man lieth, is as much to say, as that he is brave towards God, and a coward towards men. For a lie faces God, and shrinks from man. Surely the wickedness of falsehood, and breach of faith, cannot possibly be so highly expressed, as in that it shall be the last peal, to call the judgments of God upon the generations of men; it being foretold, that when Christ cometh, he shall not find faith upon the earth.

5.11.1 OF TRUTH : SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

Of Truth is Bacon's greatest work of prose, which shows his keen observation of human beings with their attributes of truth and lie. Sir Francis Bacon starts his essay while referring the Ancient Roman Governor Pilate, who made the situation critical without doing an analysis of truth. Pilate asked for truth but did not wait for it. If he would have known the truth, he may have not passed the judgment to crucify the Christ. He then talks about skeptical minds, who are not easily convincible. He doubts that Pilate was also skeptical. Definitely, there are

people who do not have strong beliefs. Numerous people are there in the world, who change their minds frequently. They consider that fixed beliefs are a sign of mental slavery. Whenever they think or take decisions, they use their free will; they stubbornly ignore every belief. In Greeks, there was a school of philosophers having skeptics. They may have died now but skeptical people are there even today in this world.

Why Do People Not Speak the Truth?

There are many reasons behind not speaking the truth. One of them is that discovery of truth requires efforts and time. Let us do a critical analysis of this truth from real life example. There are many courts in every country; each court has thousands of cases; in every case, either the defendant or the plaintiff is right. Every case has been heard for many years in order to find out who is speaking the truth. Secondly, both the parties (plaintiff and defendant) struggle to prove themselves right. Indeed Sir Francis Bacon is right. Effort and time are required to discover the truth. The second reason, which Bacon provides for not speaking the truth, is that it is hard to digest. When it is discovered people hardly believe it.

Then he talks about lies. He is of the view that lies attract people, but no one adopts truth. He is confused that why do people tell a lie for the sake of a lie. Nevertheless, he understands that poets sell lie because it gives pleasure to human beings. Traders tell lies because they want to sell their goods, but lie for the sake of lie is not comprehensible.

How is the Truth Different from Lie?

Bacon gives a real-life example. He says that if the audience sees a spectacle on the stage in daylight it will look as it is. On the other hand, if the same show is presented with candlelight then it will attract more people; it would definitely give pleasure to the audience. Lie, in the same way, has a beautiful and shiny cover, due to which people prefer lie instead of truth. However, if the truth were mixed with a lie then it would also give pleasure. Moreover, people have created their own false beliefs, judgments, and opinions. If these things were snatched from them, their condition would become miserable as these things give them hope and strange kind of pleasure.

Truth shows that Poetry is Harmful?

Is poetry a lie? If so, is it harmful? No, Bacon does not think so. Early writers of the church called poetry a devil's wine. It is because it exaggerates things and is full of fancies. It also takes a person in the world of imagination; therefore, they called poetry a lie and harmful to human beings. Bacon agrees that the poetry is a lie but he denies the second allegation. He says that it is not harmful at all. He divides lies into two categories; short-term and long-term. Poetry tells lie but people soon forget it; therefore, it causes no harm to them. Only those lies are harmful that sink in the mind and are difficult to forget.

Truth Ends Pride :

The light was the first thing, which the God had created. Then He bestowed men, rational faculty. Since then, He is illuminating the human minds. Bacon advises that whenever a person takes a decision, he should rely on his rationality. It would be based upon truth. He quotes Lucretius, who says that realization of truth is the greatest pleasure in the world. When someone realizes the truth, he becomes aware of its importance. He also recognizes his false beliefs and silly hopes. Truth also nips the pride in the bud due to which a person becomes pitiful.

Importance of Truth:

If we deeply do critical analysis "Of Truth" then we realize that Bacon truth has its own significance. Falsehood brings disgrace and truth brings honor. Even those persons, who do not speak truth, know its worth. Furthermore, the truth is required not only in the field of theology and philosophy but also in every field of life. Bacon refers Montaigne, who says that a liar is always brave towards God but coward towards humans. By telling a lie, a liar directly challenges God. He knows that he has to face God on doomsday yet he promotes falsehood. Thus, he is brave enough to get punishment in eternal life.

At the end of the essay, we find some morality. Bacon tries his best to convince his readers and compels them to speak the truth. The last argument, which he advances, is the "fear of doomsday". A liar would be punished on the Day of Judgment, says Sir Francis Bacon.

To conclude, the essay persuades people to speak the truth at any cost. He appreciates those people who stick with the truth. Thus, his tone in this essay is didactic; style is lucid and examples are rich. Solid references from Greeks, Romans, other subjects and various philosophers demonstrate experience and knowledge of the writer in every field of life. It seems that he has made critical analysis of his experiences and then written "Of Truth". In short, the whole essay is worth reading for the person, who wants success in both the worlds.

5.12 SUMMING UP

Bacon extols the value of truth and critically explains that there are many people who do not place much value on truth, as they find lies more interesting. Moving on he describes the reasons why people do not like the truth. The First, truth is difficult to acquire without hard work and man is reluctant to work hard. Moreover, truth makes people bound to a certain fact. It diminishes the freedom.

According to Bacon, Truth is like a bright day which shows the real self. Truth is like a pearl that shows what is visible to naked eye. It cannot show anything by adding unrealistic elements. Falsehood can show something apparent in the dark. People lie because it covers their real

personality. Bacon rightly says that ***"****A Mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure"*

The mixture of truth and lie makes things interesting and pleases everyone. He states if everything is presented as its real colour with no additional praise, flattering comments, and illusions, the society will become indolent.

Truth is utmost important in every aspect of life. A bit of lie added to truth is like making an alloy of copper and gold. It becomes easier to work with these metals, but at the same times, it makes impure.

Bacon compares lie with a snake crawling on its belly instead of walking on its feet. The false person has to let his head down because he feels guilty all the time due to

his head down because he feels guilty all the time due to his habit of speaking falsehood all the time to earn benefits in business.

There is no shameful act than to be a liar. Bacon quotes Montaigne and said that "a liar is a man who is brave towards God, but is a coward towards men". He emphasizes on the wickedness of the falsehood by saying that these are the negative qualities of men, which will call upon the judgment of God upon mankind.

Therefore Bacon concludes his essay with didacticism by giving a tinge of Christian morality. The essay is rich in manners. This is a council, civil and moral and should be read slowly to understand the lucid and condensed prose style of Bacon.

Francis Bacon says in his essay "Of Truth" that those who realize that truth is valuable are truly blessed. Those who deal with truth really lead a life full of joy and entertainment. On the contrary to it, falsehood also gives joy, but it is ephemeral. The soul of the person who lies is always troubled.

5.13 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Q1. Summarize the essay Of Truth in your own words.

Ans : Refer to Section 5.11.1

Q2. Discuss the value of speaking truth with reference to Francis Bacon's essay "Of Truth".

Ans : Refer to Section 5.11.1

Q3. *"A Mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure"* Explain the line with reference to context.

Ans : Refer to Section 5.11.1 and 5.12

5.14 OF FRIENDSHIP

TEXT

IT HAD been hard for him that spake it to have put more truth and untruth together in few words, than in that speech, Whatsoever is delighted in solitude, is either a wild beast or a god. For it is most true, that a natural and secret hatred, and aversation towards society, in any man, hath somewhat of the savage beast; but it is most untrue, that it should have any character at all, of the divine nature; except it proceed, not out of a pleasure in solitude, but out of a love and desire to sequester a man's self, for a higher conversation: such as is found to have been falsely and feignedly in some of the heathen; as Epimenides the Candian, Numa the Roman, Empedocles the Sicilian, and Apollonius of Tyana; and truly and really, in divers of the ancient hermits and holy fathers of the church. But little do men perceive what solitude is, and how far it extendeth. For a crowd is not company; and faces are but a gallery of pictures; and talk but a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love. The Latin adage meeteth with it a little: Magna civitas, magna solitudo; because in a great town friends are scattered; so that there is not that fellowship, for the most part, which is in less neighborhoods. But we may go further, and affirm most truly, that it is a mere and miserable solitude to want true friends; without which the world is but a wilderness; and even in this sense also of solitude, whosoever in the frame of his nature and affections, is unfit for friendship, he taketh it of the beast, and not from humanity.

A principal fruit of friendship, is the ease and discharge of the fulness and swellings of the heart, which passions of all kinds do cause and induce. We know diseases of stoppings, and suffocations, are the most dangerous in the body; and it is not much otherwise in the mind; you may take sarza to open the liver, steel to open the spleen, flowers of sulphur for the lungs, castoreum for the brain; but no receipt openeth the heart, but a true friend;

to whom you may impart griefs, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, counsels, and whatsoever lieth upon the heart to oppress it, in a kind of civil shrift or confession.

It is a strange thing to observe, how high a rate great kings and monarchs do set upon this fruit of friendship, whereof we speak: so great, as they purchase it, many times, at the hazard of their own safety and greatness. For princes, in regard of the distance of their fortune from that of their subjects and servants, cannot gather this fruit, except (to make themselves capable thereof) they raise some persons to be, as it were, companions and almost equals to themselves, which many times sorteth to inconvenience. The modern languages give unto such persons the name of favorites, or privadoes; as if it were matter of grace, or conversation. But the Roman name attaineth the true use and cause thereof, naming them participes curarum; for it is that which tieth the knot.

And we see plainly that this hath been done, not by weak and passionate princes only, but by the wisest and most politic that ever reigned; who have oftentimes joined to themselves some of their servants; whom both themselves have called friends, and allowed other likewise to call them in the same manner; using the word which is received between private men.

L. Sylla, when he commanded Rome, raised Pompey (after surnamed the Great) to that height, that Pompey vaunted himself for Sylla's overmatch. For when he had carried the consulship for a friend of his, against the pursuit of Sylla, and that Sylla did a little resent thereat, and began to speak great, Pompey turned upon him again, and in effect bade him be quiet; for that more men adored the sun rising, than the sun setting. With Julius Caesar, Decimus Brutus had obtained that interest as he set him down in his testament, for heir in remainder, after his nephew. And this was the man that had power with him, to draw him forth to his death. For when Caesar would have discharged the senate, in regard of some ill presages, and specially a dream of Calpurnia; this

man lifted him gently by the arm out of his chair, telling him he hoped he would not dismiss the senate, till his wife had dreamt a better dream. And it seemeth his favor was so great, as Antonius, in a letter which is recited verbatim in one of Cicero's Philippics, calleth him venefica, witch; as if he had enchanted Caesar. Augustus raised Agrippa (though of mean birth) to that height, as when he consulted with Maecenas, about the marriage of his daughter Julia, Maecenas took the liberty to tell him, that he must either marry his daughter to Agrippa, or take away his life; there was no third way, he had made him so great. With Tiberius Caesar, Sejanus had ascended to that height, as they two were termed, and reckoned, as a pair of friends. Tiberius in a letter to him saith, Haec pro amicitia nostra non occultavi; and the whole senate dedicated an altar to Friendship, as to a goddess, in respect of the great dearness of friendship, between them two. The like, or more, was between Septimius Severus and Plautianus. For he forced his eldest son to marry the daughter of Plautianus; and would often maintain Plautianus, in doing affronts to his son; and did write also in a letter to the senate, by these words: I love the man so well, as I wish he may over-live me. Now if these princes had been as a Trajan, or a Marcus Aurelius, a man might have thought that this had proceeded of an abundant goodness of nature; but being men so wise, of such strength and severity of mind, and so extreme lovers of themselves, as all these were, it proveth most plainly that they found their own felicity (though as great as ever happened to mortal men) but as an half piece, except they mought have a friend, to make it entire; and yet, which is more, they were princes that had wives, sons, nephews; and yet all these could not supply the comfort of friendship.

It is not to be forgotten, what Comineus observeth of his first master, Duke Charles the Hardy, namely, that he would communicate his secrets with none; and least of all, those secrets which troubled him most. Whereupon he goeth on, and saith that towards his latter time, that closeness did impair, and a little perish his understanding. Surely Comineus mought have made the same judgment also, if it had pleased him, of his second master, Lewis the Eleventh, whose closeness was indeed his tormentor. The parable of Pythagoras is dark, but true; Cor ne edito; Eat not the heart. Certainly, if a man would give it a hard phrase, those that want friends, to open themselves unto, are carnibals of their own hearts. But one thing is most admirable (wherewith I will conclude this first fruit of friendship), which is, that this communicating of a man's self to his friend, works two contrary effects; for it redoubleth joys, and cutteth griefs in halves. For there is no man, that imparteth his joys to his friend, but he joyeth the more; and no man that imparteth his griefs to his friend, but he grieveth the less. So that it is in truth, of operation upon a man's mind, of like virtue as the alchemists use to attribute to their stone, for man's body; that it worketh all contrary effects, but still to the good and benefit of nature. But yet without praying in aid of alchemists, there is a manifest image of this, in the ordinary course of nature. For in bodies, union strengtheneth and cherisheth any natural action; and on the other side, weakeneth and dulleth any violent impression: and even so it is of minds.

The second fruit of friendship, is healthful and sovereign for the understanding, as the first is for the affections. For friendship maketh indeed a fair day in the affections, from storm and tempests; but it maketh daylight in the understanding, out of darkness, and confusion of thoughts. Neither is this to be understood only of faithful counsel, which a man receiveth from his friend; but before you come to that, certain it is, that whosoever hath his mind fraught with many thoughts, his wits and understanding do clarify and break up, in the communicating and discoursing with another; he tosseth his thoughts more easily; he marshalleth them more orderly, he seeth how they look when they are turned into words: finally, he waxeth wiser than himself; and that more by an hour's discourse, than by a day's meditation. It was well said by Themistocles, to the king of Persia, That

speech was like cloth of Arras, opened and put abroad; whereby the imagery doth appear in figure; whereas in thoughts they lie but as in packs. Neither is this second fruit of friendship, in opening the understanding, restrained only to such friends as are able to give a man counsel; (they indeed are best;) but even without that, a man learneth of himself, and bringeth his own thoughts to light, and whetteth his wits as against a stone, which itself cuts not. In a word, a man were better relate himself to a statua, or picture, than to suffer his thoughts to pass in smother.

Add now, to make this second fruit of friendship complete, that other point, which lieth more open, and falleth within vulgar observation; which is faithful counsel from a friend. Heraclitus saith well in one of his enigmas, Dry light is ever the best. And certain it is, that the light that a man receiveth by counsel from another, is drier and purer, than that which cometh from his own understanding and judgment; which is ever infused, and drenched, in his affections and customs. So as there is as much difference between the counsel, that a friend giveth, and that a man giveth himself, as there is between the counsel of a friend, and of a flatterer. For there is no such flatterer as is a man's self; and there is no such remedy against flattery of a man's self, as the liberty of a friend. Counsel is of two sorts: the one concerning manners, the other concerning business. For the first, the best preservative to keep the mind in health, is the faithful admonition of a friend. The calling of a man's self to a strict account, is a medicine, sometime too piercing and corrosive. Reading good books of morality, is a little flat and dead. Observing our faults in others, is sometimes improper for our case. But the best receipt (best, I say, to work, and best to take) is the admonition of a friend.
It is a strange thing to behold, what gross errors and extreme absurdities many (especially of the greater sort) do commit, for want of a friend to tell them of them; to the great damage both of their fame and fortune: for, as St. James saith, they are as men that look sometimes into a glass, and presently forget their own shape and favor. As for

business, a man may think, if he win, that two eyes see no more than one; or that a gamester seeth always more than a looker-on; or that a man in anger, is as wise as he that hath said over the four and twenty letters; or that a musket may be shot off as well upon the arm, as upon a rest; and such other fond and high imaginations, to think himself all in all. But when all is done, the help of good counsel, is that which setteth business straight. And if any man think that he will take counsel, but it shall be by pieces; asking counsel in one business, of one man, and in another business, of another man; it is well (that is to say, better, perhaps, than if he asked none at all); but he runneth two dangers: one, that he shall not be faithfully counselled; for it is a rare thing, except it be from a perfect and entire friend, to have counsel given, but such as shall be bowed and crooked to some ends, which he hath, that giveth it. The other, that he shall have counsel given, hurtful and unsafe (though with good meaning), and mixed partly of mischief and partly of remedy; even as if you would call a physician, that is thought good for the cure of the disease you complain of, but is unacquainted with your body; and therefore may put you in way for a present cure, but overthroweth your health in some other kind; and so cure the disease, and kill the patient. But a friend that is wholly acquainted with a man's estate, will beware, by furthering any present business, how he dasheth upon other inconvenience. And therefore rest not upon scattered counsels; they will rather distract and mislead, than settle and direct.

After these two noble fruits of friendship (peace in the affections, and support of the judgment), followeth the last fruit; which is like the pomegranate, full of many kernels; I mean aid, and bearing a part, in all actions and occasions. Here the best way to represent to life the manifold use of friendship, is to cast and see how many things there are, which a man cannot do himself; and then it will appear, that it was a sparing speech of the ancients, to say, that a friend is another himself; for that a friend is far more than himself. Men have their time, and die many times, in de-

sire of some things which they principally take to heart; the bestowing of a child, the finishing of a work, or the like. If a man have a true friend, he may rest almost secure that the care of those things will continue after him. So that a man hath, as it were, two lives in his desires. A man hath a body, and that body is confined to a place; but where friendship is, all offices of life are as it were granted to him, and his deputy. For he may exercise them by his friend. How many things are there which a man cannot, with any face or comeliness, say or do himself? A man can scarce allege his own merits with modesty, much less extol them; a man cannot sometimes brook to supplicate or beg; and a number of the like. But all these things are graceful, in a friend's mouth, which are blushing in a man's own. So again, a man's person hath many proper relations, which he cannot put off. A man cannot speak to his son but as a father; to his wife but as a husband; to his enemy but upon terms: whereas a friend may speak as the case requires, and not as it sorteth with the person. But to enumerate these things were endless; I have given the rule, where a man cannot fitly play his own part; if he have not a friend, he may quit the stage.

5.14.1 OF FRIENDHIP : SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The essay "Of Friendship" celebrates the intimacy between friendship which is subjected to both prosperity and adversity without succumbing to the clouds of doubts and jealousy. Bacon begins the essay by invoking the classical authorities on basic human nature. The essay was written on the request of his friend Toby Matthew.

In the opening of the paragraph, Francis Bacon establishes the importance of friendship by implication when he says *"whatsoever is delighted in solitude is either a wild beast or a God."* He expands on his theme in the same paragraph by saying that *"without friends, the world is but wildness."*

Humans need for company

Bacon introduces the text with thoughts of Aristotle on companionship. He posits that *human nature demands company and social contact.* Isolation and solitude are traits of either wild beast or heavenly god.

Human beings require other human beings and anyone who avoids such interaction is not doing justice to his natural state. Bacon does not criticize people who feel shy in a crowd and head for therefore seek isolation in the wild.

Such people find great value in peace and it aids their mental processes to contemplate of profound issues. Through their extensive analysis, they journey on a path of self-discovery. Such hermits search for truth and knowledge in continued social sequestration.

However, the consequences of such isolation can be like a double-edged sword, desirable or detrimental. Bacon points to philosophers like **Epimenides the Candian, Numa the Roman, Empedocles the Sicilian, and Apollonius of Tyana,** who postulated theories unique to their age and contemporaries.

Their works are of immense philosophical wealth. Even several spiritual men find great benefit and progress through prolonged abstention from public life. Therefore, voluntary retreat from society can have positive consequences too.

Bacon attempts to differentiate between kinship and general crowd. For him, there is a big difference between strangers of society and known friends. *A person can feel lonely in a crowd too.* People may become transient glimpses which are lost if a person does not interact with them. If a person does not feel passionate or interested in a conversation then it becomes an exercise in futile monologues and is similar in meaning to the undecipherable notes of musical instruments like cymbals.

Bacon uses a Latin adage which means that a big city is filled with great solitude. In a large city, people are separated and encamped in distinct areas that are difficult to bring closer together.

These long distances cause separation between friends and relatives. Therefore*, for cultivating friendship a small city or town is more conducive***.** In smaller town people live closer by and mingle a lot more regularly. Thus, these small cities have strong and united communities.

According to Bacon, a friendship demands the involvement of passions and feelings. They form the foundation of any friendship. Emotions are the threads that bind the hearts together.

Friendship : A cure for ailing hearts

Bacon points to the ailments of the heart that it suffers if it stops or is suffocated. A healthy heart required vigour and the same is provided by an intimate and friendly] conversation with one's pals. The bonhomie is the cure for depression and various diseases of the heart. Friendship is the panacea for heartaches.

A true friend : Secondary value for heart

A true friend a secondary value for the heart to pump life into a sick person. Amusing and pleasant badinage acts as a stress reliever for the burdened and ailing heart. It elevates the mood of gloom and deathly isolation that a patient feels and makes him feel good again. Patients take medicines like sarza for the liver, steel for the spleen, flowers of sulphur for the lungs, castoreum for the brain etc, but for the issues of the heart, the love and affection of a friend is the best cure.

Friendship : can be bought or Can not ?

The elite of society like kings and leaders are realiiy adept at making friends. They understand the value of friendly ties with worthy people. The rich people and the powerful often try to buy friendship of noble and influential people through gifts, badges of reverence and their wealth. But such friends lack emotional attachment with their patrons or benefactors. Their loyalty or friendship is tied to generous rewards and they are susceptible to corruption and greed.

Friendship requires a quantum of parity if not equality. Therefore, the massive chasm between the king and his subjects cannot be bridged that easily.

Even if the princes admire certain ordinary individuals they find it difficult to befriend them. The only solution is to elevate such individuals so that they come nearer to the monarch in terms of power and influence.

Bacon essay "Of Friendship" is stylistically different from his other essays as it contains passionate and flattering statements along with examples to support or explain his arguments. Bacon here speaks of the therapeutic use of friendship though which one can lighten the heart by revealing the pent-up feelings and emotions: sorrows, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, advice and the like.

5.15 SUMMING UP

Francis Bacon says that Friendship is necessary to maintain good health by controlling and regulating the passion of the mind. In other words, Bacon argues that there are many things a man cannot do himself. Only a friend can do him with no embarrassment.

5.16 SELF ASSESMENT QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Q1. Summarize the essay Of Friendship in your own words.

Ans : Refer to Section 5.14.1

Q2. Discuss the importance of friendship in Becon's essay "Of Friendship"

Ans : Refer to Section 5.14.1

Q3. How does Bacon explain the first fruit of friendship?

Ans : Refer to Section 514 and 5.14.1

Q4. What does Bacon say about the Second fruit of Friendship?

Ans : Refer to Section 5.14 and 5.14.1

Q5. *"Without friends, the world is but wildinners."* Explain the line with Reference to Context. Refer to 5.18

Ans : Refer to Section 5.14.1

5.18 FURTHER READING

1. Bacon, Francis (BCN573F) Bacon, Francis. *A Cambridge Alumni Database,*University of Cambridge
2. Selby, F.G. ed. Bacon's Essays. New Delhi: Macmillan, 1989. Print.
3. Francis Bacon Christian History - Learn the History of Christianity & the Church.
4. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FrancisBacon

UNIT-6 JOSEPH ADDISON : SIR ROGER AT HOME

6.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you were introduced to Sir Francis Bacon, one of the greatest writers of Renaissance. This unit will introduce the eminent prose writer of the 18th century, Joseph Addison. In this unit, we will take up his essay "Sir Roger At Home".

6.1 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to trace the development of Periodical essays in England. You will also understand the life and works of Joseph Addison and his prose style. To understand and analysis his essay.

6.2 PERIODICAL ESSAYS

The periodical essay has been aptly described as dealing with morals and manners, but it might in fact deal with anything that pleased its author. It usually covered not more than the two sides (in two columns) of a sheet. The periodical essay is a genre that flourished only in a fifty-year period between 1709 and 1759. The rise of the genre begins with John

Dunton's Athenian Gazette on 17 March 1691; its maturity arrives part way through Addison and Steele's Tatler, and its decline is advanced when the last number of Goldsmith's short lived Bee published on 24 November 1759. In between the genre reaches its full flowering in Addison and Steele' daily Spectator and its most transcendent and durable form in Johnson's Rambler.

6.3 REASON FOR ITS POPULARITY

The periodical essays found a spectacular response in the eighteenth century on account of various reasons. Fundamentally, this new genre was in perfect harmony with the spirit of the age. It sensitively combined the tastes of the different classes of readers with the result that it appealed to ail-though particularly to the resurgent middle classes. In the eighteenth century, there was a phenomenal spurt in literacy, which expanded widely the circle of readers. They welcomed the periodical essay as it was "light" literature. The brevity of the periodical essay, its common sense approach, and its tendency to dilute morality and philosophy for popular consumption paid rich dividends.

To a great extent, the periodical essayist assumed the office of the clergyman and taught the masses the lesson of elegance and refinement, though not of morality of the psalm-singing kind. The periodical paper was particularly welcome as it was not a dry, high-brown, or hoity-toity affair like the professional sermon, in spite of being highly instructive in nature. In most cases the periodical essayist did not "speak from the clouds" but communicated to the reader with an almost buttonholing familiarity. The avoidance of politics (though not by all the periodical essayists yet by a good many of them) also contributed towards their popularity. Again, the periodical essayists made it a point to cater to the female taste and give due consideration to the female point of view. That won for them many female readers too. All these factors were responsible for the universal acceptance of the periodical essay in eighteenth-century England.

The general purpose of their essays was to be exposed the false art of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning, vanity and affection, and to recommend a general simplicity on their dress, discourse and their behaviour.

In this way, the contributions (Joseph Addison and Richard Steele) of the periodical essays (The "Spectator" and The "Tatler") are of much importance with the basic purpose to reform the contemporary society.

6.4 THE SPECTATOR

The Spectator, a periodical published in London by the essayists Richard Steele and Joseph Addison from March 1, 1711, to Dec. 6, 1712

(appearing daily), and subsequently revived by Addison in 1714 (for 80 numbers). It succeeded ″The Tatler", which Steele had launched in 1709. In its aim to “enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality,”

"The Spectator" adopted a fictional method of presentation through a “Spectator Club,” whose imaginary members extolled the authors’ own ideas about society. These “members” included representatives of commerce, the army, the town (respectively, Sir Andrew Freeport, Captain Sentry, and Will Honeycomb), and of the country gentry (Sir Roger de Coverley). The papers were ostensibly written by Mr. Spectator, an “observer” of the London scene.

"The Spectator" reported were often imagined taking place in coffee houses, which was also where many copies of the publication were distributed and read. Because of its fictional framework, "The Spectator" is sometimes said to have heralded the rise of the English novel in the 18th century. This is perhaps an overstatement, since the fictional framework, once adopted, ceased to be of primary importance and served instead as a social microcosm within which a tone at once grave, good-humoured, and flexible could be sounded.

Given the success of "The Spectator" in promoting an ideal of polite sociability, the correspondence of its supposed readers was an important feature of the publication. These letters may or may not, on occasion, have been composed by the editors. Addison’s reputation as an essayist has surpassed that of Steele, but their individual contributions to the success of "The Spectator" are less to the point than their collaborative efforts: Steele’s friendly tone was a perfect balance and support for the more dispassionate style of Addison. Their joint achievement was to lift the serious discussion from the realms of religious and political partisanship and to make it instead a normal pastime of the leisured class. Together they set the pattern and established the vogue for the periodicals throughout the rest of the century and helped to create a receptive public for the novelists, ensuring that the new kind of prose writing—however entertaining—should be essentially serious.

6.5 THE TATLER

It was during Addison’s term in Ireland that his friend Steele began publishing "The Tatler," which appeared three times a week under the pseudonym of Isaac Bickerstaff. Though at first issued as a newspaper presenting accounts of London’s political, social, and cultural news, this periodical soon began investigating English manners and society, establishing principles of ideal behaviour and genteel conduct, and proposing standards of good taste for the general public. The first number of "The Tatler" appeared on April 12, 1709, while Addison was still in England; but while still in Ireland he began contributing to the new periodical. Back in London in September 1709, he supplied most of the essays during the winter of 1709–10 before returning to Ireland in May.

The year 1710 was marked by the overturn of the Whigs from power and a substantial Tory victory at the polls. Although Addison easily retained his seat in the Commons, his old and powerful patrons were again out of favour, and, for the first time since his appointment as undersecretary in 1705, Addison found himself without employment. He was thus able to devote even more time to literary activity and to the cultivation of personal friendships not only with Steele and other Kit-Cats but, for a short period, with Jonathan Swift—until Swift's shift of allegiance to the rising Tory leaders resulted in estrangement. Addison continued contributing to the final numbers of The Tatler, which Steele finally brought to a close on January 2, 1711. Addison had written more than 40 of "The Tatler*'s*" total of 271 numbers and had collaborated with Steele on another 36 of them.

With the Addison's help "The Tatler" was an undoubted success. By the end of 1710 Steele had enough material for a collected edition of "The Tatler". Thereupon, he and Addison decided to make a fresh start with a new periodical. The Spectator, which appeared six days a week, from March 1, 1711, to December 6, 1712, offered a wide range of material to its readers, from discussion of the latest fashions to serious disquisitions on criticism and morality.

Addison was the leading spirit in "The Spectator's" publication, contributing 274 numbers in all.In bringing learning "out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables, and in coffee houses, "The Spectator" was eminently successful. One feature of "The Spectator" that deserves particular mention is its critical essays, in which Addison sought to elevate the public taste. He devoted a considerable proportion of his essays to literary criticism, which was to prove influential in the subsequent development of the English novel. His own gift for drawing realistic human characters found brilliant literary expression in the members of the Spectator Club, in which such figures as Roger de Coverley, Captain Sentry, Sir Andrew Freeport, and the Spectator himself represent important sections of contemporary society. More than 3,000 copies of "The Spectator" were published daily, and the 555 numbers were then collected into seven volumes. Two years later (from June 18 to December 20, 1714), Addison published 80 additional numbers, with the help of two assistants, and these were later reprinted as volume eight.

Addison's other notable literary production during this period was his tragedy *Cato*. Performed at Drury Lane on April 14, 1713, the play was a resounding success—largely, no doubt, because of the political overtones that both parties read into the play. To the Whigs *Cato* seemed the resolute defender of liberty against French tyranny, while the Tories were able to interpret the domineering Caesar as a kind of Roman Marlborough whose military victories were a threat to English liberties. The play enjoyed an unusual run of 20 performances in April and May 1713 and continued to be performed throughout the century.

6.6 JOSEPH ADDISON : LIFE AND WORKS

Joseph Addison (1 May 1672 – 17 June 1719) was an English essayist, poet, playwright, and politician. He was the eldest son of The Reverend Lancelot Addison. He was born in Millstone, Wiltshire, but soon after his birth, his father, Lancelot Addison, was appointed Dean of Lichfield and the Addison family moved into the cathedral close. After schooling in Amesbury and Salisbury and at Lichfield Grammar School, he was enrolled at age 14 in the Charterhouse in London. Here began his lifelong friendship with Richard Steele, who later became his literary collaborator. Both went on to the University of Oxford, where Addison matriculated at Queens college in May 1687.

Through distinction in Latin verse he won election as Demy (scholar) to Magdalena College in 1689 and took the degree of M.A. in 1693.

In 1708 and 1709, Addison was a Member of Parliament for the borough of Lostwithiel. He was soon appointed secretary to the new Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord Wharton. Under the direction of Wharton, he was an MP in the Irish House of Commons. He met Jonathan Swift in Ireland and remained there for a year. Later, he helped form the Kitcat club and renewed his friendship with Richard Steele. In 1709, Steele began to publish the Tatler, and Addison became a regular contributor. In 1711, they started The Spectator. The first issue appeared on 1 March 1711. This paper, which was originally a daily, was published until 20 December 1714, interrupted for a year by the publication of The Guardian in 1713. His last publication was "The Freeholder", a political paper, in 1715–16. Addison is remembered alongside that of his long-standing friend Richard Steele, with whom he founded The Spectator magazine In April 1709, his childhood friend, Richard Steele, started "The Tatler". Addison contributed 42 essays to "The Tatler".

6.7 JOSEPH ADDISON : PROSE STYLE

Joseph Addison is ranked with the great prose writers of English literature. To his credit, he has a distinctive prose style. His style consists in the clearness, lucidity, and naturalness. He does not try to produce effects by straining. It comes to him spontaneously because he has an easy mastery of language. No pretentiousness, affectation, pompousness or verbosity characterizes his essays. In consonance with his graceful character, his essays have been enriched with sincerity, moderation, and purity of style. So the essays have become the expression of character. Felicitous choice of vocabulary and an equally felicitous arrangement and a combination of words mark his prose style.

He has not used high figurative expressions. The fanciful or the high flown similes are almost absent in his essays. But he uses similes, metaphors, and antitheses in his own homely and modest way. Such figurative expressions have been useful for him to drive a point home to

the reader. He is almost laconic and terse in the use of figures of speech. In the essay, “Periodical Essays”, he describes that “an essay-writer must practice in the chemical method and give the virtue of a full draught in a few drops”. On Cheerfulness, he says, “Mirth is short and transient, cheerfulness fixed and permanent”. Addison has often indulged in moralizing, but he never grows vehement or passionate like a pulpit orator. He maintains restraint and never becomes intense or vehement. He is eloquent without being rhetoric. His essays are full of allusions– historical, literary, Biblical and mythological; quotations from various sources, parable, fables, anecdotes, and analogies are freely employed by him to clarify and reinforce his arguments.

Addison is a remarkable satirist because he intended his humour to be ‘Remedial’, to induce human feelings to forsake the wrong, and to become more kind. His humor is that kind that makes one smile rather than laugh aloud. His essays help to impart a moral tone of British society; he castigated the manners and foibles of society. In fact, he was the most genial teacher of wisdom to the people of his age.

6.8 JOSEPH ADDISON TEXT " SIR ROGER AT HOME"

TEXT

Having often received an invitation from my friend Sir Roger de Coverley to pass away a month with him in the country, I last week accompanied him thither, and am settled with him for some time at his country-house, where I intend to form several of my ensuing speculations. Sir Roger, who is very well acquainted with my humour, lets me rise and go to bed when I please; dine at his own table, or in my chamber, as I think fit; sit still, and say nothing, without bidding me be merry. When the gentlemen of the country come to see him, he only shows me at a distance. As I have been walking in his fields, I have observed them stealing a sight of me over an hedge, and have heard the knight desiring them not to let me see them, for that I hated to be stared at.

I am the more at ease in Sir Roger's family, because it consists of sober and staid persons; for as the knight is the best master in the world, he seldom changes his servants and as he is beloved by all about him, his servants never care for leaving him: by this means his domestics are all in years, and grown old with their master. You would take his valet de chambre for his brother; his butler is grey-headed; his groom is one of the gravest men that I have ever seen; and his coachman has the looks of a privy-councillor. You see the goodness of the master even in the old house-dog; and in a gray pad, that is kept in the stable with great care and tenderness out of regard to his past services, though he has been useless for several years.

I could not but observe with a great deal of pleasure, the joy that appeared in the countenances of these ancient domestics upon my friend's arrival at his country-seat. Some of them could not refrain from tears at the sight of their old master; every one of them pressed forward to do something for him, and seemed discouraged if they were not employed. At the same time the good old knight, with a mixture of the father and the master of the family, tempered the inquiries after his own affairs with several kind questions relating to themselves. This humanity and good nature engages everybody to him, so that when he is pleasant upon any of them, all his family are in good humour, and none so much as the person whom he diverts himself with: on the contrary, if he coughs, or betrays any infirmity of old age, it is easy for a stander-by to observe a secret concern in the looks of all his servants.

My worthy friend has put me under the particular care of his butler, who is a very prudent man, and, as well as the rest of his fellow-servants, wonderfully desirous of pleasing me, because they have often heard their master talk of me as of his particular friend.

My chief companion, when Sir Roger is diverting himself in the woods or the fields, is a very venerable man, who is ever with Sir Roger, and has lived at his house in the nature of a chaplain above thirty years. This gentleman is a person of good sense, and some learning, of a very regular life, and obliging conversation: be heartily loves Sir Roger, and knows that he is very much in the old knight's esteem; so that he lives in the family rather as a relation than a dependant.

I have observed in several of my papers, that my friend Sir Roger, amidst all his good qualities, is something of an humourist; and that his virtues, as well as imperfections, are, as it were, tinged by a certain extravagance, which make them particularly his, and distinguishes them from those of other men. This cast of mind, as it is generally very innocent in itself, so it renders his conversation highly agreeable, and more delightful than the same degree of sense and virtue would appear in their common and ordinary colours. As I was walking with him last night, he asked me how I liked the good man whom I have just now mentioned: and, without staying for my answer, told me, that he was afraid of being insulted with Latin and Greek at his own table ; for which reason, he desired a particular friend of his at the University, to find him out a clergyman rather of plain sense than much learning, of a good aspect, a clear voice, a sociable temper, and, if possible, a man that understood a little of backgammon.

"My friend (says Sir Roger) found me out this gentleman, who, besides the endowments required of him, is, they tell me, a good scholar, though he does not show it. I have given him the parsonage of the parish; and because I know his value, have settled upon him a good annuity for life. If he outlives me, he shall find that he was higher in my esteem than perhaps he thinks he is. He has now been with me thirty years; and, though he does not know I have taken notice of it, has never in all that time asked anything of me for himself, though he is every day soliciting me for

something in behalf of one or other of my tenants, his parishioners. There has not been a law-suit in the parish since he has lived among them: if any dispute arises, they apply themselves to him for the decision; if they do not acquiesce in his judgment, which I think never happened above once, or twice at most, they appeal to me. At his first settling with me, I made him a present of all the good sermons which have been printed in English, and only begged of him that every Sunday be would pronounce one of them in the pulpit. Accordingly, he has digested them into such a series, that they follow one another naturally, and make a continued system of practical divinity."

As Sir Roger was going on in his story, the gentleman we were talking of came up to us; and upon the knight's asking him who preached tomorrow, (for it was Saturday night,) told us, the Bishop of St. Asaph in the morning, and Dr. South in the afternoon. He then showed us his list of preachers for the whole year, where I saw with a great deal of pleasure, Archbishop Tillotson, Bishop Saunderson, Doctor Barrow, Doctor Calamy, with several living authors who have published discourses of practical divinity. I no sooner saw this venerable man in the pulpit, but I very much approved of my friend's insisting upon the qualifications of a good aspect and a clear voice; for I was so charmed with the gracefulness of his figure and delivery, as well as the discourses he pronounced, that I think I never passed any time more to my satisfaction. A sermon repeated after this manner, is like the composition of a poet in the mouth of a graceful actor.

I could heartily wish that more of our country clergy would follow this example; and, instead of wasting their spirits in laborious compositions of their own, would endeavour after a handsome elocution, and all those other talents that are proper to enforce what has been penned by greater masters. This would not only be more easy to themselves, but more edifying to the people.

6.8.1 SIR ROGER AT HOME : SUMMARY

After getting the invitation from Sir Roger, the author went to Sir Roger’s country house. Here his hospitality takes the attention of the reader. Here we see that he is very hospitable and did everything possible to make his friend happy. Even the people around his house requested not to get closer to Addison because Addison would be disturbed. In his house, Addison was requested to feel free for any kind of job.

In the essay “Sir Roger at Home”, Sir Roger treatment of his servants was adequately well. He loved each and every servant in his home and they returned his love with both service and love because he maintained a friendly relationship with them and inquired after their health and family. And they satisfied with him, His nice behavior towards them helped them develop such love for him that if they were not employed, they seemed discouraged in his service. Even his post dog was not left unloved. So when Sir Roger arrived at home upon completion his outside

activities, their hearts leapt with a great deal of pleasure. The love between the master and the servants developed in such a degree that if he simply coughed or showed any infirmity of old age, there appeared tension in the looks of his servants.

6.8.2 CHARACTER OF SIR ROGER

Sir Roger is introduced as a gentleman who is very singular in his behaviour, but his singularities proceed from his good sense and are contradictions to the manners of the world. He is considered as a fine gentleman in his 56th year, cheerful, gay and hearty, keeps a good house in town and country, a great lover of mankind. In fact, he is the representation of a typical 18th century country gentleman. Sir Roger is endowed with an essential goodness of heart. He is an idealist country characteristic and having broad sympathy.

Sir Roger has been characterized vividly by Joseph Addison. Sir Roger is presented in this essay as kind, generous, lovable and sometimes as a peculiar person. But in the hand of Joseph Addison, Sir Roger's character is conveyed ironically. For that reason he sometimes seems odd. Although he is gentle and mild in nature and lovable to people, he has some eccentricities and oddities.

Humanity

Sir Roger is a man of humanity and has a large heart. Moreover, he is mild. He loves not only the servants of his house but also the people who live around him. In "Sir Roger at Home" we see that he is loved by his servants, who are living with him and are growing older with him like family members, because of his love towards them. Addison says in “Sir Roger at Home” ‘I am the more at ease in Sir Roger's family, because it consists of sober and staid persons; for as the knight is the best master in the world, he seldom changes his servants; and as he is beloved by all about him.’

Lover for religion/ Sir Roger at Religious being

He is a true lover of religion. He is a regular church goer and encourages others to come to the church. His mind is set for religious purposes and he does a lot of jobs for religion. In the essay "Sir Roger at Church", we see that he has decorated end beautified the church on his own accord and at his own expense so that the country people would be encouraged to come to the church enthusiastically. In this essay, he says, My friend Sir Roger, being a good churchman, has beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own choosing. He has likewise given a handsome pulpit-cloth, and railed in the communion- table at his own expense

His Hospitality

After getting invitation from Sir Roger, the author went to his (Sir Roger's) country house. Here his hospitality takes the attention of the readers. Here we see that he is very hospitable and did everything possible

to make his friend happy. Even the people around his house were requested not to get closer to Addison because Addison would be disturbed. In his house Addison was requested to feel free for any kind of job.

Him Authority/ Authoritative

Sir Roger has authoritative power both in home and church. In the essay "Sir Roger at Church", the author says, As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in good order, and will suffer nobody to sleep in it. Even if he sees anybody is nodding, whether it is in the middle of the congregation or not, he walls to that person or sends his servants to him to make him alert. Moreover, he appoints the clergymen for the church on his own accord and suggests them to follow the instructions of different professors for sermons.

Skilled Organizer

Sir Roger is a skilled organizer. He organizes not only his house but also the church. He has keen sense to organize things. The church is organized beautifully. He encourages people to come to church, decorates for church and keeps the church in a very good or disciplined order. All these things suggests he is a skilled organizer

His Responsible

Sir Roger being the landlord of all the congregations, felt personally responsible for their behaviour and exerted his authority to keep them disciplined. He allowed no one to sleep. If he felt asleep during the sermon, on waking up he would look around and if he found anyone dozing off, he would immediately wake him up. Even in the middle of the congregation, he would stand up and started counting the number of people to understand anybody's absence. Addison says, Sometimes stands up when everybody else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing.

His eccentricity

To some extent Sir Roger can be considered as eccentric. He wanted that his tenants should behave well in the church. They must not sleep or make any noise during the church service, but he himself did so. Sometimes when everybody was on their knees, he stood up.

Humorist

Sir Roger is a humorist. His eccentricities can not but make us laugh. The ways that he adopts to do his daily work are sometimes humorous. His follies as well as his eccentricities are expressed in his essay. In summing up, it can be said that in spite of being a man of great honour, Sir Roger is regarded as a humorist and sometimes eccentric because of having some oddities or peculiarities in him.

Sir Roger is regarded as a humorist and sometimes eccentric because of having some oddities or peculiarities in him. However, the ultimate aim

was not to show his humorous expressions to make up laugh only, rather to make up correct for our follies and absurdities. The main intention was to correct the society, to reform every corner of life by presenting the character Sir Roger.

6.9 SUMMING UP

Joseph Addison distinguished essayist of the 18th century England who flourished and flowered English prose to its highest peak.. His character is a well mixture of hospitality, humanity, love, helpfulness, disappointment, superstition, singularities, kindness, honesty and goodness. Through the character of Sir Roger Addison showed the oddities and vices of the 18th century English society in a suttle manner.

6.10 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Q1. Summarize the essay Sir Roger at Home in your own words.

Ans : Refer to Section 6.8.1

Q2. Write a short note on periodical essay.

Ans : Refer to Section 6.2 and 6.3

Q3. Discuss the prose style of Joseph Addison.

Ans : Refer to Section 6.7

Q4. Evaluate the character of Sir Roger.

Ans : Refer to Section 6.8.2

Q5. Discuss the popularity of The Spectator and The Tatler.

Ans : Refer to Section 6.3, 6.4, 6.5

Q6. Write a brief biographical note on Joseph Addison.

Ans : Refer to Section 6.6

Q7. "I am the more ease in Sir Roger's family, because it consists of sober and staid persons; for as the knight is the best master in the world, he seldom changes his servants; beloved by all about him." Explain these lines with reference to context. Refer to 6.11"

Ans : Refer to Section 6.8.2

6.11 FURTHER READING

1. Essay on the Life and Writings of Addison, Essays vol. V (1866) Hurd and Houghton
2. Joseph Addison/ English author/Britannica.com
3. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Joseph_Addison. Web

UNIT-7 RICHARD STEELE : OF THE CLUB

Structure

7.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you were introduced to Joseph Addison, an English essayist, poet, playwright, and politician of the 18th century. This unit will introduce Richard Steele, the eminent prose writer of the 18th century. In this unit, we will take up his essay “Of the Club”.

7.1 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to analyze the life and works of Richard Steele. You will also understand his deeply felt concerns as a social reformer.

7.2 RICHARD STEEL : LIFE AND WORKS

Richard Steele, pseudonym Isaac Bickerstaff English essayist, dramatist, journalist, and politician, best known as the principal author with Joseph Addison of the periodicals "*The Tatler"* and "*The Spectator"*.

Steele’s father, an ailing and somewhat ineffectual attorney, died when the son was about five, and the boy was taken under the protection of his uncle Henry Gascoigne, confidential secretary to the Duke of Ormond, to whose bounty, as Steele later wrote, he owed “a liberal

education.” He was sent to study in England at Charterhouse in 1684 and to Christ Church, Oxford, in 1689. At Charterhouse, he met Joseph Addison, and thus began one of the most famous and fruitful of all literary friendships; this lasted until disagreements (mainly political) brought about a cooling and a final estrangement shortly before Addison’s death in 1719.

Steele moved to Merton College in 1691 but, caught up with the excitement of King William’s campaigns against the French, left in 1692 without taking a degree to join the army. He was commissioned in 1697 and promoted to captain in 1699, but, lacking the money and connections necessary for substantial advancement, he left the army in 1705.

Meanwhile, he had embarked on a second career, as a writer Steele created the mixture of entertainment and instruction in manners and morals that was to be perfected in "The Spectator". “The general purpose of the whole,” wrote Steele, “has been to recommend truth, innocence, honour, and virtue, as the chief ornaments of life”; and here, as in the later period, can be seen his strong ethical bent, his attachment to the simple virtues of friendship, frankness, and benevolence, his seriousness of approach tempered by the colloquial ease and lightness of his style. Addison contributed some 46 papers and collaborated with several others, but the great bulk of the 271 issues were by Steele himself, and, apart from bringing him fame, it brought a measure of prosperity. "The Tatler*’s*" greater successor, first appearing on March 1, 1711, was avowedly non political and was enormously successful. "The Spectator" was a joint venture; Steele’s was probably the most original journalistic flair, and he evolved many of the most celebrated ideas and characters (such as Sir Roger de Coverley), although later Addison tended to develop them in his own way. Steele’s attractive, often casual style formed a perfect foil for Addison’s more measured, polished, and erudite writing. Of the 555 daily numbers, Steele contributed 251 (though about two-thirds made up from correspondents’ letters). Steele’s health was gradually undermined by his cheerful intemperance, and he was long plagued by gout.

7.3 RICHARD STEEL : PROSE STYLE

Richard Steele was the essayist of the period of transition. He represented the transition from the Restoration to the Augustan Age. Like his friend Addison, he revolted against the Latinized and learned prose of John Milton and Thomas Browne. He made prose simple and the commonplace. The periodical essayists brought the essay from the schools, colleges, closets and libraries down to the clubs and coffee houses. Steele did much to inculcate good morals among the people of the age. He adopted the method of gentle persuasion and pleasant irony in achieving his end. The appeal of “The Tatler” in the domestic front as well as to the coffee house was great. "The Tatler" papers became very popular with the masses as they were widely read and liked by them.

Steele's political writings had stirred up enough storms to make his career far from smooth. Both as man and writer, Steele is one of the most attractive figures of his time, much of his writing—easy, rapid, slipshod, but deeply sincere—reflecting his personality. Steele's prose is simple and his essays are characterized by simplicity of language. There is clarity of expression, gentle humour and kindliness in his style. He tries to attack the follies and vices of the time and is successful in it to quite an extent. He started his essays with personal experiences, but later on became philosophical in tone.

His essays also show the balanced style which is maintained through the craftsmanship of Richard Steele. Neither writer concentrates solely on writings either topical or moral essays; he writes, both with equal facility and in complementary style. This particular essay, giving us an account of the different types of characters who are members of the Spectator's Club, takes its distinction from Steele's prevailing tenderness of heart and wide acquaintance with human life.

7.4 TEXT : OF THE CLUB

THE FIRST 1 of our society is a gentleman of Worcestershire, of an ancient descent, a baronet, his name Sir Roger de Coverley. His great-grandfather was inventor of that famous country-dance which is called after him. All who know that shire are very well acquainted with the parts and merits of Sir Roger. He is a gentleman that is very singular in his behavior, but his singularities proceed from his good sense, and are contradictions to the manners of the world, only as he thinks the world is in the wrong. However, this humor creates him no enemies, for he does nothing with sourness or obstinacy; and his being unconfined to modes and forms makes him but the readier and more capable to please and oblige all who know him. When he is in town he lives in Soho Square. It is said he keeps himself a bachelor by reason he was crossed in love by a perverse beautiful widow of the next county to him. Before this disappointment, Sir Roger was what you call a fine gentleman, had often supped with my Lord Rochester and Sir George Etherege, fought a duel upon his first coming to town, and kicked bully Dawson in a public coffee-house for calling him youngster. But being ill-used by the above-mentioned widow, he was very serious for a year and a half; and though, his temper being naturally jovial, he at last got over it, he grew careless of himself and never dressed afterwards. He continues to wear a coat and doublet of the same cut that were in fashion at the time of his repulse, which, in his merry humors, he tells us, has been in and out twelve times since he first wore it. It is said Sir Roger grew humble in his desires after he had forgot his cruel beauty, insomuch that it is reported he has frequently offended with beggars and gypsies; but this is looked upon, by his friends, rather as. He is matter of raillery than truth now in his fifty-sixth year, cheerful, gay,; and hearty; keeps a good house both in town and country; a great lover of mankind; but there is such a mirthful cast in his behavior, that he is rather beloved than esteemed. His tenants grow rich,

his servants look satisfied, all the young women profess love to him, and the young men are glad of his company. When he comes into a house, he calls the servants by their names, and talks all the way upstairs to a visit. I must not omit that Sir Roger is a justice of the quorum; that he fills the chair at a quarter-session with great abilities, and three months ago gained universal applause, by explaining a passage in the Game Act.

In esteem and authority among us is another bachelor, who is a member of the Inner Temple, a man of great probity, wit, and understanding; but he has chosen his place of residence rather to obey the direction of an old humorsome father than in pursuit of his own inclinations. He was placed there to study the laws of the land, and is the most learned of any of the house in those of the stage. Aristotle and Longinus are much better understood by him than Littleton or Coke. The father sends up every post questions relating to marriage-articles, leases, and tenures, in the neighborhood; all which questions he agrees with an attorney to answer and take care of in the lump. He is studying the passions themselves, when he should be inquiring into the debates among men which arise from them. He knows the argument of each of the orations of Demosthenes and Tully, but not one case in the reports of our own courts. No one ever took him for a fool; but none, except his intimate friends, know he has a great deal of wit. This turn makes him at once both disinterested and agreeable. As few of his thoughts are drawn from business, they are most of them fit for conversation. His taste for books is a little too just for the age he lives in; he has read all, but approves of very few. His familiarity with the customs, manners, actions, and writings of the ancients, makes him a very delicate observer of what occurs to him in the present world. He is an excellent critic, and the time of the play is his hour of business; exactly at five he passes through New-inn, crosses through Russell-court, and takes a turn at Will's till the play begins; he has his shoes rubbed and his periwig powdered at the barber's as you go into the Rose. It is for the good of the audience when he is at the play, for the actors have an ambition to please him.

The person of next consideration is Sir Andrew Freeport, a merchant of great eminence in the city of London; a person of indefatigable industry, strong reason, and great experience. His notions of trade are noble and generous, and (as every rich man has usually some sly way of jesting, which would make no great figure were he not a rich man) he calls the sea the British Common. He is acquainted with commerce in all its parts, and will tell you that it is a stupid and barbarous way to extend dominion by arms; for true power is to be got by arts and industry. He will often argue that, if this part of our trade were well cultivated, we should gain from one nation; and if another, from another. I have heard him prove that diligence makes more lasting acquisitions than valor, and that sloth has ruined more nations than the sword. He abounds in several frugal maxims, amongst which the greatest favorite is, "A penny saved is a penny got." A general trader of good sense is pleasanter company than a general scholar; and Sir Andrew having a natural unaffected eloquence,

the perspicuity of his discourse gives the same pleasure that wit would in another man. He has made his fortune himself; and says that England may be richer than other kingdoms by as plain methods as he himself is richer than other men; though at the same time I can say this of him, that there is not a point in the compass but blows home a ship in which he is an owner.

Next to Sir Andrew in the clubroom sits Captain Sentry, a gentleman of great courage, good understanding, but invincible modesty. He is one of those that deserve very well, but are very awkward at putting their talents within the observation of such as should take notice of them. He was some years a captain, and behaved himself with great gallantry in several engagements and at several sieges; but having a small estate of his own, and being next heir to Sir Roger, he has quitted a way of life in which no man can rise suitably to his merit, who is not something of a courtier as well as a soldier. I have heard him often lament that, in a profession where merit is placed in so conspicuous a view, impudence should get the better of modesty. When he has talked to this purpose, I never heard him make a sour expression, but frankly confess that he left the world because he was not fit for it. A strict honesty and an even regular behavior are in themselves obstacles to him that must press through crowds, who endeavor at the same end with himself, the favor of a commander. He will, however, in his way of talk excuse generals for not disposing according to men's dessert, or inquiring into it; for, says he, that great man who has a mind to help me has as many to break through to come to me as I have to come at him: therefore he will conclude that the man who would make a figure, especially in a military way, must get over all false modesty, and assist his patron against the importunity of other pretenders, by a proper assurance in his own vindication. He says it is a civil cowardice to be backward in asserting what you ought to expect, as it is a military fear to be slow in attacking when it is your duty. With this candor does the gentleman speak of himself and others. The same frankness runs through all his conversation. The military part of his life has furnished him with many adventures, in the relation of which he is very agreeable to the company; for he is never overbearing, though accustomed to command men in the utmost degree below him; nor ever too obsequious, from an habit of obeying men highly above him.

But that our society may not appear a set of humorists, unacquainted with the gallantries and pleasures of the age, we have amongst us the gallant Will Honeycomb, a gentleman who, according to his years, should be in the decline of his life; but having ever been very careful of his person, and always had a very easy fortune, time has made but a very little impression either by wrinkles on his forehead, or traces on his brain. His person is well turned, and of a good height. He is very ready at that sort of discourse with which men usually entertain women. He has all his life dressed very well, and remembers habits as others do men. He can smile when one speaks to him, and laughs easily. He knows the history of every mode, and can inform you from which of the French king's wenches our wives and daughters had this manner of curling their hair, that way of placing their hoods; whose frailty was

covered by such a sort of a petticoat, and whose vanity to show her foot made that part of the dress so short in such a year. In a word, all his conversation and knowledge have been in the female world. As other men of his age will take notice to you what such a minister said upon such and such an occasion, he will tell you when the Duke of Monmouth danced at court, such a woman was then smitten, another was taken with him at the head of his troop in the park. In all these important relations, he has ever about the same time received a kind glance, or a blow of a fan from some celebrated beauty, mother of the present Lord Such-a-one. If you speak of a young commoner that said a lively thing in the House, he starts up, "He has good blood in his veins; Tom Mirable begot him; the rogue cheated me in that affair; that young fellow's mother used me more like a dog than any woman I ever made advances to." This way of talking of his very much enlivens the conversation among us of a more sedate turn, and I find there is not one of the company, but myself, who rarely speak at all, but speaks of him as of that sort of a man who is usually called a well-bred fine gentleman. To conclude his character, where women are not concerned, he is an honest worthy man.

I cannot tell whether I am to account him, whom I am next to speak of, as one of our company; for he visits us but seldom, but when he does, it adds to every man else a new enjoyment of himself. He is a clergyman, a very philosophic man, of general learning, great sanctity of life, and the most exact good breeding. He has the misfortune to be of a very weak constitution, and consequently cannot accept of such cares and business as preferments in his function would oblige him to; he is therefore among divines what a chamber-counsellor is among lawyers. The probity of his mind, and the integrity of his life, create him followers, as being eloquent or loud advances others. He seldom introduces the subject he speaks upon; but we are so far gone in years that he observes, when he is among us, an earnestness to have him fall on some divine topic, which he always treats with much authority, as one who has no interest in this world, as one who is hastening to the object of all his wishes, and conceives hope from his decays and infirmities. These are my ordinary companions.

7.4.1 OF THE CLUB : SUMMARY

The Spectator here gives an account of his companions. The first gentleman to be named in this connection is Sir Roger de Coverley, of Worcestershire, of an ancient descent. He is quite well-known to folks of Worcestershire. He has some singular views, which have originated from his thinking of this world as all wrong. But he never alienates people by this theory of his; for his good manners always please his friends. Sir Roger was disappointed in love; he was repulsed by a beautiful widow. Before this disappointed Sir Roger was a fine gentleman and was a baronet in the true sense of the term. But after this repulsion, he grew careless and since then took little interest in his dress. So his dress may appear rather outmoded. He is fifty-six, but still has a cheerful disposition.

In fact, people take him as an intimate comrade, impressed by his affectionate behaviour. He is popular with every class of people. As for his professional aspect, Sir Roger is a justice of the quorum and carries out his duties with great ability.

Andrew Freeport, a merchant, is the next member of the Spectator's Club. He is a very industrious and well experienced person. He has noble and generous notions of trade and commerce. As he is acquainted with trade in all parts of the British seas, he knows a lot. He thinks that trade is the best way to extend dominions. He places no importance on wars. According to him, diligence, in the long run, proves to be more effective than valour. The Spectator thinks that he is a very agreeable companion. His simple, unaffected speech is quite pleasant.

Captain Sentry is the next important person. He is a very courageous person, but is quite modest and humble. He served gallantly as a captain some years back. But he left this service since he could not exhibit his talents. He was, in fact, too modest to make his service sufficiently conspicuous. He admits that any soldier wishing to gain popularity must get over all his modesty. He has quite a lot of experience about military life. The Spectator observes, that he is not overbearing, though he has been accustomed to commanding men.

The next gentleman mentioned is another bachelor, who is a member of the Inner Temple. He is a learned gentleman, well versed in the classics. But unfortunately, according to the dictates of his father, he had to study the laws of the land. As a result, he takes the help of an attorney and usually agrees upon all questions relating to marriage articles, leases, and tenures. He spends his days in devoting his time to Aristotle and Longinus. He is always absorbed in the theories and views of the classical writers, and takes little interest in modern subjects. According to the Spectator, this makes him at once both disinterested and agreeable. He visits the theatre frequently and this is the only business he takes seriously. Before the play actually starts, he drops in at Will's Coffee House to have a chat with his friends.

There is another character, the gallant Will Honeycomb. This person is quite aged. But as he takes particular care about his dress and appearance, he does not seem to be too old. He is always ready to entertain women. He is helped in this respect by his knowledge of the history of every mode. Most of his information, however, is concerned with the female world. Thus, he can supply people with facts about historical personages and their women friends. This sort of conversation gives quite a gay colour to the company of the Spectator and his friends.

The last character is a Clergyman. Though he visits the company very seldom, he lends a new turn to their conversation whenever he joins them. He is a philosopher and is a great, learned person, preserving sanctity of life. But he is unfortunately of a very weak constitution. He has a very interesting manner of speaking, on divine subjects. He rarely introduces his subjects. But he observes and knows when the assembled

people have an inclination to hear about divine matters. Thus, he chooses his moment to speak about his subject.

7.4.2 CHARACTERS

Sir Roger de Coverley

Sir Roger de Coverley, a fifty-six-year-old bachelor, the benevolent autocrat of a large Worcestershire estate. The knight's humaneness, according to his own opinion, is the result of his love for a beautiful widow whom he has wooed for thirty years. His kindness is equaled by his rigid control of his servants, whose morals, finances, and behavior are the assumed responsibility of Sir Roger. In London, he presides over "The Club," an informal but close-knit group of men of divergent interests and personalities. Sir Roger's every thought seems marked by affability, his every act by broad knowledge and understanding.

Mr. Spectator

Mr. Spectator, is the anonymous first-person narrator of the articles describing customs and personalities of eighteenth century London. The writer sets the tone of the journal with the editorial pronouncement that any faulty character described in the journal fits a thousand. People and that every paper is presented in the spirit of benevolence and with love of humankind.

Captain Sentry

Captain Sentry, Sir Roger's nephew, who leaves a successful naval career to assume his position as heir to Sir Roger in the Club, as well as in his uncle's financial holdings. The captain's great courage, keen understanding, and gallantry in naval sieges are quietly balanced by an invincible modesty, qualities that make him a liked and admired individual.

Sir Andrew Freeport

Sir Andrew Freeport, a club member whose eminence as a merchant and personal frugality speak for the differences between Sir Andrew's and Sir Roger's political and economic philosophies. Those differences provide the basis for many hours of debate between the two devoted friends. Among Sir Roger's last acts is making the gift of a book to Sir Andrew, a collection of acts of Parliament.

Will Honeycomb

Will Honeycomb, a beau and fop in the decline of life. Despite his age, he remains youthful, he says, because of his many attempts to marry. His contributions to club discussions stem from various aspects of the female world. His ultimate marriage at an advanced age bears out his claim to gallantry.

William Wimble

William Wimble, a bachelor neighbour of Sir Roger de Coverley. The youngest son of an ancient family, born to no estate and bred to no business, Will lives with an older brother and acts as gamekeeper on the family estate. Resigned to his lot in life, amiable Will is the darling of the countryside.

Moll White

Moll White, a slatternly recluse who lives near Sir Roger's estate. Known as a witch by her neighbours, she is blamed for any untoward event or incident. Her death is said to have caused winds violent enough to blow off the end of one of Sir Roger's barns. Sir Roger tells Mr.Spectator of the coincidence of the two events, but professes no belief in any relationship between them.

Kate Willow

Kate Willow, a witty, mischievous wench in Sir Roger's neighbourhood. Kate's value of her beauty over love has kept her unmarried. To the consternation of many, she tries to influence young girls in love to be as indiscreet as she has been.

Irus

Irus (I-ruhs), men of the countryside. Their economic practices, both based on poverty, are opposites. Because he is ashamed to appear poor, Laertes spends unthriftily, moving always closer to poverty. Irus' fear of poverty causes him to save, moving him from it.

Tom Touchy

Tom Touchy, is the selfish neighbor of Sir Roger. At every meeting of the court, he sues someone for poaching on his land. Touchy, generally disliked for his littleness, incurs the wrath of the countryside when he sues Will Wimble for taking hazel sticks from his hedge. Good-natured Will has taken the sticks to make tobacco-stoppers for his friends.

A Minister

A minister, a club member whose visits add to every man new enjoyment of himself.

The Templar

The Templar, is another member of the Spectator. His interest turns from poetry to law, and he leaves the Club.

Edward Biscuit

Edward Biscuit, is Sir Roger's butler. From Biscuit's correspondence, Mr. Spectator learns the details of the baronet's death and burial.

7.5 SUMMING UP

Richard Steele depicts all characters in order to comment on English society as a whole. Through characters of the club, he describes how Augustan writers used fiction to make political and social statements about what was going on around them in the society.

7.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Q1. Who are the members of the club?

Ans : Refer to 7.4.2

Q2. Write a short note on the character of Sir Roger?

Ans : Refer to 7.4.2

Q3. Write a short note on the character of Captain Sentry?

Ans : Refer to 7.4.2

Q4. Summarize the essay Of the Club in your own words.

Ans : Refer to 7.4.1

Q5. Discuss the prose style of Richard Steele.

Ans : Refer to 7.3

Q6. Discuss Richard Steele as an Essayist.

Ans : Refer to 7.2 and 7.3

7.9 FURTER READINGS

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Steele. Web
2. http:www.britiannica.com / biography / Richard Steele

Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon
Open University

Bachelor of Arts

UGEN-102

Literature in English 1550-1750

BLOCK

4

DRAMA-SHAKESPEARE : MACBETH

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BLOCK INTRODUCTION

In this block we are going to study William Shakespeare's play, *Macbeth.* It is powerful play with grim scenes and story line. In the unit 8, we shall give you an introduction to Shakespeare's life, literary works and his contribution to English Drama.

Unit-9 discusses the historical background, publication and composition, super natural elements and the atmosphere of the play.

Unit-13 discusses the art of characterizations, major characters and technique.

Unit-14 discusses annotations of important passages in the play.

UNIT-8 SHAKESPEARE : LIFE AND WORKS

Structure

8.0 INTRODUCTION

In Unit 1 of Block 1 you have studied Shakespeare as a poet. In this Unit we shall discuss Shakespeare as a dramatist. We shall also discuss about his life and his contribution to English drama. It was as a poet as well as a playwright that Shakespeare was honoured not only by his contemporaries but by the people of all ages. Shakespeare is modern today because his plays do not merely externalize, they internalize life with psychological subtlety and insight. He is a creator, the immortal creator of a new world, who has marvelously but convincingly expounded a universal vision out of life. His subject matter is life in its totality. This is the secret of his universal appeal. Although Shakespeare has powerfully expressed the spirit of the age, he rises above his contemporaries due to the expression of those human emotions of love, hate, jealousy, sorrow, sympathy, longings and aspirations, smiles and tears, passions and prejudices, which are everlasting. He stands secure through all eternity transcending the boundaries of time and space.

Read about Shakespeare and his age in unit 8.2. Then you should read about his works and contribution to English drama in 8.2.3. After you have read about his life and achievements write down the answers to the

exercises. Your answers should then be checked with the answers given by us at the end of the unit.

8.1 OBJECTIVES

In this unit you will read about Shakespeare as the true child of English Renaissance. In an Elizabethan atmosphere he grew up and became not only great and wise, but famous, rich and happy. The age in which Shakespeare lived and wrote is rightly described as the golden period in the history of England. The spiritual and patriotic fervour of the Elizabethan age and its adventurous spirit found its best expression in drama and as such the drama is perhaps the richest form of Elizabethan Literature. Shakespeare describes the spirit of man of this age in his dramas. This is what the age demanded and this is what Shakespeare bountifully supplied. At the end of your study of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss Shakespeare's life in detail
- know about his world famous dramas
- realize his contribution to English Literature.

8.2 SHAKESPEARE : HIS PARENTAGE AND AGE

William Shakespeare was born in April 1564 at Stratford-on Avon, where his father, John Shakespeare was a shopkeeper. He had two sisters and three brothers. His mother owned some land, and the family was sometimes in good circumstances and sometimes in need. Shakespeare received some education in the Free Grammar school at Stratford but had to leave at the age of thirteen when there were serious financial troubles at home. That is why the learned Johnson was able to laugh at Shakespeare's 'small Latin and less Greek'. Possibly he had to work to help at home.

At the age of nineteen, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, who was eight years older than himself. It is said that there were unhappy married relations, though little actual evidence. But it must be remarked that there is a passage in the play, *Twelfth Night* in which Shakespeare gives the advice that the woman should always marry one older than herself. Three children were born to them. A daughter was born to the couple within six months. She was Susanna who later married the physician John Hall and lived prosperously in Stratford. The family was completed with the birth of the twins, Judith and Hamnet, in 1585: Hamnet died in 1596 and Judith lived until 1662. Virtually nothing is known of Shakespeare's life from 1585 to 1592. Tradition and conjecture have filled these 'seven lost years' with various activities- schoolmastering , soldiering or working in the law- designed to explain the expert knowledge of these branches of life which some readers have

detected in the plays. One of the many possibilities is that Shakespeare left Stratford with a group of London actors. Later he became an actor and was very successful. Then he began to rewrite plays and recast old plays and very soon began to write plays which were very successful on the stage. He wrote much and gave to the English stage as many as thirty-seven plays. In 1612, he retired from the stage and returned home with his wife and married daughter. We know that Shakespeare's retirement at Stratford was a period of happiness and prosperity. He was a prominent man in the civic affairs of Stratford. He died there on the 23rd April, 1616, that day being his birthday.

8.2.1 LITERARY ACHIEVEMENT

When Shakespeare came in London, he soon took up the profession of an actor, and he published his first work *Venus and Adonis* in 1593. In 1594 he became a member the Lord Chamberlain's Company, where in addition to acting he was employed in re-modelling and fitting up for the stage various old plays. This would certainly give him a practical insight into the needs of stage production and the requirements of dramatic effect. This was the reason that he never wrote such scenes in his dramas, which were difficult to be staged in the theatre. He was connected with the theatrical company from 1588 to 1612 and in this period he produced his plays, and all his non- dramatic poetry.

Shakespeare wrote for twenty- four years. His dramatic career is divided into four periods:

i) **The First Period** (1588-1595): Shakespeare's first period represents the time of his apprenticeship to the art of the dramatist. In this period the choice of subject varies widely; histories like *Richard II,* comedies like *Midsummer Night's Dream* , and a tragedy in *Romeo and Juliet.* The other important dramas of this period are *Titus Andronicus,* The first part of *Henry VI,* The Second and third parts of *Henry VI* , *Love's Labour Lost , The Comedy of Errors, Two Gentlemen of Verona.* Shakespeare was experimenting in different mode of expression, before finding for himself that style which we know as Shakespearean. This period is called 'In the Workshop' when he was learning his trade as a dramatic craftsman.

ii) **The Second Period** (1595-1601): The second period shows in general a great advance in power of characterisation and in the command of poetic resources. This period includes the comedies and historical plays. His historical plays were *Henry IV, Parts I and II* with the comic Falstaff. No tragedy was written in those years, and his interest was all in comedy such as- *As You Like It, Twelfth Night, The Merchant of Venice* and *Much Ado About Nothing.* Dramas like *Richard III, Henry V, The Taming of Shrew, The Merry Wives of Windsor* were also written during this period.

This period is called 'In the World', that is, in this period Shakespeare gets some experience of human life.

iii) **The Third Period** (1601- 1608): This period is famous for the four great tragedies: *King Lear, Othello, Hamlet,* and *Macbeth. Julius Caesar* was written about the beginning of this period, and stands like a connecting link between the Comedies and the tragedies. *Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus, Timon of Athens, All's Well that Ends Well, Measure for Measure, Troilus and Cressida* are the main dramas of this period. There is much depth in his writing during this period. This period is called the period of Sadness and Philosophical Contemplation.

iv) **The Fourth Period** (1608- 1612) The fourth period is the period of Calmness and Serenity. This final period is that of the Romantic Drama (or Comic Tragedies) such as *Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale, The Tempest.* Shakespeare reached the heights during this period.

8.2.2 SHAKESPEARE AND THE STAGE

It is important to know that Shakespeare wrote his plays for acting and not for reading. Therefore, some idea of the stage and theatre in the time of Shakespeare is necessary in order to help students understand the limitations and possibilities of the stage during the age. The theatre during the age of Shakespeare was not like the theatres we go today. The main stage projected into the audience. This allowed the playgoers to be grouped on three sides of the stage. There were no curtains, so the actors were in full view all the time they were on the stage. In case, any of the characters died he was carried off the stage at the end of the scene by other actors. The end of an Act or an important scene could not be marked by the fall of a curtain as it is done today. Instead it was shown by a rhyming couplet at the end of the final speech in the scene.

Shakespeare never forgot his audience. He never ignored the 'groundlings' or common people who sat or stood in the 'pit' during a performance. Much depended upon their approval or disapproval. For their entertainment, he always introduced sufficient action, violence and exciting scenes. Even the uneducated section of the audience was eager for something new in the theatre. Shakespeare provided them with excellent non-religious plays which were commercially profitable at the same time. His plays, therefore, appealed to playgoers both 'high and low' and this accounts for his immense popularity both with royalty and masses. Moreover, the playwright during that age, had to please the public or else face bankruptcy.

The plays were acted in daylight with a minimum of scenery. Although 'props' such as furniture, rocks and thrones were used on the stage, there was an absence of elaborate curtains and stage scenery. This meant that the audience had to use their imagination to supplement what

the eyes could not see. In the dialogue, pictorial descriptions were provided. These were so vivid and evocative that scenery was unnecessary.

Costumes were elaborate, bright and gay. The actors usually wore the Elizabethan dress appropriate to the rank and position of the characters. Musical effects were used to stress the mood of the play. Frequently, songs were introduced into the action in order to convey the depth and mood of emotions and feelings. The stage was devoid of all the wonderful effects of sound and light, scenery- both indoor and outdoor, and the elaborate orchestral effects of the modern age.

8.2.3 CONTRIBUTION TO ENGLISH DRAMA

The greatest of all Elizabethan dramatists was Shakespeare in whose hands drama reached its climax. Living in the region of Bishopsgate, not far from the Theatre, Shakespeare continued to write plays at the rate of approximately two a year. The period 1594-8 may have seen the first productions of King John (sometimes dated as early as 1589), the middle comedies *Love's Labour's Lost* (scholars continue to argue about the Love's Labour's Won mentioned by Meres), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Merchant Of Venice*, the outstandingly popular tragedy *Romeo And Juliet* and the cycle of English history plays. *Richard II*, the two parts of Henry IV and Henry V. That he also had aspirations as a gentleman, and the means to support them, is apparent in the application, on his father's behalf, for a coat of arms in 1596; it was granted. The following year Shakespeare bought one of Stratford's finest houses, New Place. Early in 1598 he made a small investment in malt (malting was Stratford's principal industry). The London theatres were experiencing hardship at this time, and it is possible that he was contemplating the life of a country gentleman with his wife and daughters in Stratford. If so, he changed his mind. With other shareholders of the Lord Chamberlain's Men, he met the landlord's threat of eviction from the Theatre by moving its timbers to the south bank of the Thames and re-erecting them as the Globe.

Shakespeare wrote his greatest plays during the first decade of his company's occupation of the Globe theatre. They include the mature comedies, *Much Ado About Nothing* (more probably dating from 1598), *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, the darker comedies, sometimes called Problem Plays, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Measure For Measure* and *Troilus And Cressida*; a pot-boiler, *The Merry Wives Of Windsor*, bringing Falstaff back to life from Henry IV; and the succession of great tragedies, *Julius Caesar* , *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Antony And Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus* and *Timon* Of Athens. It was a period that saw the Lord Chamberlain's Men honoured by the new monarch with the title of the King's Men and confirmed in their ascendancy at court. Shakespeare had moved his London lodgings to Southwark, but maintained his financial interests in Stratford. A small investment in land in 1602 was followed by a larger one in 1605. But theatrical fashions were changing.

The faddish interest in Boys' Companies, playing in indoor theatres, had attracted the interest of some of the best playwrights of the age. As the interest in the boys waned, these playwrights began to write for the adult companies. Beaumont and Fletcher were particularly adept at suiting the new fashions almost before they declared themselves. Shakespeare was probably feeling the need to look to his well established laurels. When the King's Men decided to invest in an indoor playhouse of their own, at the BLACKFRIARS, he joined them, perhaps recognizing the greater scenic scope offered by indoor playing. His last plays, *Pericles*, *Prince Of Tyre* (written in collaboration, probably with George Wilkins), *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*, are romances, which acknowledge even as they transcend the growing interest in spectacle, magic and improbable resolutions. The collaborations with Fletcher on *Henry VIII*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and the lost *Cardenio* (see also Shakespeare Apocrypha) suggest a dulling of his own creativity. It was at a performance of *Henry VIII* in 1613 that the Globe was burned down. Shakespeare had just bought the upper floor of one of the Blackfriars gatehouses and may not have wished to pay out more money for the rebuilding of the Globe. The probability is that he spent his last years in Stratford, dying there in 1616.

8.2.4 SHAKESPEARE'S UNIVERSALITY

Shakespeare is not just a poet of England, but of mankind. Shakespeare's universality lies in the acceptance of life in its totality. He has expressed human soul with intense emotion, he has in his works men and women irrespective of age and climate, and found in them an echo of their own emotions- their laughter and tears, passions and prejudices, longings and aspirations. His plays are a faithful record of Elizabethan conventions. Shakespeare has a friendly approach to man with all his baseness and limitations. Life is Shakespeare's capital. It is this intense love of life with all its colours and beauty that has made his works so ravishingly fascinating. Life and love are interwined in Shakespeare's vision, both in tragedies and comedies. Love is one of the fundamental instincts of man, shared by the king's living in palaces and the peasants in their humble huts. Shakespeare has easily transcended the limits of time and space. He has become a rich heritage of mankind. Ben Jonson, stern classicist that he was, appreciated the universal appeal of Shakespeare with 'Soul of the Age The applause! Delight! the wonder of our stage.' Jonson also commented 'He was not of an age, but for all times.'

Shakespeare had a mind reflecting "ages past" and present. All the people that ever lived are in Shakespeare's plays. Human tastes and values change. Literary fashions and tendencies change but Shakespeare has remained unchanged due to the faithful creation of life in all its totality. Shakespeare's stage is the world, his characters are types of universal mankind. His subject is the human soul and he himself is the very genius of humanity. He is "the prophetic soul of the wide world dreaming of the times to come". S.T. Coleridge remarked, "The greatest genius that perhaps human nature yet produced, our myriad- minded Shakespeare".

His plays are the epitome of mankind. His language fits all times and his thought all places. No part of human existence, no variety of character seems outside his range.

Shakespeare is a dramatist of human nature. He is above all writers the poet of nature, the poet that holds up his readers a faithful mirror of man and his environment, manners and life. His characters do not belong to this country or that but come from all lands and all walks of life. Shakespeare's persons are not only individuals, they are a species eternal and true. They are found here, there, everywhere. He had a thorough and comprehensive knowledge of the passions, humours and sentiments of mankind. Shakespeare had a friendly approach to man with all its baseness and limitations. He embraced man with all his faults and imperfections. His works bear a correlation and association between the age in which his literary creation took shape and the period in which the readers pursue it. There is hardly any aspect of morality, human behaviour and philosophy that Shakespeare ignored. He is for all ages, nations and societies.

8.3 SUMMING UP

The greatest of all Elizabethan dramatists was Shakespeare in whose hands the Romantic drama reached its climax. As we do not know much about his life, and it is certain that he did not have proper training and education as other dramatists of the period had, his stupendous achievements are an enigma to all scholarship up to the present day. Endowed with a marvelous imaginative and creative mind, he would put new life into old familiar stories and make them glow with deepest thoughts and tender feelings. The plays of Shakespeare are so full of contradictory thoughts expressed so convincingly in different contexts, that it is not possible to formulate a system of philosophy out of them. Each of his characters- from the king to the clown, from the most highly intellectual to the simpleton, judges life from his own angle, and utters something which is so profound and appropriate, that one is astonished at the playwright's versatility of genius. His style and versification are of the highest order. He was not only the greatest dramatist of the age, but also the first poet of the day, and one of the greatest of all time. In his plays there is a fine combination of dramatic and lyric elements. Words and images seem to flow from his brain spontaneously and they are clothed in a style which can be called perfect. Though Shakespeare belonged to the Elizabethan age, on account of his universality, he belongs to all times. Every time we read him, we become more conscious of his greatness, like the charm of Cleopatra "Age cannot wither her, nor customs stale her infinite variety." The appeal of Shakespeare is perennial. His plays are like a great river of life and beauty. Shakespeare's vision of life, his wonderful characterization, his broad humanity, his sense of humour and tolerance, and his dramatic art have all found an eloquent expression in his magnificent works.

8.4 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Question-1- Discuss Shakespeare as a dramatist.

Answer– See Section 8.1, 8.2.1, 8.2.2.

Question-2- Write a note on Shakespeare's life .

Answer- See Section 8.2.

Question-3- What are the important dramas of the First Period?

Answer– See Section 8.2.1.

Question-4- What are the important works of the Second Period?

Answer– See Section 8.2.1.

Question-5- What are the main dramas of Shakespeare in the Third Period?

Answer– See Section 8.2.1.

Question-6- What are the main dramas of Shakespeare in the Fourth Period?

Answer– See Section 8.2.1.

Question-7- What was the condition of the stage during Elizabethan Period ?

Answer– See Section 8.2.2.

Question-8- Write a brief note on the contribution of Shakespeare to English Drama.

Answer– See Section 8.2.3.

Question-9- How can you say that Shakespeare was universal?

Answer– See Section 8.2.4.

Question-10- "Shakespeare is relevant today". Comment.

Answer- See Section 8.2.4.

8.5 FURTHER READING

- Boas, F.S. - *Shakespeare and His Predecessors*
- Bradley, A.C.- *Shakespearean Tragedy*
- Coleridge, S.T.- *Lectures and Notes on Shakespeare*
- Dowden, Edward- *Shakespeare-His Mind and Art*
- Moultan, Richard- *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist..*
- Nicoll, A.- *The British Drama.*
- Reese, M.M.- *Shakespeare*: *His World and His Work*

UNIT-9 BACKGROUND STUDY OF THE PLAY MACBETH

Structure

9.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit on the background study of the play you will read about the atmosphere and conditions in which *Macbeth* was written. It is classed among the great tragedies, and comes in between *Julius Caesar* and *Hamlet. Macbeth* is certainly one of Shakespeare's most powerful and emotionally intense tragedies. Whereas Shakespeare's other major tragedies, such as *Hamlet* and *Othello,* fastidiously explore the intellectual predicaments faced by their subjects and the fine nuances of their subjects' characters. *Macbeth* tumbles madly from its opening to its conclusion. It is a sharp, jagged sketch of theme and character; as such, it has shocked and fascinated audiences for nearly four hundred years. It dramatises the damaging physical and psychological effects of political ambition on those who seek power for its own sake.

Read the present unit based on the background and the atmosphere of the play given in 9.6 and 9.8. Then read about the publicaton and

composition of the play in 9.3 and 9.4. You should also read about the various sources of the drama given in 9.5.

After you have read and understood the unit, write down the answers to the exercises. Your answers should be checked with the hints given at the end of the unit.

9.1 OBJECTIVE

Shakespeare's shortest and bloodiest tragedy, *Macbeth* tells the story of a brave Scottish general Macbeth who receives a prophecy from a trio of sinister witches that one day he will become King of Scotland. Consumed with ambitious thoughts and spurred to action by his wife, Macbeth murders King Duncan and seizes the throne for himself. He begins his reign racked with guilt and fear and soon becomes a tyrannical ruler, as he is forced to commit more and more murders to protect himself from enmity and suspicion. The bloodbath swiftly propels Macbeth and Lady Macbeth to arrogance, madness, and death. *Macbeth* was most likely written during the reign of James I, who had been James VI of Scotland before he succeeded to the English throne in 1603. James was a patron of Shakespeare's acting company, and of all the plays Shakespeare wrote under James's reign, *Macbeth* most clearly reflects the playwright's close relationship with the sovereign. In focusing on Macbeth, a figure from Scottish history, Shakespeare paid homage to his king's Scottish lineage. Additionally, the witches' prophecy that Banquo will found a line of kings is a clear nod to James's family's claim to have descended from the historical Banquo. In a larger sense, the theme of bad versus good kingship, embodied by Macbeth and Duncan, respectively, would have resonated at the royal court, where James was busy developing his English version of the theory of divine right.

At the end of your study of this unit you will be able to:

- Know about the background of the play.
- Understand about the sources of the play.
- Be familiar with the publication and composition of the play.

9.2 PUBLICATION AND COMPOSITION

It was first published in the First Folio (1623). The precise date of composition of a Shakespearean play is difficult to ascertain. Shakespeare wrote his plays primarily for the stage and not for publication, and therefore one cannot precisely say when a particular play of Shakespeare was first written. We can only conjecture the date of composition from two kinds of evidences- the external and the internal. The external evidence is drawn from the references to a particular play in the writings of other contemporary authors, critics and historians. The internal

evidence is derived from many textual references to historical incidents of the day, and the art, technique and style of the play under consideration. *Macbeth* could not have been written later than April 20, 1610 when Dr. Simon saw its performance at the Globe theatre. The Register of the Stationers' Company shows an entry, relating to *Macbeth*, dated the 8 th November, 1623 with the remark that it had been "formally entered to other man." It means that there could not have been any previous publication of the play. It could not have written than 1604 because it was clear references to King James I who ascended the throne of England in March, 1603 and was proclaimed King of Britain, France and Ireland to which the lines "and some I see / that two fold balls in tripple scepters carry" refer (Act IV, Sc.1 L. 130-131) The critical opinion is in favour of the year 1606 as the most probable date of its composition.

Macbeth is thought to have been first performed in 1606. Of all the plays that Shakespeare wrote during the reign of James I, who was patron of Shakespeare's acting company, Macbeth most clearly reflects the playwright's relationship with his sovereign. It is Shakespeare's shortest tragedy.

9.3 TIME OF THE PLAY'S ACTION

The events of *Macbeth* are supposed to happen on nine days, separated by intervals. These are arranged as following:

Day-1. Act I, Scene 1 to3.

Day-2. Act I, Scene 4 to 7.

Day-3. Act II, Scene 1 to 4. An interval, say a couple of weeks.

Day-4. Act III, Scene 1 to 5. (Act III, Sc. 6, an impossible time.)

Day-5. Act IV, Scene 1.

Day- 6. Act IV, Scene 2. An interval. Ross's journey to England.

Day- 7. Act IV, Scene3, Act V, Scene1. An interval. Malcolm's return to Scotland.

Day 8. Act V, Scene 2 and 3.

Day 9. Act V, Scene 4 to 8.

The historic period of the play is seventeen years- from 1040, the year of Duncan's death, to 1057, the year of Macbeth's.

9.4 DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The following characters appear in the play *Macbeth*

Duncan, King of Scotland.

Malcolm and *Donalbain* - His Sons

Macbeth and *Banquo*- Generals of the King's Army.

Macduff

Lennox

Ross

Menteith

Caithness- All are Noblemen of Scotland.

Fleance- Son to Banquo.

Siward- Earl of Northumberland, General of English Forces.

Young Siward- His Son.

Seyton- an Officer attending on Macbeth.

Boy- son to Macduff.

An English Doctor.

A Scotch Doctor.

A Sergeant.

A Porter.

An Old Man.

Lady Macbeth.

Lady Macduff.

Gentlewoman attending on Lady Macbeth.

Hecate.

Three Witches.

Lords, Gentlemen, Officers, Soldiers, Murderers, Attendants and Messengers.

The Ghost of Banquo and other Apparitions.

Scene: Scotland: England.

9.5 SOURCES

Shakespeare's source for the story is the account of Macbeth, King of Scotland, Macduff, and Duncan in Holinshed's Chronicles (1587), a history of England, Scotland, and Ireland familiar to Shakespeare and his

contemporaries, although the events in the play differ extensively from the history of the real Macbeth. In the 'Chronicle' Macbeth is a cousin of Duncan. He was a brave and successful general. Macbeth and Banquo defeat the enemies of the king. The weird sisters predicted that he would be the king of Scotland and Banquo's sons would also be king. Macbeth is instigated by his wife to murder Duncan. After Duncan's murder his sons fled from Scotland. Macbeth grew very suspicious and became a tyrant. He got Banquo murdered but Banquo's son Fleance escaped. He also wanted to kill Macduff but he fled to England. Then he had his family murdered. Macbeth's consultation of the witches for the second time and the convention of Macduff and Malcolm in England are also given in the 'Chronicle'. The rebellion by Macdonwald, invasion of Sweno, King of Norway and attack on Scotland by the forces of King Canute are separate events. But Shakespeare compresses them into one event. He does it for economy and dramatic effect. In Holinshed, Duncan is murdered by four hired servants but in *Macbeth* he murders Duncan himself. Similarly Shakespeare changes Holinshed's 'Chronicle' where Macdowald commits suicide whereas in the play Macbeth kills him in the battle. There is another change made by Shakespeare. Banquo was murdered after returning from the Banquet, in the play he is murdered before it. Holinshed also makes Macbeth rule for seventeen years as he actually did in history. Shakespeare compresses time and blends events and introduces characters for dramatic purposes and theatrical effect. But he relies mainly on Holinshed's 'Chronicle'.

9.6 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Duncan ascended the throne of Scotland in 1035 and he was killed by Macbeth in the battle at Bathgowmnan near Elgin in 1040. Macbeth had gone treacherously over to Torfin a cousin of Duncan who had revolted against him. Macbeth seems to have been a good and popular King who reigned for 17 years. He was killed in the battle of Lumphanan in 1057. He was succeeded by Malcolm Cammore who had spent his youth in the court of Edward, the Confessor of England. Malcolm reigned from 1058 to 1093. In history there is no mention of Banquo, Fleance and Macduff.

The rebellion of Macdonwald, from the Western Isles, is mere fable. The old historians may have confounded it either with the rebellion of Gilcomgain, the maormor of Moray, in 1033, or with the rebellious conduct of Torfin. Nor was there during the reign of Duncan any invasion of Fife by Sweno, Norway's king. It was to put down the rebellion of Torfin that Duncan marched northward through the territorial government of Macbeth, and was slain. Macbeth's father was not Sinel, but Finley, or Finlegh, the maormor, or prince, of Ross, not the thane of Glamis, and was killed about the year 1020, in some encounter with Malcolm II, the grandfather of Duncan. These are the sources from which Shakespeare drew the materials of the tragedy of Macbeth, and, of course, for his

purpose it mattered little whether these were based on fact or it was the blend of fact and fiction.

9.7 USE OF SUPERNATURAL

Elizabethans on the whole believed in ghosts, and the Elizabethan drama inherited a tradition of tragic ghostly intervention in human affairs from the tragedies of Seneca which showed most clearly in revenge tragedy. Shakespeare presents ghosts in five plays – Richard III, Julius Caesar, Hamlet, Macbeth and Cymbeline.

On the other hand the ghost of Banquo (*Macbeth*) may be regarded as a hallucination both of Macbeth's guilty conscience; another common form of ghost. The ghosts have great theatrical impact, especially in the two great tragedies, but are also excellent devices used by the dramatist to show the troubled mind or sick conscience, and to convince the audience of the terrible demands, whether internal or external, laid upon the tragic hero and constituting the crux of his moral dilemma. The helplessness of man caught and isolated in a pattern of events finally beyond his control is a recurrent idea of great power, uniting an audience in a bond of sympathy with the noble victim, however, erring he may be. The witches, ghosts, apparitions and hallucinations carry this sordid story of murder and bloodshed to higher levels of true tragedy and render it to be one of the most tremendous stories of the human soul.

For literary purposes supernatural elements may be broadly classified as:

9.7.1 WITCHES

The first and most dreadful form of the supernatural in *Macbeth* is represented by the three witches. They are the instruments of darkness. They are old women, poor, ragged, skinny and hideous and full of vulgar spite. They have beard also. They have, received from evil spirits certain supernatural powers. They cannot be fates because fates admit of no 'masters'. Even their mistress Hecate herself is a spirit and not fate. They are not fates also because they have no power over the thoughts and actions of Macbeth. They could only suggest or advise but could not dictate. Shakespeare has not given the slightest, hint that the actions of Macbeth were forced on him by an external power, whether by the witches or their masters or Hecate herself.

9.7.2 GHOSTS

Shakespeare has also introduced ghosts as a second type of the supernatural in *Macbeth.* They heighten the tragic effect and render the atmosphere of the play mysterious, awful and impenetrably dark. The ghosts, apparitions and hallucinations imply the existence of an invisible world above and beyond the physical world within the apprehension of our physical senses. Shakespeare makes use of two kinds of ghosts- the

objective and the subjective. Banquo's ghost in the banquet scene is visible to Macbeth alone and not to Lady Macbeth and other lords and courtiers sitting round the dining table. This subjective ghost is sometimes interpreted as the creation of the character's own heated imagination and horror-stricken spirit. The 'air-drawn' dagger seen by Macbeth in his bloody chamber may also be considered as a kind of subjective ghost.

9.8 THE ATMOSPHERE

Prof. Bradley says, "A Shakespearean tragedy, as a rule has a special tone or atmosphere of its own, quite perceptive, however difficult to describe." *Macbeth* is set in a dismal and dreary atmosphere beset with over-powering supernatural awe and horror. It is, therefore the most poignant, the most appealing and the most awe-inspiring tragedy in which Shakespeare takes the readers and spectators straight into black tragedy, through one door opening into utter darkness. We have in it deep pathos, moving pity, momentous thrills, appalling tragic incidents and awful supernatural scenes woven in an overpowering and impenetrably horrible atmosphere. It is a tragedy not only of external tragic conflicts but more a tragedy of the soul. Horror broods over the whole tragedy- horror within and horror without.

F.S. Boas asserts in his popular book *Shakespeare and His Predecessors* that *Macbeth* is steeped in Celtic atmosphere. "The desolate, storm swept heaths, where the evil powers of earth and sky may fittingly meet and greet in hideous carnival, the lovely castles where passions of primeval intensity find their natural home and where at dead of night murderer may stealthily move to its design; the eerie atmosphere where the hoarse creak of the raven and the scream of the owl, the fatal bellman, foretell the impending doom, and where the ghost of the victim stalks to the head of the board in the assassin's banqueting- hall- every detail is steeped in the peculiar genius of Celtic Scotland.

The play is set in a dark and black atmosphere. The spirit of the night broods over the whole play. Almost all the important and thrilling incidents of the tragedy occur either at night or at some dark spot at the hour of dusk. For example, the vision of the dagger, the murder of Duncan, the murder of Banquo, the sleep walking of Lady Macbeth are all night scenes. Darkness seems to be the predominating element in the conception of the tragedy of Macbeth. There is darkness not only in the world outside, but also in the heart of the hero and the heroine. And above all, it is the weird sisters, the witches, who immeasurably heightens the tragic intensity of the atmosphere and elevate the tragedy to the plan of superhuman grandeur and awe.

9.9 SUMMING UP

Macbeth is unanimously held as the most vehement, the most concentrated, and the most tremendous of the tragedies of Shakespeare. It

is basically a tragedy of murder and bloodshed. The plot of the play is, therefore, steeped in blood. It is a tragedy issuing from the character of the hero himself. He is torn with conflict in his mind- conflict both external and internal. The tragic trait or fault in the character of Macbeth is his inordinate ambition. This ambition becomes the cause of his doom. Some abnormal conditions of mind, as insanity, somnambulism and hallucinations affect human deeds. Lady Macbeth suffers from somnambulism and her husband from hallucinations. Finally when the hero dies and the curtain falls, two kinds of feelings are left in our heart- the feeling of awe and of sympathy. We feel fear at the fall of Macbeth and bit for the way in which he suffers and meets his death. At the death of Macbeth a medley of emotions is left in our heart, pain at his tragedy, admiration for the noble qualities in him and the promise of better things to come.

In *Macbeth,* however, Shakespeare fully observes the principle of poetic justice. The hero and the heroine are justly punished for the most heinous crimes they have committed. Macbeth and his wife shed blood of others therefore their own blood is shed. It is essentially a melodramatic revenge tragedy. It abounds in all the stock devices of a melodrama- ghosts, witches, apparitions, murder, bloodshed, along with sensational and blood-curdling scenes of cruelty, unnatural sufferings, horror and dread. Still we can say *Macbeth* is not depressing. It elevates, ennobles and exalts us. Man's destiny is always determined to a great extent by his own character. He is an architect of his own fate. Macbeth suffers because he errs. He is not just the plaything of fate. *Macbeth* reveals the dignity of man and of human endeavour over the power of evil, which is ultimately defeated. It ends with the restoration of the power of the good.

9.10 MODEL QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Question-1 Write the political background of *Macbeth*.

Answer- See Section 9.2.

Question-2 What are the sources of *Macbeth?*

Answer- See Section 9.5.

Question-3 What is the historical background of *Macbeth?*

Answer- See Section 9.6.

Question-4 Comment on the use of supernatural elements in other dramas of Shakespeare.

Answer- See Section 9.7.

Question-5 Write a brief note on the use of supernatural elements in *Macbeth.*

Answer- See Section 9.7

Question-6 Describe about the atmosphere of *Macbeth.*

Answer- See Section 9.8.

Question-7 How the theme of *Macbeth* is similar to the history of that time?

Answer- See Section 9.6.

Question-8 Point out the resemblances as well as deviations, made by Shakespeare in writing *Macbeth.*

Answer- See Section 9.6.

Question-9 Write about the time of the action of *Macbeth.*

Answer- See Section 9.4.

Question-10 Discuss the date of the composition of *Macbeth.*

Answer- See Section 9.3.

Question-11 What are our feelings after the end of the play *Macbeth?*

Answer- See Section 9.9

Question-12 Do you agree that *Macbeth's* superstition caused a great havoc in the drama? Discuss.

Answer- See Section 9.7, 9.9.

9.11 FURTHER READING

- Boas, F.S. - *Shakespeare and His Predecessors*
- Bradley, A.C.- *Shakespearean Tragedy*
- Dowden, Edward- *Shakespeare-His Mind and Art*
- Moultan, Richard- *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist.*.
- Nicoll, A.- *The British Drama.*
- Reese, M.M.- *Shakespeare*: *His World and His Work*

UNIT-10 ANALYSIS ACT I AND II

Structure

10.0 INTRODUCTION

In unit 10 we shall analyse I and II acts of the play *Macbeth*. There are seven Scenes in Act I and four Scenes in Act II. *Macbeth* is the shortest of Shakespeare's tragedies. The action moves straight on to its end with little or no pause. There are few episodes. The whole action is controlled by external forces, working in union with human will of Macbeth. The witches go in and out throughout the play, and have much to do with development of the action. It is likely that if Macbeth had been left to do himself, he would not have committed crime to secure the crown of Scotland. He was ambitious, and Lady Macbeth, who has been aptly called the fourth Witch, stimulated his ambition, until it could only be fulfilled by crime.

You will come to know about the summary and critical analysis of all the scenes of both the Acts of the play in 10.3. Read about the difficult words in unit 10.2. You will be familiar with the important scenes of Act I and II in unit 10.5. After you have read and understood write down your answers of the questions given. Your answers should then be checked with the hints given at the end of the unit.

10.1 OBJECTIVES

There are total 5 Acts and 28 Scenes in the Play *Macbeth.* In the first Act of the play the first crime is conceived and determined by Macbeth after considerable hesitation. In second Act the first crime is committed as resolved upon the preceding Act, the King of Scotland is murdered by Macbeth. Macbeth, a brave general of the King fought against the rebel Macdonwald who was aided by the king of Norway, Sweno. Macbeth killed Macdonwald in the battlefield and compelled Sweno to sue for peace. The action of these two Acts takes place in Scotland. The Scenes are held at a desert place, a heath, a camp near Forres, a cavern, before and in the rooms of the castle of Duncan and a nearby country and battlefield and Inverness, Macbeth's castle. The events of these two Acts cover three days.

i) First Day-

Act I, Scenes i- iii

ii) Second Day

Act I, Scenes iv- vii.

iii) Third Day

Act II, Scenes i- iv

The action of the play develops by the combined influences of the Witches and Lady Macbeth, and then Macbeth simply drifts on. At the end of your study of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss Act I and Act II
- appreciate about the dramatic devices
- understand the important Scenes and their significance.

10.2 REFERENCES

Act I Scene I-

Hurlyburly= uproar, tumult of the battle

Heath= barren desert

Graymalkin= a common name for a gray cat, the attendant sprit of the first witch

Paddock= a toad, the attendant of the second witch.

Hover= fly about

Act I Scene II-

Bloody= bleeding

Revolt = battle

The newest state= the latest position of the war

Hardy= brave and strong

Hail= welcome

Spent= tired

Do swarm upon him= abound in him

Rebel's whore= harlot of a traitor

Unseamed= cut through

Nave= middle part of the body

Direful= dreadful

Kerns= light- armed soldiers

Say sooth= speak truly

Reeking= smoking with fresh blood

Golgotha= "a place of skull" in the Bible

Gashes= deep wounds

Smack= indicate

Curbing= checking

Deign= permit

Act I Scene III-

Mounched= chewed

Aroint thee= begone, run away

Aleppo= a sea- coast town in Syria

Pent- house lid= eyelids

Bark= ship

Attire= dress

Seeds of time= future events

Melted= disappeared in the air

Insane root= hemlock or any root which renders man insane

Post with post= messenger after messenger

Instruments of darkness= supernatural evil powers

Knock at my ribs= beat violently

Stir= efforts

Registered= imprinted on the heart

Act I Scene IV-

Execution= death punishment

Liege= my lord

Treasons= treachery, villainy

Plant thee- to keep you in my favour

Infold=embrace

Harbinger= messenger

Black and deep desires= sinful and secret plan of murder

Banquet= rich feast

Act I Scene V-

Missives= messengers

Lay it to thy heart= think over it seriously

Impede= prevent

Tidings= message

Tending= medical aid

Battlements= castle

Unsex me= drive away womanly feelings and sentiments from my heart

Gall= poison

Dunnest= thickest; darkest

Act I Scene VI-

Nimbly= gently

Marlet= a small household bird

Mansionary= nest

Pendent bed= hanging nest

Coursed him at the heels= followed him

Purveyor= messenger

Holp= helped

Audit= account

Graces= favours

By your leave= with your permission

Act I Scene VII-

Assassination= murder

Trammel up= close, finish

Surcease= murder, death

Be- all and the end-all= the beginning and the end of the whole affair

Even-handed justice= impartial justice

Commends= administers; brings

Ingredients= contents

Poisoned chalice= cup of poisonous liquor

Deep damnation= great crime

To look green and pale= to be afraid

Durst= dared

Wassail= drink

Quell= adventure

Mock the time= deceive the people

Act II Scene I-

Husbandry- economy

Candles= stars

In repose= in sleep

Largess= gifts; rewards

Cleave to my consent= agree with me

Augment= increase

Palpable= real

Marshallest= leads

Dudgeon= handle

Gouts= drops

Act II Scene II-

Surfeited- intoxicated

Mock their charge= neglect their duty

Possets= night drink

Confounds= ruins

Lodged together= sleeping together

Knits = closes up

Appals= frightens

Act II Scene III-

Beelzebub= first assistant of Satan

Equivocator= one who deceives by speaking in ambiguous language

Anon= just coming

Stirring= awake

Unruly= stormy

Dire combustion= fearful tumults

Sacrilegious= unholy

Gorgons= three dreadful maidens in the classical mythology. They were most monstrous who could blind the eyes of man by their ugly appearance.

Parley= meeting

Vault to brag of= to be boastful of life in this world

Auger hole= small hole

Dainty= formal; sentimental

Act II Scene IV-

Three score and ten= seventy years

Sore night= terrible night

Strangles- overtakes

Towering= soaring high in pride

Minions of their race= best of their breed

Store house= burial ground

Benison= blessings

10.3 SUMMARY AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Act I: Scene I- The play *Macbeth* begins in a desert area where the three Witches are found talking mutually. It is the weather of thunder and lighting. At a lonely heath these witches are planning to meet Macbeth, a general in the Scottish army of Duncan, the king of Scotland. The scene takes place in Scotland, Macbeth is returning from a battle having won the field. The motto of the actions of the three witches is ‘’Fair is foul, foul is fair”, they run away in the foul and foggy atmosphere.

The opening scene of *Macbeth* is highly significant and striking. It emphatically suggests the spirit of the play. *Macbeth* is a tragedy set in an awful supernatural atmosphere haunted by ghosts, witches and apparitions. The supernatural agents maliciously meddle with human affairs and lead human beings to disaster and death through sinful ways. The opening scene at once strikes this keynote of the tragedy. The scene, though brief is charged with mystery and terror. It is clear that Macbeth is going to be brought under the influence of witches. The storm symbolizes the political storm in Duncan’s kingdom and spiritual storm in Macbeth’s soul.

Act I: Scene II- The real story begins with this scene of the play. It explains the conditions and circumstances under which the play begins. It brings into light the mighty internal and external political upheavals which Scotland was facing at this time. The Thane of Cawdor threw off his allegiance to King Duncan and allied himself with Macdonwald and Sweno the King of Norway. King Duncan is anxious to meet Macbeth and Banquo and reward them for their glorious victory. Macbeth is introduced to us as a great Shakespearean tragic hero, always a great and noble warrior unconsciously possessing some little moral flaw. His valour and loyalty have been described in superlative terms. Later, he is brought into contact with the witches and the loyal hero degenerates into the murder of his sovereign.

In the first scene our interest is awakened in Macbeth, because the Witches want to get hold of him, and bring him under their power. We do not yet meet Macbeth. But here is the report of his extraordinary valour which decides the battle. There is the hint of Duncan’s blind failt in Macbeth and this is to be later the cause of his tragic fate. It should be noted that the style is epic rather than tragic.

Act I: Scene III- We again meet the witches in this scene. They are three in numbers. They are the embodiments of evil and sin. Macbeth and Banquo enter. The first witch greets Macbeth as Thane of Glamis. The second witch greets him as Thane of Cawdor. The third witch greets him as the future King of Scotland. Banquo is told that he will never become a king but his sons will become kings. Angus and Ross enter giving the news that Macbeth has been declared the Thane of Cawdor.

The Witches are waiting to meet Macbeth upon whom they are going to establish control. The question whether Macbeth was tempted by the Witches to the crime of murder. It ought to be noted here that Macbeth meets them half way. The difference in the attitude between Macbeth and Banquo towards the Witches is very conclusive. Banquo does not take the prediction of the Witches very seriously. But Macbeth as soon as part of prediction is fulfilled, begins to contemplate the next step in his imagination. The image of murder already presents itself to his mind's eye. The subtle alliance between the Witches and Macbeth is only possible because Macbeth is half drawn to the crime.

Act I Scene IV- With the opening of this scene, the action is set in motion. Macbeth has been profoundly influenced by the witches' prophecies. Therefore Shakespeare has placed Macbeth in this scene under such conditions and circumstances as further incite him and tempt him to follow the bloody path resolutely.

The scene is charged with dramatic irony. The king is hardly satisfied with the honours he has heaped upon Macbeth. There is dramatic irony in the statement by the king that there is no art to find the mind's construction in the face. It applies more to Macbeth than to Cawdor. Duncan proclaims his elder son Malcolm as the crown prince and the successor to the throne of Scotland. The change in Macbeth takes place quickly enough. His imagination which was shaken by the thought of murder, now slumbers in him. Duncan announces his intention to visit the castle of Macbeth. It was a chance not to be lost by Macbeth.

Act I Scene V- Lady Macbeth reads the letter that her husband has sent her. Macbeth gives all the details of his meeting with the witches. He also informs Lady Macbeth about the prophecies of the witches. Lady Macbeth at once makes up her mind that her husband shall be what has been predicted of him at any cost.

This scene introduces Lady Macbeth. She is a woman of iron will and tremendous energy. There is an implied contrast between Lady Macbeth and her husband. She sacrifices her womanhood to ambition. But her love for Macbeth is greater than her ambition. Her ambition is not for herself, but for her husband. She serves as an ally of the Witches. She throws herself in the scale of "fate and metaphysical aid," which would, after all, have Macbeth crowned.

Act I Scene VI- Duncan has already arrived at Macbeth's castle. He admires the castle. Next enter Lady Macbeth. Duncan graciously

addresses her and excuses himself for the trouble he is giving his hostess, though he knows that this trouble is quite welcome to her.

Though a short scene, it is charged with the deepest tragic significance. The dialogue between the King and Banquo, with which the scene opens hardly dispels the shuddering impression of the previous scene- hatching of the plot to murder the innocent and unsuspecting Duncan. The suggestion of repose is rather poignant, for as a matter of fact events are moving rapidly towards a tragedy. The dramatic irony seems to be overcharged.

Act I Scene VII- Macbeth cannot shut his eyes to the consequences of the crime. The king is so gentle and as a host, it is his duty to protect him against his murderer. Lady Macbeth lends support to her husband's plan. Macbeth now makes up his mind to do the murder.

The scene opens with Macbeth's soliloquy. His imagination seems to be suspended for a while, while his intellect rules him. Macbeth analyses the consequences of murder. All that he is afraid of at present is the retribution of the crime. Ambition is upper most in him, and seems to blunt his moral sensibilities. If he is still wavering, Lady Macbeth chides it away with the valour of her tongue.

Act II Scene I- Banquo enters with his son, Fleance, while a servant bears a torch before them. Macbeth also enters, followed by a servant with a torch. Banquo hints that he dreamt of the three weird sisters last night. Macbeth is not prepared to talk over the matter at present. When Macbeth is alone, he seems to see a phantom of a dagger before him.

It is midnight, and the moon is down, and there is little light in the heaven. Banquo has not yet gone to bed. It is strange that Macbeth should be up still. There is dramatic irony, the king greets Lady Macbeth with a diamond ring on the very eve of his murder in which Lady Macbeth is the greatest inciter. Then follows the dagger- scene. Macbeth's imagination- which hardly differs from the imagination of a poet- is awake. The murder which is going to be committed, takes a material shape. It marks a great psychological change in Macbeth. It may be a hallucination, but the dramatic interest lies in that Macbeth rehearses the murder.

Act II Scene II- The night is stormy and the sound of the owl may be heard in the dark night. Lady Macbeth mixes drug in the wine of the attendants of Duncan and sends Macbeth to murder the king. Macbeth is fearful after committing this evil deed. Lady Macbeth consoles him to be normal but Macbeth is disturbed.

It is the murder- scene. Lady Macbeth waits in tense suspense for the result of her husband's action. When Macbeth comes back from the king's chamber after murder, he is shaken with terror and confusion- his fancy is still possessed with horror of the deed. The psychological effect of the murder upon a sensitive mind and imaginative nature could not have been more powerfully and graphically portrayed than in this scene. So

Boas writes, “The scene is written with a pen of fire.” This scene, the crisis of the action, is conceived with unsurpassed intensity.

Act II Scene III- A constant knocking is heard at the door. The watchman of the gate of hell is seen on the stage. All sinners come here to get entry in the hell. He finds Macduff too on the gate of hell. He finds the king dead. Macbeth also appears and kills both the security men. Malcolm and Donalbain decide to run away from there to remain safe. Malcolm departs to England and Donalbain rides to Ireland.

Here is the scene of the discovery of murder. It opens with a short, light and ironical scene of the “Porter of hell-gate”. The porter’s scene brings us into the daylight of realities. The tragic tension needs to be relieved. If it is necessary for Macbeth and Lady Macbeth to keep their countenances for their own safety, it is as much necessary that the audience should be released from the atmosphere of tragic gloom and terror. With a true psychological insight- for a tragic scene cannot be sustained too long- Shakespeare provides this comic relief, while we are made to forget the tragic background of darkness, mystery, and terror.

Act II Scene IV-The scene opens before the castle of Macbeth. People are shocked at the death of Duncan. There is doubt about the real murderer. Some people suspect that the king was murdered by the two grooms of the king and Duncan’s sons had hired them. The dead body of Duncan was carried to Colme-kiln to bury.

This scene does not seem to advance the action of the play. This scene also looks forward to Macduff’s revolt. It lowers the tension for a moment before the second crisis. It is at best a pause-scene, and serves as a relief after concentrated tragedy of the last scene. The introduction of the Old Man serves much the same purpose as that of the chorus in Greek tragedies.

10.4 DRAMATIC DEVICES

Shakespeare's use of dramatic techniques creates a meaningful play for audiences because he uses those techniques to effectively build tension and convey themes to the audience.

Creative use of entrances and exits is a dramatic technique. In *Macbeth* Shakespeare builds tension early in the play by having the witches mysteriously appear and vanish. For example in act 1 scene 3, the witches vanish after speaking with Macbeth and Banquo. It adds a sense of mysticism to an already strange scene with great rhyming and prophecies of the future.

Asides and soliloquies are closely related, because both of them are used to indicate the inner thought processes of a character. These have been used to highlight the evil, plotting thoughts of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. In act 1 scene 5, Lady Macbeth's soliloquy is unnerving. It very

effectively shows the audience how far she is willing to go to make her husband king.

Shakespeare uses symbols to make the play more meaningful. One of the most common and repeated symbols in the entire play is blood. Blood is the symbol of the guilt that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth feel.

A fourth dramatic technique that Shakespeare uses is the off-stage technique. When events happen off-stage, an audience is forced to use imagination to fill in the gaps. Often an audience's imagination will make everything more extreme and scarier or more brutal. Duncan's murder happens off-stage. It helps to build tension, because the audience doesn't know if Macbeth is going to go through with the murder, or if Duncan woke up, or exactly how Macbeth did it. It's a very effective technique to really involve an audience.

10.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF IMPORTANT SCENES

10.5.1 THE OPENING SCENE

The opening scene is the keynote of the play. It is very significant and impressive. There is introduction of the three witches in the opening of the play. These witches appear on a heath. There was thunder and lightning. The storm is the symbol of the present convulsion in Duncan's kingdom, and of the still greater convulsion to come. This is the place for evils and for their mastery. These evil elements know about the wicked feeling of Macbeth's mind. Evil has sympathy for evil. These witches arouse Macbeth's ambition. The poet's object was to raise the mind at once to the high tragic tone. The witches, in fact, introduce that atmosphere of guilt and evil which hangs as a pall over the whole play. As the moment of their first appearance is significant, so is the scene. Thus the opening scene of the play establishes our interest in Macbeth and in supernatural element and atmosphere.

10.5.2 THE DAGGER SCENE

This scene takes place before the murder of the king. The vision of a dagger rises before Macbeth's eyes. There are different interpretations about it. Some think that it is a material appearance, while others call it a mere hallucination caused by Macbeth's heated imagination and excited brain. This is the psychological interpretation of the dagger. This is the concrete and objective representation of the fear of Macbeth. Others think it is only 'a representation of the spiritual world'. On the stage it is merely a hallucination but on the spiritual plane it is as concrete a dagger as the one Macbeth was holding in his hand. A third interpretation is that it is an instrument of the witches. This is why the dagger has its handle towards Macbeth and points towards the chamber of Duncan.

10.5.3 THE PORTER SCENE

The scene of the *Knocking at the Gate* is one of the most remarkable scenes in *Macbeth.* Usually known as the Porter- Scene, it affords an effective example of dramatic relief and irony. This is the scene of the discovery of murder. The porter of Macbeth's castle plays the role of 'the keeper of the hell- gate'. He is unconscious of the fact that he is really guarding the gate of the castle where dwell two fiends indulging in hellish deed. He gives entry to the sinners of the world. It may be a farmer or a tailor. This scene is an important source of comic relief. It is shown just before exposing Duncan's murder. This scene is necessary for the stage- action. The actor who plays Macbeth has to wash his hands and change the clothes.

10.6 SUMMING UP

The main spring of action is ambition. It is ambition in the mind of a man who finally dissociates moral principles from his action, and even suppresses his imagination and sensibilities. Ambition is the cause of his crime and degradation. Of course if Macbeth had been left to himself, he might have shrunk from crime and kept a clean man. On the one hand is the supernatural soliciting of the witches; on the other, is Lady Macbeth's tongue. Macbeth could have easily resisted the solicitation of the witches and the fatal persuasion of Lady Macbeth' s tongue if he had not been ruled by ambition. We may contrast him with Banquo; Banquo too was solicited by the witches but he repressed his ambition, and followed the path of virtue. Ambition works a havoc in the peace and happiness of Macbeth.

10.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Question-1 Write the summary of Macbeth.

Answer- See Section 10.3.

Question-2 Write the summary of Macbeth it dies.

Answer- See Section 10.3.

Question-3 Write the critical analysis of Act I.

Answer- See Section 10.3.

Question-4 Write the critical analysis of Act II.

Answer- See Section 10.3.

Question-5 Write a note on the dramatic technique used in Act I and II.

Answer- See Section 10.4.

Question-6 What is the purpose of the dramatic devices?

Answer- See Section 10.4.

Question-7 Write a brief note on the theme of battle described in Act I Scene II

Answer- See Section 10.1, 10.3.

Question-8 What was the reason of battle?

Answer- See Section 10.1, 10.3.

Question-9 Write a note on the significance of the opening scene.

Answer- See Section 10.5.1.

Question-10 Write a critical note on the dagger scene.

Answer- See Section 10.5.2.

Question-11 What is the dramatic significance of the porter- scene?

Answer- See Section 10.5.3.

Question-12 *Macbeth* has been termed a tragedy of ambition. Discuss.

Answer- See Section 10.6.

10.8 FURTHER READING

- Boas, F.S. - *Shakespeare and His Predecessors*
- Bradley, A.C.- *Shakespearean Tragedy*
- Dowden, Edward- *Shakespeare-His Mind and Art*
- Moultan, Richard- *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist.*.
- Nicoll, A.- *The British Drama.*
- Reese, M.M.- *Shakespeare*: *His World and His Work*

UNIT-11 ANALYSIS ACT III

Structure

11.0 INTRODUCTION

In Unit 11 of this block we shall discuss about the III Act of the play *Macbeth.* There is a considerable interval between Acts II and III. The long and gloomy period of Macbeth's reign must have been left between these two Acts. During this period Macbeth must have established himself well on the throne of Scotland. Yet Macbeth could gain no mental or spiritual peace during the long period of his reign. The thought that Banquo's sons, according to the witches' prediction, were to succeed on the throne of Scotland after him, awfully tortured him. He constantly thought of getting rid of both Banquo and his son Fleance. He had gone so deep into the thought of murder that no moral scruples could now shake him from planning more murders for his security. Dreadful hallucinations still haunted him but he gradually won over them. A mighty change had come in the character of Macbeth.

You will come to know about the summary and critical analysis of all the scenes of Act III of the play in 11.3. Read about the difficult words in unit 11.2. You will be familiar with the important scenes of Act III. After you have read and understood write down your answers of the questions given. Your answers should then be checked with the hints given at the end of the unit.

11.1 OBJECTIVES

There are six scenes in Act III. The two sons of Duncan being away; it becomes easy enough for Macbeth to secure the throne of Scotland, and to shift the blame to the absent sons of the King. The disillusion of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth comes sooner than they anticipated. There is already a sign of nervous breakdown in Macbeth. He is growing more violent and desperate. Again he meets the witches: their purpose towards Macbeth is revealed. They just draw him on, to his confusion, till he spurns fate, scorns death and bears his hopes above wisdom. The action of this Act takes place in Scotland. The Scenes are presented at Macbeth's castle, banquet- hall and heath. A gap of two weeks comes here between Acts II and III. All the events of this Act take place on a single day i.e. the Fourth Day.

It is impossible to fix the time of Act III, Scene vi.

At the end of your study of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss all the scenes of Act III
- appreciate about the dramatic devices in Act III
- understand the important Scenes and their significance.

11.2 REFERENCES

Act III Scene I

Weird women= witches

Promised= predicted

Stand in thy posterity= inherited by your sons

Verities= truths

Solemn supper= royal banquet

Indissoluble ties= unwavering fidelity

Knit= connected, joined

Grave and prosperous= experienced and happy

Bestowed= sheltered

Patricide= the crime of murdering their father

Sirrah= fellow, servant

Dauntless temper= fearless nature

Valour= bravery, courage

Chid= rebuked

Rancours in the vessel of my peace= disturbed the peaceful and tranquil poise of my mind

Eternal jewel= soul

Common enemy of man= Satan

Hounds= hunting dogs

Mongrels= cross-breed dogs

Spaniels= a species of dogs with thick fur

Curs= street dogs

Shoughs= dogs with rough hair

Water-rags= a species of water-dogs

Demi-wolves= a species of cross-breed dogs between wolf and dog

Incensed= incited, intoxicated

Tugged with fortune= struggling with hard luck

Sundry weighty reasons= some very important reasons

Act III Scene II

Attend his leisure= meet him at his leisure time

Naught's had, all's spent= gained nothing and lost everything

Sorriest fancies= most gloomy thought

Scotched= wounded

Poor malice= our little offence

Restless ecstasy= doubtful joy

Treason= treachery, conspiracy

Foreign levy= foreign oppressions

Sleek= calm down

With eye and tongue= with words and gestures

Lave= bathe, cloak

Vizards= mask

Full of scorpions in my mind= my mind is constantly tortured by terrible thoughts as if stung by numerous scorpions

Assailable= can be killed

Jocund= happy

Scarf= cover

Act III Scene III

Needs not our mistrust= we should not disbelieve him

Delivers our offices= describes our duties here

Direction just= correctly

Glimmers= shines

Spurs= makes haste

Gain the timely inn= to reach the inn in time

Thou mayst revenge= you may take the revenge of my death, if possible

Strike out= extinguish

Best half= better half

Act III Scene IV

Degree= titles, positions

Encounter= reply, reciprocate

Be large in mirth= enjoy freely

Dispatched= killed

Cut- throats= murderers

Founded as the rock= as firm as a rock

Casing air= surrounding atmosphere

Cabined, cribbed, confined= imprisoned, crippled and bound

Saucy= trembling, giving rude shocks

Bides= lies

Trenched gashes= deep and wide wounds

Grown serpent= Banquo

The worm= Fleance

Venom breed= grow poisonous

Vouched= offered with repeated thanks

Sweet remembrance= sweet wife, she has timely reminded him to his duty

Gory locks= bloody hair

Flaws and starts= momentary fits

Impostors to true fear= false alarms of real danger

Women's story= idle tales told by women to their children

Charnel- houses= vaults where dead bodies are buried

Monuments= graves

Crowns= heads

Muse= mock

Avaunt= disappear

Marrowless= without blood and flesh

Peers= friends

Rugged Russian bear= wild and ferocious bear of Russia

Hyrcan tiger= the tiger of Hyrcania South of the Caspian Sea

Blanche= dried up

Choughs= crows

Rooks= another species of crows

Servant feed= paid servant, paid spy

Wade= enter

Strange and self-abuse= my own excitement and hallucinations

Initiate fear= fear of a beginner in the career of guilt and crime

Young in deed= inexperienced in the career of criminal deeds

Act III Scene V

Beldams- hags, witches

Trade and traffic with Macbeth= to deal with Macbeth

Contriver= harbinger, creator

Wayward son= spoilt, wild, i.e., Macbeth is a wild man who may escape from their clutches

Spiteful and wrathful= malicious and haughty

Pit of Acheron= in classical mythology, Acheron is the name of a river in the Hades. Here it stands for a dark cave

Unto a dismal and fatal end= doing a dreadful deed

Distilled by magic sleights= charmed with magical arts

Illusion= false show

Confusion= doom

Spurn= kick, mock

Act III Scene VI

Things have strangely born

Pious rage= right indignation

Delinquents= culprits

Under his key= under his power

Broad words= frank words

Malevolence of fortune= hard strokes of fate

Free= banish

Pine for= crave, strongly wish

Cloudy messenger= gloomy messenger

You will rue the time= you will regret for the answer you have given this moment

Clog me with this answer= you send this answer through me

To hold what distance= to keep as far away as possible

Ere he come= before Macduff reaches England

Under a hand accursed= under the tyranny of Macbeth

11.3 SUMMARY AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Act III Scene I- This scene opens with Banquo's soliloquy. He now thinks that all the predictions of the witches concerning Macbeth have been fulfilled. But he suspects Macbeth to have achieved his ambition by most unfair and unscrupulous means, by treachery. He believes that the prediction of the witches about him will also come true. His soliloquy is interrupted by the entrance of Macbeth as king and Lady Macbeth as queen, accompanied by Lennox, Ross, Lords and Ladies. Both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth invite Banquo to the feast to be given that night. Banquo is going out for a ride with Fleance but promises to come back. Macbeth is ill at ease so long as Banquo lives, he also remembers the prediction of the witches about Banquo's children succeeding to the throne. Macbeth has determined to kill both father and son with the help of murderers.

The scene has a great psychological interest. Macbeth has changed much for the worse. His conscience has been stilled and even his imagination seems to have gone to sleep. He begins to feel that he can secure his crown only by heaping crime on crime. He is now rushing blindly on his fate.

ACT III Scene II- Lady Macbeth is disillusioned. Her desire has been attained but it has brought no contentment. She is worried about Macbeth because he is keeping alone, wrapt in sorry fancies. But Macbeth tells her that there can be no peace of mind until the danger is totally eliminated.

This life of suspense and uncertainty is no life at all. Lady Macbeth begs him to smooth his features, and play the genial host among his guests. He bids Lady Macbeth be merry for ere long "a deed of dreadful note" will be accomplished. He will not let her know at present what the deed is.

It is a brief encounter between Macbeth and his wife. The murder of the king has given Macbeth the throne, but no peace of mind and no sense of security. He is quite self- composed after having arranged the murder of Banquo. There can be no other policy for him now. But one thing may be noted. Macbeth is alone. The scene does not carry the action forward; it shows the change in the mental outlook of the King and Queen. Both are haunted by the nightmare of the crime- the risk and insecurity of their position.

Act III Scene III- The two murderers are joined by a third one. He has been deputed by Macbeth. The murderers get ready. As Banquo and Fleance enter with a torch, The murderers fall upon Banquo at once. Banquo bids his son fly and keep himself alive to revenge his death. So Fleance escapes.

A brief scene, but dramatically portentous, for Fleance escapes. It reveals that Macbeth's success can be but qualified success. So there can be no end to the 'fitful fever' of Macbeth's life. This scene marks the crisis in Macbeth's fortune.

Act III Scene IV- It is a room of state in the palace. The guests have assembled. Macbeth welcomes them. The murderer reports the murder of Banquo, for which he receives Macbeth's sincerest thanks. But his joy is marred when he hears that Fleance has escaped. At present he may have no fear of Fleance- but in future he may prove a great danger. Lady Macbeth reproaches her husband for his indifference to the guests. When Macbeth regrets the absence of Banquo, suddenly the ghost of Banquo appears, and sits in Macbeth's place. Macbeth addresses wild words to the ghost. The ghost is not seen by anyone. The ghost soon disappears. Macbeth bids his guests drink health and invite them to honour the absent Banquo with a pledge. The ghost appears again. Macbeth is disturbed again. The ghost vanishes again. Lady Macbeth requests the guests to let her husband alone. Macbeth is still very much excited. The ghost, he thinks, has come to demand blood. Macbeth now remembers that Macduff has not come to the feast. He has kept a spy in every house of lord. He will seek the weird sisters tomorrow.

The supernatural is managed with admirable skill. What is Macbeth's reaction to this supernatural terror (which may also be regarded as the objectification of the terror- the haunting dread of an outraged conscience)? Macbeth shakes in fear, and with his nerves taut, his gestures wild, addresses the ghost, unseen to the guests, in a speech, however, blustering, that seems to betray him. Lady Macbeth saves the situation with her marvelous tact.

Act III Scene V- The scene presents the three witches and Hecate. She is the mistress of their charms. She is not pleased because they have shown

their favour to a wayward son, spiteful and wrathful, who is self-seeking. She foretells that there Macbeth will come to know his destiny. Let the witches prepare their spells and enchantments. The result will be that Macbeth will grow desperate, and defy fate and death, will and be elated by hopes above all prudence.

It is shown that the supernatural operation has not been suspended. The witches are the agents of the devil and Macbeth is led to believe that he can secure his throne only by allying himself more with the power of evil. So now grown desperate, he seeks the witches again. This scene does not advance the action of the play. It has been supposed to be an interpolation. The metre is iambic, whereas in the witch- scenes Shakespeare uses trochees. Stage- manners in Shakespeare's day loved to interpolate such scenes, as they appealed to the groundlings.

Act III Scene VI- Lennox meets another lord. Lennox has been lately scanning Macbeth's doings. He suspects that both Duncan and Banquo had been murdered by Macbeth. He has also come to learn that Macduff lives in disgrace. The lord tells Lennox that the son of Duncan(Malcolm) lives in English court, where he has been well received by the pious Edward, and that Macduff has gone to England to seek the aid of Northumberland and Siward, with the permission of Edward, for the restoration of Duncan's heir to the throne of Scotland, and of peace and order in this distracted kingdom. Both Lennox and the lord wish success to Macduff's mission and pray for the speedy deliverance of the country from the yoke of tyranny.

If this scene does not advance the action of the play, it is something like a comment on what is going on. Macbeth's haunting fear, and sense of insecurity, drives him on to desperation. It is but the picture of the inner conflict in Macbeth. There have been whispers of suspicion about Macbeth, which seemed to have become more insistent, when the murder of Banquo follows that of Duncan. The scene also points to the counteraction that will bring about Macbeth's downfall.

11.4 DRAMATIC DEVICES

The contrast between Macbeth and Banquo is brought out in the soliloquy of Banquo in the Ist scene of IIIrd act. At each and every step it is to be noted, Macbeth's rise in this world is threatened with a fall in moral values while Banquo's integrity in uniformly sustained.

Macbeth invites Banquo to attend the feast. Banquo says "My Lord, I will not". It is prophetic. Not Banquo but his ghost keeps the appointment. There is unconscious tragic irony.

The soliloquy of Macbeth presents his fear and desperation. He is not at all happy after becoming the king because of Banquo.

In Scene II the line "Good things of day begin to droop and drowse" reveals the inner soul of the tragedy- "the tragedy of dark twilight and the setting-in of thick darkness upon a human soul."- Dowden.

The tragedy reaches its climax in III scene. The whole plot is clearly divisible into two parts with the scene of Banquo's murder at the turning point of the whole. The plot rises up to Banquo's murder and then after a momentary pause it declines to its catastrophe. The supernatural powers who have been hitherto helping him begin to turn against him.

In Scene IV "But Banquo's safe" is an instance of euphemism. There is unconscious irony, tragic and poignant, in the word 'safe', for Banquo too, ' after life's fitful fever' will sleep well, but for Macbeth there is no 'safety', haunted perpetually as he is, by suspense and fear. The ghost of Banquo marks that stage when Macbeth not only sees but also believes to what he imagines. If the ghost is nothing but an objectification of his terrorized conscience, it may be shown how his morbidity develops.

Scene V is a witch- scene. Having won Macbeth ''with honest trifles'', they now prepare to betray him "in deepest consequence" by giving him false assurances of safety and security. Macbeth plunges himself headlong into the pool of blood and meets his doom.

In scene VI 'Merry he was dead' is an ironical line. Ironically Lennox says that Banquo died and Macbeth deeply lamented his death. Lennox again says ironically that Banquo must have been killed by his son Fleance because he fled away after his father's death. The ironical reference is to Macbeth's inference that Malcolm and Donalbain must have killed Duncan because they fled away after the discovery of the murder. There is double- edged irony in the remark "How did it grieve Macbeth". The murder of Duncan would have grieved his two sons, but it was left to Macbeth to mourn Duncan's fate so grieviously, when he profited most by it.

11.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF IMPORTANT SCENES

11.5.1 THE BANQUET SCENE

This is the scene in which the ghost of Banquo appears. Like a good diplomat, Macbeth holds a royal feast soon after his coronation and invites all the thanes and nobles to it. All the nobles gather freely round the court of the usurping king and pledge indissoluble ties to him. Macduff alone openly declines the invitation of the king. Banquo keeps his promise to attend the feast- coming in spectral form and shaking his gory locks at the murderer- which so convulses Macbeth's soul that he betrays his guilt before all his guests. Macbeth claims him to be a valiant and challenges the ghost to encounter with him with sword. The ghost disappears, Macbeth again requests the guest that he has become normal; so they

should be seated. Macbeth is fearful. Everyone goes from the feast leaving Macbeth and his wife behind.

11.5.2 THE WITCH SCENE (SCENE 5)

This scene mainly serves to increase the suspense and establish a mood of darkness and violence. Hecate scolds the three weird sisters for messing with Macbeth. This scene foreshadows later trouble for Macbeth. It provides a link between the first part of the play and what we shall soon find are the true consequences of that initial meeting. Macbeth will soon learn what it is to indulge the powers of evil. His doom is surely sealed. This scene accentuates the depth the witches' perfidy and their utter confidence that Macbeth will allow himself to be misled and used to fulfill their purpose.

11.6 SUMMING UP

Having begun with murder, Macbeth cannot stop, and his degeneration is swift and terrible; he becomes filled with blood lust; and , in his madness, he even challenges fate itself into the lists to fight to the finish. Banquo is murdered, and, inevitably, Fleance escapes. Natural allies desert Macbeth, and now he has only the witches to support him; they have cheated him once. *Macbeth* is not only a tragedy of crime, but of crime which has no motive but vulgar ambition, and is in all its circumstances mean.

11.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Question-1 What is the gap of time between Act II and Act III?

Answer- See Section 11.3.

Question-2 Why did Macbeth want to kill Banquo and his son?

Answer- See Section 11.3.

Question- 3 Why did Macbeth think the crown fruitless?

Answer- See Section 11.2 and Section 11.3.

Question-4 Why did Macbeth think the sceptre barren?

Answer- See Section 11.2 and Section 11.3.

Question-5 Being the king of Scotland Macbeth is not happy, why?

Answer- See Section 11.3.

Question- 6 Write a note on Banquo's ghost?

Answer- See Section 11.3 and Section 11.5.1.

Question-7 What is the dramatic significance of Banquet scene?

Answer- See Section 11.3 and Section 11.5.1.

Question-8 Why is Macbeth fearful of Banquo?

Answer- See Section 11.3.

Question-9 Why was Lady Macbeth fearful and depressed?

Answer- See Section 11.3.

Question-10 What was the prophecy of witches about Banquo?

Answer- See Section 11.0, Section 11.1 and Section 11.3.

11.8 FURTHER READING

- Boas, F.S. - *Shakespeare and His Predecessors*
- Bradley, A.C.- *Shakespearean Tragedy*
- Dowden, Edward- *Shakespeare-His Mind and Art*
- Moultan, Richard- *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist.*.
- Nicoll, A.- *The British Drama.*
- Reese, M.M.- *Shakespeare*: *His World and His Work*

UNIT-12 ANALYSIS ACT IV & V

Structure

12.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we shall discuss about two Acts i.e. Act IV and Act V. Theatrically a stirring scene is imperatively demanded to sustain the Fourth Act. Dramatically, the reappearance of the witches marks the beginning of the reaction. Now Macbeth is completely in the power of the witches. They can now play on his credulity in any way they please. Now Macbeth goes from his own side to seek their advice regarding the future course of action. His first interview with the witches lured him on to his first crime; the second interview confirms him in his career of crimes.

You will come to know about the summary and critical analysis of all the scenes of both the Acts of the play in 12.3. Read about the difficult words in unit 12.2. You will be familiar with the important scenes of Act IV and V in unit 12.5. After you have read and understood write down your answers of the questions given. Your answers should then be checked with the hints given at the end of the unit.

12.1 OBJECTIVES

There are 3 Scenes in Act IV and 8 Scenes in Act V. The third crime is resolved upon and carried out immediately, Macbeth feels remorse in committing the crime. The action of the IV Act is often slow as if it precedes the storm. We are removed from the disturbance of Scotland to the quiet of the English court. Macduff's family is wiped out, leading to wholesale slaughters throughout the country. In the last Act Macbeth, the

tyrant, is punished on the battlefield as he punished other rebels in the opening scene. The action ends with ironic note which is also tragic. Scene I of Act IV take place the day after the banquet. It begins with fifth day.

-Fifth Day-

Act IV, Scene I.

There is the gap of about two days between the fifth and sixth days.

-Sixth Day-

Act IV Scene II.

After this there is an interval of about two weeks, in order to enable Ross to make his journey to England.

-Seventh Day-

Act IV, Scene III, and Act V, Scene I.

There is an interval of about three weeks to allow Malcolm to march to Scotland with English troops.

-Eighth Day-

Act V, Scene II and III

-Ninth Day-

Act V, Scenes IV to VIII

After you finished the study of this unit you will be able to

- analyse Act IV and Act V.
- understand the important scenes.
- Know about the dramatic devices in these Acts.

12.2 REFERENCES

Act IV, Scene-I

Thrice and once= four times

Whined= cried out

Cauldron= large boiling vessel

Poison'd entrails= the intestines of a poisoned animal

Charmed pot= magic cauldron

Fillet= slice

Newt= water lizard

Adder= viper

Conjure= abjure

Lion-mettled= as brave as the lion

Pernicious= wicked

Act IV Scene II

Most diminutive= tiniest
Coz= contraction of cousin
Gin= snare
Homely= humble
Abide= stay here
Laudable= praise worthy
Fry of treachery= offspring of a traitor

Act IV Scene III

Appease= propitiate
Transpose= transmute
In that rawness= in such thoughtless haste
Sundry= numerous
Avaricious= greedy
Malicious= violent
Voluptuousness= licentiousness
Sauce= provocative
Foisons= plentiful harvest
Verity= truthfulness
Blaspheme= slander
Black scruples= suspicion and treachery
Coveted= longed for
Betimes= early
Hell- kite= a person of hellish cruelty
Braggart= bluster

Act V, Scene I

Guise= manner
Accustomed= customary
Murky= dismally dark

Act V, Scene II

Power= forces
Well= suitably
Valiant fury= desperate courage
Pester'd= constantly troubled

Act V, Scene III

Taint= become infected
Sag= droop
Cream-faced= pale with fear
Loon= stupid fellow

Sear= withered state

Cleanse= purify

Weighs upon= crushes

Rhubard= a drug used as purgative

Senna= another drug used as purgative

Bane= destruction

Act V, Scene IV

Hew= cut

Shadow= conceal

Attend= await

Act V, Scene V

Famine= starvation

Ague= a kind of malarial fever

Dareful= defiantly

Beard to beard= face to face

Direness= horrors

Avouches= declares

Act V, Scene VI

Leavy= full of leaves

Clamorous= noisy

Order= plan of battle

Act V, Scene VII

Abhorred= detestable

Clatter= noise

Staves= quarter staffs; clubs

Bruited= noisily heralded

Act V, Scene VIII

Charged= burdened

Terms= language

Ripp'd= torn out

Prowess= physical strength

Front= forehead

Knoll= funeral bell

Producing forth= bringing to justice

12.3 SUMMARY AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Act IV Scene I- The witches are preparing to meet Macbeth. All the different ingredients of their charm are thrown into the cauldron. They are

boiled to prepare the charm. Macbeth now enters and addresses the witches, demanding that they should answer his questions. First rises the apparition of an armed head. It warns Macbeth against Macduff. Next rises the apparition of a bloody child. It prophesies that Macbeth has nothing to fear from one born of woman. The third apparition is a child crowned with a tree in his hand. It prophesies that Macbeth will never be defeated until great Birnam wood comes to high Dunsinane hill. Yet he is anxious to know about Banquo's issues. Last appears a shadowy procession of eight kings- Banquo's ghost following.

The connection between Macbeth and the powers of evil is renewed and emphasized. There is evidence of the changed order of things. The witches, like fate, are now drawing Macbeth to his doom.

Act IV Scene II- Ross has come to tell Lady Macduff that her husband has left for England. In any case his action cannot be defended as sensible when he has left his wife and children, his mansion and his estate in a place where he does not consider himself to be safe. Now follows a dialogue between Lady Macduff and her young son. The murderers enter and kill Macduff's son. Lady Macduff is pursued by the murederers.

This scene offers a welcome relief from the awful supernatural atmosphere. The only dramatic motif that we can assign for Macduff's departure for England is to give an opportunity to Macbeth to reveal his further degradation- in his delight in wanton cruelty. The scene invites the doom.

Act IV Scene III- Macduff on coming to England, has an interview with Malcolm. At first Malcolm is distrustful of Macduff. Later on Malcolm is convinced by Macduff's sincere emotion. In fact he has to be cautious before he trusts anybody, for Macbeth has tried to entrap him many a time. Malcolm informs Macduff that old Siward, as the head of ten thousand men, is ready to set forth against Scotland. Ross comes and breaks the news of the murder of Lady Macduff and her children. Malcolm restrains his grief, and only prays that he may meet Macbeth face to face in the battlefield.

It is rather a long, and, in the beginning, a tedious scene. It marks the pause before the storm. Macduff's mission to Malcolm costs him his wife and children, and his only comfort is that he will take revenge .With the entrance of Ross the scene becomes quite enlivened. Again we are reminded that Macbeth cannot carry on long, and that his doom is drawing near.

Act V Scene I- The scene takes place several days after the last. Lady Macbeth has been troubled in her sleep. She has been walking in sleep. The Doctor has heard of whisphered rumours of murder, which seems to be confined by Lady Macbeth's involuntary words.

How Lady Macbeth wished to unsex herself when planning the murder of Duncan! But she keeps a woman till the end, and for a woman the burden of guilt and remorse has been too much to bear. Her sleep-walking is

nothing but a resurgence of these memories of crimes into full consciousness.

Act V Scene II- Some of the rebel nobles assemble, waiting to join Malcolm and the English army he is leading. They decide to meet them near Birnam wood. In the meantime Macbeth is fortifying Dunsinane.

It is a scene revealing the internal condition of Scotland- the reaction that began early, and has now come to a head.

Act V Scene III- Macbeth is quite sick of the report of the desertion of his thanes. But he has nothing to fear until Birnam wood moves to Dunsinane.

The scene brings the danger nearer and nearer to Macbeth. The most tragic thing is not his fear of personal danger, but his sense of loneliness- the loneliness into which he has been forced by crime.

Act V Scene IV- This scene marks the beginning of catastrophe. The English, led Malcolm, Old Siward and his son, etc. now approach Birnam wood. Malcolm bids every soldier cut down a branch and carry it before him, so that the actual numbers of the army will be exaggerated.

Macbeth still clings to the hope that he has nothing to fear until Birnam wood moves to Dunsinane. But the impossible is made possible by Malcolm's command.

Act V Scene V- Macbeth now stands on last steps of the world, the life and the time, trembling at that where he had stood before. He orders flags to be hung out from the outward walls of the fortress. Macbeth is confident that the castle's strength will be able to resist a siege. Seyton enters with the news that the queen is dead. He gets another message that the Birnam wood began to move. He decides to meet the enemy in the open.

Spiritually Macbeth is dead, his imagination being atrophied, his sensibilities having perished- and he is now a mere husk of what he was. No other event could have brought it so vividly before us than the apathy of Macbeth when he hears of his wife's death.

Act V Scene VI- As the combined English and Scottish armies draw near, Malcolm assumes their leadership. He bids them throw down the boughs of trees which have concealed their actual numbers till now. Siward and his son are to lead the first line; Macduff and Malcolm will lead the second.

It is a brief scene, concerned with the disposition of the army. It is quite evident that Malcolm is the acknowledge leader. He uses the royal 'we'; that means he is so confident of victory.

Act V Scene VII- Macbeth finds himself in a desperate strait. He cannot take refuge in flight, but must have to face the enemy. Macbeth kills Siward. Macduff is ready to take revenge against Macbeth. Macbeth

passes on following the noise. Then enter Malcolm and old Siward. By this time the castle has surrendered. The victory is almost Malcolm's.

The scene depicts the encounter between two forces. Macbeth has left the protection of the castle, and came forth to meet his enemy. He realises how desperate his position is.

Act V Scene VIII- Macbeth is stunned to hear that Macduff was untimely ripped from his mother's womb. He curses the evil spirits,that could betray the mortals with such equivocation. He throws his shield before his body; and then invites Macduff to lay on. After the battle is over some people are missing. Young Siward is one of them. Macduff enters with Macbeth's head. Macduff greets Malcolm as king. Malcolm gives thanks to all and everybody who had stood by him, and secured the victory for him.

In the last scene, in which Macbeth meets his doom, there is again human touch in his character. Our sympathies seem to be partially restored to Macbeth in his dying moment.

12.4 DRAMATIC DEVICES

The supernatural rituals appear nauseating on the modern stage but to the Elizabethan audience it was full of topical references which they could not set aside as incredible. Now, the apparitions conjured up by their magic, do urge Macbeth to be bloody, bold and resolute.

Macbeth's last soliloquy comes a little before his final overthrow in the battlefield. All his hopes have been shattered. He gets neither love nor respect, neither obedience nor loyalty. Instead, he is held in contempt, hatred, and disrespect by everybody.

There is a sort of relief in the second scene of Act IV- a relief charged with the most poignant pathos and irony. The innocent prattle of Macduff's young son, who is unsuspecting of any danger, is a master-stroke of irony, for it is immediately followed by the atrocious murder of mother and son.

The weird sisters prophesied that nobody of woman born can kill Macbeth. He meets irony of fate that Macduff got premature birth from his mother's womb and Macbeth is killed. Fate, to Macbeth had store of opposites that Malcolm told his soldiers to cover them with the branches of trees taken from the Birnam wood.

12.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF IMPORTANT SCENES

12.5.1 THE CAVERN SCENE

In a dark cavern, a bubbling cauldron hisses and spits, and the three witches suddenly appear on the stage. It is where Macbeth draws all

the wrong conclusions. He should learn that Banquo's issue will become kings and not his. Moreover he hears that he should fear Macduff. Nevertheless he disregards that warning since he doesn't have to fear anyone born from a woman and needn't fear anything until the forest comes knocking at the castle gates.

12.5.2 THE SLEEP- WALKING SCENE

This famous scene is one of the most moving tragic scenes in English drama. Lady Macbeth suffers terribly and she suffers inwardly because she has violently repressed her feelings and emotions within herself. The canker of guilt and remorse has silently eaten up all her energy and vitality. In this scene, we get a glimpse of the real character of Lady Macbeth who so far lay concealed behind the 'assumed mass of hardness and cruelty'. She breaks down in her struggle with conscience and pours out her soul in the broken words.

The scene affords a deep study in the psychology of a sinful mind. It has a moral interpretation of its own. Lady Macbeth would not reveal those guilty secrets for all the wealth of the world, but in the awful war which is raging in her breast, her will is helpless. Her feet, her hands, her lips conspire against her. Shakespeare has thus laid bare the heart of Lady Macbeth. We know not whether to hate her or pity her.

12.5.3 THE SCENE OF PHILOSOPHICAL VIEW

In Act V Scene V we can see Shakespeare's view about life. Here is the philosophy of Macbeth who has now realized the futility of all boastful thoughts and criminal deeds in the life of man. Human life passes out from day to day. The last moment of an individual's life is thus gradually and imperceptibly reached. The last entry is recorded in heaven in the Book of Life and then the man ceases to live. Thus, all the days gone by have constantly led man on to the path of death when finally he creeps into his dusty grave. The human body merges into dust of which it is made. Human life is as transitory and insecure as a candle which can be blown off by a little whistle of breath. Human life is as insubstantial and unreal as a shadow moving about in the world. Man is like an actor on the stage of this world and plays his part during the short span of his life. Human life is full of idle boastings and pompous actions which are all futile and insignificant. It is full of futile words and action resulting in nothing.

12.6 SUMMING UP

Macbeth fights desperately and dies bravely. His death leaves an impression of pity and sympathy for this usurping tyrant and his fiendlike queen. Even when we condemn his actions and villainy, we feel pity for this unfortunate and helpless man. Shakespearean tragedy, as a rule, leaves

a medley of deep impressions at the fall of the curtain- hatred for the evil deeds of the hero; pity for his helplessness and irrevocable doom; admiration for his nobility and greatness and promise for better things to come. All these impressions are left on our mind clearly and deeply at the death of the hero. When Macbeth dies, we are unconsciously tempted to pronounce, "What a piece of work is man!"

Eight Kings are Robert II (1371-1390); Robert III (1390-1406); James (1424-1437); James II (1437-1460); James III (1460- 1488); James IV (1488-1513); James V (1513-1542); James VI (1567-1625) who becomes James I of England. Mary Queen of Scots, the mother of the last, reigned from 1542 to 1567.

12.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Question-1 Write the summary of Act IV.

Answer-1 See Section 12.3.

Question-2 Write the summary of Act V.

Answer-2 See Section 12.3.

Question-3 Write a note on the time span of Act IV .and Act V.

Answer-3 See Section 12.1.

Question-4 Write a note on the time span of Act V.

Answer-4 See Section 12.1.

Question-5 What did the witches show to Macbeth?

Answer-5 See Section 12.3.

Question-6 Describe briefly about the sleep- walking scene.

Answer-6 See Section 12.5.2.

Question-7 Describe about the cavern- scene.

Answer-7 See Section 12.5.1.

Question-8 What is the view of life presented by the dramatist?

Answer-8 See Section 12.5.3.

12.8 FURTHER READING

- Boas, F.S. - *Shakespeare and His Predecessors*
- Bradley, A.C.- *Shakespearean Tragedy*
- Dowden, Edward- *Shakespeare-His Mind and Art*

- Moultan, Richard- *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist*..
- Nicoll, A.- *The British Drama.*
- Reese, M.M.- *Shakespeare*: *His World and His Work*

UNIT-13 CHARACTERISATION AND TECHNIQUE

Structure

13.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we shall discuss about Shakespeare's art of characterization and his important techniques being used in his play Macbeth. His great characters are men and women of strong individuality. In characterization, Shakespeare is unrivalled in literature. He displays a profound understanding of human psychology and each character has an extremely individual personality. He has used many dramatic techniques to make this play interesting. Some techniques are traditional but some are the result of his literary experiment.

You should read about the development of the character sketch of Macbeth and other important characters of the play *Macbeth.* You should also read about the dramatic devices being used by Shakespeare in this play. After you have read and understood the unit, write down the answers to the exercises. Your answers should be checked with the hints provided at the last of the unit.

13.1 OBJECTIVES

Shakespeare's characters have a permanent hold on the human mind. No other dramatist grips our attention in the range of characterization as Shakespeare does. He is matchless in the use of dramatic art also. He has used these techniques for the first time in his plays. His is a pure artist and he takes care of the joy of his audience. After reading this unit you will be able to:

- describe about the tragic hero of the play
- appreciate about the dramatic devices used in *Macbeth*
- understand about the art of characterization in this play

13.2 ART OF CHARACTERISATION

Shakespeare's characters are real life-like and are not only puppets. Macbeth is the central character who plays leading role in *Macbeth.* The tragedy of *Macbeth* would be impossible without Lady Macbeth. There are some more characters, equally important for the development of the plot like Duncan, Banquo, Macduff etc.

13.2.1 MACBETH

Macbeth is one of the most perfect and most complex heroes of Shakespeare. Usually Shakespeare's heroes bear only heroic qualities and villains cross the borders of villainy but Macbeth is the only character bearing the qualities of both. In him, we find the most pathetic example of a great man of power, nobility, strength and courage ruined through the existence of a trifling inherent weakness brought into contact with the special hostile circumstances calculated to defeat him.

Macbeth is a man of indefatigable courage and formidable valour. At the beginning of the play, he is found returning from war against Norway. He is loved and appreciated by everybody, including the king Duncan. The valour and courage of a man is not to be judged with what dangers he has encountered but with what attitude of mind he has approached them.

A very important feature of Macbeth's character is his inordinate ambition. He had the ambition to wear the crown of Scotland. In fact this is his tragic trait which ultimately brings about his doom.

Yet in spite of this vaulting ambition Macbeth is weak of will. It is owing to this weakness he falls an easy prey to the prophecies of the witches and to the criminal incitement of his wife. He has no power to oppose the sinful temptations rising in his heart in spite of all his conscience and sense of moral gratitude.

Another weakness in Macbeth is that he is superstitious. He accepts the prophecies of the witches as truths. He takes their words as gospel truths and follows their advice every syllable. In fact Macbeth, suffers all the tortures and agonies within his mind and heart on account of his superstitious nature. He trembles awfully at the sight of the ghost of Banquo.

The most redeeming feature of Macbeth's character is his glowing imagination and lively conscience. When the murder is done, he goes mad with horror. Although he murders the king, slaughters Macduff's wife and children, butchers Banquo and revels in bloodshed, yet the forces of moral and spiritual life do not wholly die in him.

After the murder of Duncan there is a steady decline and degeneration in Macbeth in spite of all the restraining forces of conscience. His end solemnly reminds us of the truth of the saying that the corruption of the best is of all things worst.

13.2.2 LADY MACBETH

The eminence which Macbeth enjoys among the tragic heroes of Shakespeare, Lady Macbeth enjoys among the heroines. Her character is full of grandeur, strength and awe. She is complementary to her husband and helps in making the tragedy full and complete.

Lady Macbeth is as ambitious as her husband. She strains herself so much that her feminine nerves break down and she suffers the tortures of hell even while she lives.

Lady Macbeth excels even her husband in her strength of will, determination and resourcefulness. No sense of morality, gratitude or compassion can deter her from striving to achieve her goal.

Lady Macbeth is highly resourceful. She is tactful and does not lose her mental equilibrium even in the most critical situations. She is a woman of very practical wisdom.

Yet she is essentially a woman possessing the essential feminine nature. She cannot wholly discard her feminine weakness in spite of her devilish will and unwavering determination. Every scene of the murder has gone deep in her mind and heart.

Her conscience, though much banquished and long suppressed, is not quite killed in her. She repents her folly after the deed has been done. She becomes the Queen of Scotland, yet can enjoy neither happiness nor peace in life.

She has been called as the ‘fourth witch’. But she is not quite inhuman. She deliberately tries to counteract all feelings of pity and remorse in a state of abnormal excitability. In spite of all her vicious deeds, we pity her.

13.2.3 BANQUO

Macbeth and Banquo are to an extent complementary to each other in revealing each other’s character. Banquo is a mighty warrior and fearless hero. He wins equal laurels in quelling the rebellion by the Thane of Cawder. He is usually supposed to be very gentle, innocent and noble. But the truth is that in him, too, germs of guilt and ambition lay latent. He displays rare virtues of restraint and tactfulness after the murder of Duncan. He could have revealed the mystery of the king’s murder but he held his tongue. Banquo begins as a noble and virtuous man, a faithful general and formidable warrior. But germs of evil and guilt penetrate into his heart.

13.2.4 MACDUFF

Macduff is a virtuous man, noble patriot, affectionate husband, and a brave warrior. He is quite free from the lust for power, from the germs of sin and vice and from covetous ambition which haunted his rivals Macbeth and Banquo.

The most notable trait in the character of Macduff is his glowing and active patriotism. He flies from the country and directs all his efforts in England to persuade Malcolm to collect an army and regain his rightful throne by defeating Macbeth on the battlefield.

He greatly loved his wife and children. He was mortally grieved at the news of his wife and children. He is ready to take revenge of the murder of his family.

Macduff is above all a great and fearless warrior. He is a man of action. He kills Macbeth on the battlefield and pays back his debt to the Motherland. Macduff is the only man whose suffering has been portrayed as no less keen than Macbeth’s; the scene where he is told of the death of his wife and little one is exceptionally pathetic, his agony and the manful efforts he makes to bear it arouse both pity and admiration.

He is represented throughout as noble, courageous and absolutely incorruptible; the only man Macbeth’s equal in bravery, the only one, who on account of his nobility and suffering, could draw our sympathy from the hero in single combat.

13.3 TECHNIQUES

Shakespeare has used various techniques in *Macbeth* to make it interesting. Some of these can be defined from classical rules but some are

the experiments of the dramatist as per the demand of the public of Elizabethan time.

13.3.1 IMAGERY

In Shakespeare's plays, images play a very important part in telling us more about characters and issues without actually saying it in words. Macbeth's speeches are full of images taken from the animal kingdom. Many interpretations are possible. It gives us a picture of Macbeth as a 'natural animal' who chaffs under the yoke of civilised laws. May be in Macbeth's world the laws of the jungle prevail. Other image clusters in the play are: food and feasting images; clothes imagery; images of geological disruptions (earthquakes, fires etc.) and nature imagery. All that was natural and orderly was good, while all that was unnatural and chaotic was evil.

13.3.2 DRAMATIC IRONY

Dramatic irony is a literary device employed for heightening the tragic effect. *Macbeth* displays not only irony of words but also irony of action. The irony of speech is even more poignant. The very opening words of Macbeth, "So foul and fair a day I have not seen" are ironical in as much as they recall the first words of the witches, "Fair is foul and foul is fair" This establishes a kind of spiritual analogy between Macbeth and the witches. Duncan did not know that he was going to be slaughtered in the same "pleasant seat". After the murder of Duncan, Lady Macbeth lightly says "A little water clears us of this deed". These words remind the intense sleep-walking scene when she painfully heaves out, "all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand." The plot is throughout full of irony of action.

13.3.3 TRAGIC CONFLICT

'Conflict' is an important part of Shakespearean tragedy. Conflict may be of two types (i) external, and (ii) internal. In *Macbeth*, both types of conflicts are present. External conflict is the conflict of hero with external characters as there is external conflict between Macbeth and Malcolm and Macduff etc. This conflict is common and may be found throughout the action of the plot. The internal conflict is more important and effective which goes on in the mind and heart of the hero himself. The imaginations, ambition, aspirations, power conscience all are created by internal conflict. Macbeth is confused by two opposite forces of ambition and imagination. Inner conflict is a psychological conflict which comes from mental agitation and mental conflict.

13.3.4 SOLILOQUY

Without soliloquy the inner or the spiritual tragedy, which produces the real tragic effect, cannot be expressed. Shakespeare uses the

device very effectively for the same purpose. Macbeth's first soliloquy comes immediately after his meeting with the three witches. He finds himself in acute mental torture. The thought of murder shatters his mind and nerves. In the opening lines of Scene VII, Act I Macbeth's heart is torn between guilt and pricks of conscience, between loyalty and ingratitude, and between present fears and future consequences of the deed of murder. In the last soliloquy he has been completely disillusioned. All his hopes have been shattered. Lady Macbeth also speaks a few soliloquies. These reveal that she is a monster in the human shape. The sinful purpose of Banquo finds clear expression in his soliloquy. He knows that Macbeth had killed the king, but he holds his tongue on purpose. Thus soliloquies reveal the innermost working of the minds of the characters. They constitute a kind of spiritual autobiography. Without them the character's inner personality would remain closed to us.

13.3.5 POETIC JUSTICE

In *Macbeth* we find as much poetic justice as is possible in reference of tragedy. Lady Macbeth becomes victim of her guilt. Macbeth and his wife plot to kill Duncan. After it he kills the two grooms. We feel indignation at it that he is crossing the border of all morals. He could not check himself here and kills Banquo. It seems a relief to the audience when Macbeth is seen like a mad person on the feast and his wife announces him under fit. The most pathetic situation of his villainy is seen in the brutal murders of innocent wife, child and servants of Macduff. Every reader feels at the climax of indignation and wishes a fall for Macbeth. Shakespeare fully observes the principle of poetic justice. The hero and the heroine are justly punished for the most heinous crimes they have committed. They shed blood of others and therefore their own blood is shed.

13.3.6 COMIC RELIEF

Comic relief or dramatic relief is used to give some comfort to the tense emotions of readers. These devices reduce the tragic intensity. Shakespeare has made an effective use of comic relief in *Macbeth*. The serious tone starts from the very beginning. The existence of witches, their prophecies for Macbeth, the plan of murder, all these are the serious and horrible scenes but Shakespeare gives a coldness to the mind of readers by the description of the beauty of nature. The Porter Scene is an important source of comic relief. It is shown just before the exposing Duncan's murder. The dramatist provides the relief to the strained nerves of the audience, makes them fresh and be ready for the more horrible scenes.

13.3.7 SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS

The supernatural element dominates the action, but it is subordinated to human character. The prophecy of the weird sisters

awakens only the criminal ambition lurking in the heart of hero who at once becomes wrapped in thought, his will being paralysed by the monstrous image of murder which rises before the eye of his mind. He decides to wait and see the will of destiny work out its own way. The prophecy about the children of Banquo does not affect him so long as he remains heart- whole. It is only after the fulfillment of the prophecy regarding Macbeth becomes real, Macbeth starts worrying about Banquo's issues.

13.4 SUMMING UP

Finally, in a play like *Macbeth,* the story of which is a popular legend known to the audience, the focus is not on what happens, but on how it happens. His dramas are a great river of life and beauty. All who thirst for art or truth, can stop to drink from its water. Shakespeare takes us into the minds of his characters and reveals to us the eternal conflict between violent emotions that goes on within the minds of men.

13.5 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Question-1 'Macbeth is the central figure in *Macbeth',* illustrate.

Answer- See Section 13.2.1.

Question-2 Describe about the character of Lady Macbeth.

Answer- See Section 13.2.2.

Question-3 Describe the character of Banquo briefly.

Answer- See Section 13.2.3.

Question-4 Write the character sketch of Macduff.

Answer- See Section 13.2.4.

Question-5 Write a brief note on the use of Imagery in *Macbeth*

Answer- See Section 13.3.1.

Question-6 What is dramatic irony? Give examples.

Answer- See Section 13.3.2.

Question-7 Write a short note on Tragic conflict.

Answer- See Section 13.3.3.

Question-8 Comment on the use of Soliloquy in *Macbeth*.

Answer- See Section 13.3.4.

Question-9 Write a note on Poetic Justice in *Macbeth*.

Answer- See Section 13.3.5.

Question-10 Write a short note on the use of Comic relief.

Answer- See Section 13.3.6.

13.6 FURTHER READING

- Boas, F.S. - *Shakespeare and His Predecessors*
- Bradley, A.C.- *Shakespearean Tragedy*
- Dowden, Edward- *Shakespeare-His Mind and Art*
- Moultan, Richard- *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist*..
- Nicoll, A.- *The British Drama.*
- Reese, M.M.- *Shakespeare*: *His World and His Work*

UNIT-14 ANNOTATIONS : IMPORTANT PASSAGES

Structure

14.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous units of this Block you have read about all the important aspects about the playwright and the play. You have read about Shakespeare's life and his works. You have also read about *Macbeth* through all important angles. Shakespeare is basically an artist and he has no axe to grind. In a play there is limitation for the dramatist, what he wants to say his characters are his mouthpiece. Shakespeare is sometimes so serious that he presents the whole philosophy of life in these dialogues. His soliloquies are full of psychological aspects and also express the inner conflict of the characters.

14.1 OBJECTIVES

In this unit you will read about the interpretation of the important lines extracted from *Macbeth.* Out of these quotations some are very popular and full of the practical knowledge of Shakespeare. These dialogues and soliloquies show the development of the character and also lead the plot. They also express the inner and outer personality of the various types of characters. After reading this unit you will be able to:

- describe about the important paragraphs
- appreciate about the beauty of the language used in *Macbeth*

- interpret the lines taken from all the scenes of all the acts.

14.2 ACT-I

(1) *Fair is foul and foul is fair:*

Hover through the fog and filthy air. (Act I Scene I)

Reference to the context- These lines occur in the first Scene of the first Act in Shakespeare's famous tragedy *Macbeth*. These lines depict the motto of the play. We come to know that the play is going to narrate the villainy, melodrama and mischief. The whole of the atmosphere of the play has been ruined by the activities of the three witches that spoke the above statement.

This line has double meaning. In the ordinary meaning, the witches mean to say that to them foul stormy and gloomy atmosphere is good and pleasant sunshine bad. They revel in foggy and filthy air. The second and more significant meaning is that the witches are associated with evil and sin. They hate everything which is fair, noble and virtuous. And they love everything which is foul, sinful and wicked. This is the creed of these witches. This was also the creed of Satan who exclaimed after his fall, "Evil, be thou my God."

It has a symbolical meaning: the witches cannot have anything to do with what is good: evil is the very element of their existence-they will even turn good into evil.

(2) *Doubtful it stood;*

As two spent swimmers, that do cling together

And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald,

Worthy to be a rebel, for to that

The multiplying villainies of nature

Do swarm upon him, from the western isles

Of kerns and gallowglasses is supplied;

And fortune, on his damned quarrel smiling,

Show'd like a rebel's whore.

(Act I Scene II)

The Sergeant is describing the battle as it stood at the time he left it. The result seemed to be doubtful then. Neither army had the advantage of the other. They were fighting at close quarters, and were quite exhausted. They could show little of their skill or ability. Each side was fighting desperately. The position was not

unlike that of two competing swimmers, who when quite exhausted, clasp each other, and both run the risk of being drowned.

The sergeant tells about the defeat and death of Macdonwald. He was wicked, quite vicious enough to take part of a rebel. There was no end to the villainies with which he was burdened. He was supplied with light armed foot soldiers and heavy-armed horse soldiers from the western isles. And fortune seemed to have favoured his wicked cause. In fact fortune seemed to be acting as his mistress.

Macbeth is the central character. The lines speak of the heroic nature. Hyperbole has been used. The language is high-flown.

(3) *As whence the sun' gins his reflection*

Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break,

So from that spring whence comfort seem'd to come

Discomfort swells.

(Act I Scene II)

Macbeth is represented here as a loyal and brave general of Duncan.

The Sergeant points out how the death of Macdonwald became the starting- point of fresh danger. It is true that the sun rises daily in the east and is a welcome sight. From the east again come storms that destroy ships at sea, and from the east break the dreadful thunder-storms. Similarly, though the slaying of Macdonwald by Macbeth, opened the chance of victory; it was also the occasion of a violent attack on Macbeth and his followers.

The sudden reversal of the fortunes of the warriors is here compared with the unnatural phenomena of storms breaking over a scene where spring seems to bring sunshine and joy. The simile and the imagery employed by sergeant is very appropriate.

(4) *But 't is strange*

And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,

The instruments of darkness tell us truths,

Win us with honest trifles, to betray's

In deepest consequence.

(Act I Scene III)

Banquo is an honest and noble person. He rightly considers the witches as the agents of Satan. So he says that very often the witches win our confidence by correctly predicting about little

truths. Through this confidence they lead man to his utter ruin. They deceive and desert man in critical moments of grave importance to fall in utter destruction.

This is Banquo's view of the partial fulfillment of the prophecy of the Witches. It surpasses his understanding how part of the prophecies of the Witches came out true. While he seems to ponder over it, an explanation suggests itself to him. Banquo gets confused about the good or evil of the words of supernatural beings like the Witches. Banquo is indifferent to the predictions made by the Witches.

(5) *Present fears*

Are less than horrible imaginings:

My thought, whose murder yet is fantastical,

Shakes so my single state of man that function.

Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is

But what is not.

(Act I Scene III)

Macbeth's imagination is possessed by the thought of murder, which is the only step of the throne of Scotland. Macbeth becomes convinced that without his initiative action, the third prediction of the Witches can hardly be fulfilled. But being dominated by imagination and sensibilities, he begins to shudder at the mere thought of murder. The imagination of the murder shakes all his nerves. The murder which he contemplates exists as yet in his imagination. But he is so distracted and convulsed by it that his power of action is paralysed, and what was unreal, seems to be real and what is real, seems to be no more.

Macbeth is noble at heart but ambitious. He is brave yet unaccustomed to evil activities. He seems to be a man of moral but his ambition wins at last.

(6) *There's no art*

To find the mind's construction in the face:

He was a gentleman on whom I built

An absolute trust.

(Act I, Scene IV)

Duncan says to Malcolm that there is no art or science by which one can read the thoughts of any person by looking at his face. It is not possible to judge thoughts and feelings of a person from his

facial expression. The face is no index to thee mind. Duncan calls the thane of Cawdor a gentleman in whom he had reposed his full confidence for his loyalty and honesty. In his later life, however, he proved to be disloyal to his country. As soon as Duncan speaks these words, Macbeth enters. He came with a smiling and innocent face but nourished bloody designs in his mind.

King Duncan's reaction reflects the simplicity and nobility of the man. These words have an intense irony in them.

(7) *The sin of my ingratitude even now*

Was heavy on me; thou art so far before,

That swiftest wing of recompense is slow

To overtake thee. Would thou hadst less deserved,

That the proportion both of thanks and payment

Might have been mine !

(Act I, Scene IV)

Duncan told Macbeth that he was feeling shy because he could not adequately reward Macbeth for the obligations he had done to him. He had done so invaluable services to the country that he stood far above the range of adequate reward and compensation. However fast rewards might follow him, they would not be able to overtake his obligations. Duncan wished Macbeth had deserved less so that it would have been possible for him to reward him adequately.

These are again very ironical words because Macbeth was just contemplating to murder Duncan in spite of all the honours the king had conferred on him. While Duncan reproaches himself with ingratitude, ingratitude is breeding in Macbeth's heart. Soon the sin of ingratitude will lie heavy on Macbeth.

(8) *Thee hither,*

That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,

And chastise with the valour of my tongue

All that impedes thee from the golden round,

Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem

To have thee crown'd withal.

(Act I, Scene V)

Lady Macbeth feels impatient and desires that her husband should come to her soon. She would like to infuse in him all her fire and sentiments. She would drive away from the mind of Macbeth all fears and doubts which stood in his way to the throne of Scotland. Fate and supernatural powers had destined him to bear the crown

of Scotland and therefore all that was needed was a bold and resolute step to be taken by him.

Lady Macbeth's strong will and self confidence are apparent in her present soliloquy. It indicates that she is less imaginative and more intellectual.

(9) *Your face, my thane, is as a book where men*

May read strange matters: to beguile the time,

Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,

Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,

But be the serpent under't.

(Act I, Scene V)

Macbeth was not a habitual murderer and therefore, he could not conceal the expressions on his face. There was murder in his eyes. His heart at this moment was truly the index of his heart. In order to deceive the people, it is essential to bear expressions corresponding to the times and circumstances. He should look sweet and innocent like a blossoming flower but should be cruel and poisonous like a snake hidden within the bush of flowers.

Lady Macbeth is warning her husband not to betray his thought in his face. As she looks at his face, it is wild and distracted; it is like an open book in which a man may read whatever is there. Let not the observers suspect what is in his mind. He should wear a perpetual smile of welcome to his guests. Let his eyes, his hands and his tongue radiate welcome. Let him act like the serpent, hidden among beautiful flowers. He should be very cautious, and play the genial host, never letting anyone suspect what is passing within his mind.

This line has become proverbial. Lady Macbeth shows her villainy and ambition.

(10) *If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well*

It were done quickly: if the assassination

Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,

With his surcease, success; that but this blow

Might be the be-all and end-all here,

But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,

We'ld jump the life to come.

(Act I, Scene VII)

In this soliloquy Macbeth reviews the consequences of the act of murder. If murder of the king would give rise to no further complications, once it was done, Macbeth would have no hesitation to carry it through. But every crime is followed by punishment. If the act of murder could swallow up the consequence and secure that object for which it was done, Macbeth would not have been deterred by moral scruples. But he knows that a crime cannot be killed- it rather moves in a vicious circle, and perpetuates itself in a series of complications; which he cannot but dread. If the murder of Duncan were but to end here on earth, if it would drag after it no further tragic consequences, Macbeth would be prepared to stake the life after death to secure the object of his ambition in this life. Macbeth now dreads the material consequences of Duncan's murder; for example, the danger that the crown which he may wear by murdering Duncan may be snatched away from him. For the time Macbeth forgets the haunting terror of conscience that will give him no peace of mind.

The inner strife of Macbeth has been presented. He is in the situation of dilemma.

(11) *I have no spur*

To prick the sides of my intent, but only

Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself

And falls on the other.

(Act I, SceneVII)

Macbeth means that he is swept away by his measureless ambition, which may defeat its own purpose. It should be noted that he is now almost ready to sacrifice moral scruples to his ambition.

In the above soliloquy he assumes his contradictory thoughts. His intention is like a horse which has no spur to be checked. In riding the horse of his intent, the rider may take too high a jump and fall on the ground on the other side of the horse. In other words, he feels that his ambition may be the cause of his ruin and death.

There are two metaphors confused together. Macbeth had no spur to prick the sides of his intent; he had nothing to stimulate him to the execution of his purpose but ambition, which is apt to overreach itself: this he expresses by the second image of a person meaning to vault into his saddle who, by taking too great a leap, will fall on the other side.

14.3 ACT-II

(12) *The sleeping and the dead*

Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood

That fears a painted devil.

(Act II, Scene II)

Lady Macbeth's nerve has not been shaken at all; it means nothing to her to carry the daggers back to the room in which the murder has been done. Dead are no more to be feared than painted pictures. Only children can be frightened by pictures of the devil. She says to Macbeth that he should not fear to return to the murder-chamber where lie a dead man and two sleeping grooms.

(13) *The night has been unruly: where we lay,*

Our chimneys were blown down; and, as they say,

Lamentings heard i' th' air; strange screams of death;

(Act II, SceneIII)

Lennox relates the incidents and prodigies of last night. A violent storm blew, and the chimneys of the house in which Lennox lodged were torn away. People said that mysterious cries were heard- wailing sounds and shrieks, such as are uttered by persons dying a violent death. Voices were here predicting dreadful calamities and disorder and confusion which were soon to follow.

14.4 ACT-III

(14) *To be thus is nothing;*

But to be safely thus.- Our fears in Banqo

Stick deep; and in his royalty of nature

Reigns that which would be fear'd: 'tis much he dares:

And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,

He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour

To act in safety.

(Act III, Scene I)

This is part of Macbeth's soliloquy. He has now succeeded to the throne, but he has little peace of mind, and he seems to be surrounded by perils on every side. To be king on such terms is meaningless. But if he could be king without the fear of being deposed or hurt by an unseen enemy, it would be certainly worthwhile. He cannot dismiss the thought of Banquo. Banquo has a king-like disposition, and, therefore, he ought to be feared. His valour may carry him to any daring enterprise. With his valour he

unites discretion; discretion will guide his valour and enable him to act safely and cautiously.

(15) *For mine own good,*

All causes shall give way: I am in blood

Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,

Returning were as tedious as go o'er.

(Act III, Scene IV)

Macbeth says to Lady Macbeth that everything must give way to his own interest. He has gone so far in bloody crime that it would be impossible to retrace his steps, if he had a mind to do so. He had strange schemes in contemplation; these must be executed before they might be thoroughly examined.

14.5 ACT-IV

(16) *But cruel are the times, when we are traitors,*

And do not know ourselves; when we hold rumour

From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,

But float upon a wild and violent sea

Each way and move.

(Act IV, Scene II)

Ross is trying, to justify Macduff's flight by reffering to the unsettled conditions in the country. In these days of trouble an innocent man will be looked upon as a traitor; men hardly know each other, each seeming to be a traitor to the other; they are apt to believe every report, which seems to be suggested by their own fears, nor can they define what it is that they fear. They seem to be tossed to and fro on the wave of conjecture; their minds are beset with doubt and suspicion, and they seem to be the prey of every gust of passion and prejudice.

In these lines, Ross gives Lady Macduff vague hints of the troubles and perils that are incidental to the times.

14.6 ACT-V

(16) *To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,*

Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,

To the last syllable of recorded time;

And all our yesterdays have lighted fools

The way to dusty death.

(Act V, Scene V)

When Macbeth hears of the death of his wife, he is very apathetic. He generalises about life. Life seems to drag on from day to day. To- morrow ever appears in rosy tints before the eyes of men and women. Each carries on till the allotted period of life has been exhausted. The bright hopes that lure men and women on, soon fade away; and all that awaits them is the dusty oblivion of death.

Here is the philosophy of Macbeth who has now realized the futility of all boastful thoughts and criminal deeds in the life of man. The last moment of an individual's life is thus gradually and imperceptibly reached. The last entry is recorded in heaven in the book of Life and then the man ceases to live.

(17) *Out, out, brief candle!*

Life 's but a walking shadow, a poor player

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,

And then is heard no more: it is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,

Signifying nothing.

(Act V, Scene V)

Macbeth compares life to a candle that burns for a few moments and then goes out. He compares it to a passing shadow, to a third-rate actor, who plays his tricks on the stage for his allotted period of time, and then is heard no more. Life seems to Macbeth to be a tale told by an idiot; there is a lot of wild and ranting talk in it, but it has no meaning.

These lines express the darkest cynicism, which has invaded Macbeth's soul. They can mark only the complete blight that has fallen upon his imagination and sensibilities. Human life is full of idle boastings and pompous actions which are all futile and insignificant. Macbeth has fully experienced the futility and insecurity of human life. Shakespeare has compared life to a stage in *As You Like It, "Life is a stage."* He says in *Tempest, "We are such stuff as dreams are made on."*

14.7 SUMMING UP

In this unit we have discussed the important meaningful paragraphs being spoken by various characters on different occasions. These dialogues sometimes present the inner working of the mind of the

characters and sometimes throw light on the characters and their permanent nature. Basically Shakespeare is an artist but some lines show his philosophy about life. Sometimes he presents the psychology of the characters, for example in the sleepwalking scene.

14.8 MODEL QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Explain with Reference to the Context the lines given below.

Question-1 *Fair is foul and foul is fair:*
Hover through the fog and filthy air.

Answer- See Section 14.2.

Question-2 *Doubtful it stood;*
As two spent swimmers, that do cling together
And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald,
Worthy to be a rebel, for to that
The multiplying villainies of nature
Do swarm upon him.

Answer- See Section 14.2.

Question-3 *As whence the sun' gins his reflection*
Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break,
So from that spring whence comfort seem'd to come
Discomfort swells.

Answer- See Section 14.2.

Question-4 *There's no art*
To find the mind's construction in the face:
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust.

Answer- See Section 14.2.

Question-5 *The sin of my ingratitude even now*
Was heavy on me; thou art so far before,
That swiftest wing of recompense is slow
To overtake thee.

Answer- See Section 14.2.

Question-6 *Thee hither,*
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,

And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round,
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crown'd withal.

Answer- See Section 14.2.

Question-7 *Your face, my thane, is as a book where men*
May read strange matters: to beguile the time,
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,
But be the serpent under't.

Answer- See Section 14.2.

Question-8 *If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well*
It were done quickly: if the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
With his surcease, success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and end-all here,

Answer- See Section 14.2.

Question-9 *The sleeping and the dead*
Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil.

Answer- See Section 14.3.

Question-10 *The sleeping and the dead*
Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil.

Answer- See Section 14.6.

14.9 FURTHER READING

- Boas, F.S. - *Shakespeare and His Predecessors*
- Bradley, A.C.- *Shakespearean Tragedy*
- Dowden, Edward- *Shakespeare-His Mind and Art*
- Nicolle, A.- *The British Drama.*
- Reese, M.M.- *Shakespeare*: *His World and His Work*

Uttar Pradesh Rajarshi Tandon
Open University

Bachelor of Arts

UGEN-102

Literature in English 1550-1750

BLOCK

5

FICTION-SWIFT : THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

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BLOCK INTRODUCTION

This Block is a study guide to Jonathan Swift's close satire '*The Battle of the Book*'

In the **unit-15** we shall give you an introduction to Swift, the man, the writer and his literary work. This is important as a writer's life as a significant bearing on his literary output.

In **unit-16** we cover the significant of the title and themes of the novel

In **unit-17** we discuss the structure and narrative technique of the novel

In **unit-18** we shall look at some of the main characters in the novel. And finally we discuss the use of satiric element in the work in **unit-19**.

UNIT-15 SWIFT : LIFE AND WORKS

Structure

15.0 INTRODUCTION

In Block 2 you have studied about Neo-classical age. The essence of neo-classicism lies in the tendency to adapt the old classical principles to the modern literature. You have also read about Pope in Unit 4. The 18th century is known as the age of enlightenment, the golden age of reason. One of the greatest prose writers of the day, namely, Jonathan Swift, made his outstanding contribution to the periodical and the journalistic literature. The general tendency of this period was to look at life critically and to put emphasis on intellect rather than imagination, on form rather than the content.

Read about the life and parentage of Swift in 15.2. You will also read about the age of prose and reason in 15.3. Read about his contribution in the field of satire and answer the questions given at the last of the unit.

15.1 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit, you will read about Jonathan Swift as the most original prose writer of his time and the man of genius among many men of talent. The range of the literature of this period is limited. It is a literature of the town and the fashionable upper circles of the city of London, Pope, Addison, Steele, Burke, Dr. Johnson and other writers of this period dealt with urban themes. They show remarkable interest in the

middle classes and, thus, broaden the scope of literature which was previously confined strictly to fashionable and aristocratic circles. The social, political and even literary conditions were congenial for the rise and growth of prose. At the end of your study of this unit you will be able to:

- discuss Swift's life in detail
- know about his works
- realize his contribution to English Literature.

15.2 SWIFT : HIS PARENTAGE AND AGE

Jonathan Swift came of an English family that had, in the year 1660, migrated from England to settle down in Ireland. His father, who was also known as Jonathan, was one of the five brothers who left their English homes in search of better fortunes. He secured for himself a minor office at the King's Inns, Dublin, but before he could go further his career was cut short by his untimely death in 1667. The future satirist was born on the 30th November 1667, seven months after the death of his father and had to look up to his uncle, Godwin Swift, for his upbringing and early education. He went to Kilkenny School, where Congreve was a fellow pupil, and Trinity College, Dublin, where his academic record was undistinguished. Arriving in England in 1689, he became secretary to Sir William Temple at Moor Park in Surrey. Apart from a period in Ireland after his ordination in 1694, he remained in Temple's service until the latter's death in 1699- writing his largely unsuccessful Pindaric Odes, acting as tutor to the eight-year-old Esther Johnson (Stella), editing Temple's correspondence and writing *The Battle Of The Books* (1704), which further identified him with his patron. Yet his service never brought Swift the advancement for which he had hoped and Temple's death left him 'unprovided both of friend and living'.

15.2.1 LITERARY ACHIEVEMENT

He returned to Dublin as chaplain to Lord Berkeley, the new Lord Justice, obtained the living of Laracor, and was granted a prebend in St Patrick's, Dublin, where Stella and her companion Rebecca Dingley joined him. Visits to London in the following years yielded his *Discourse of the Contests and Dissensions in Athens and Rome* (1701), a pamphlet about the impeachment of several Whig Lords, and introduced him to Addison and Steele. *A Tale of a Tub* (1704), a vehement and comprehensive Satire on contemporary intellectual abuses, brought him notoriety and certain popularity in Whig literary circles. His writings on religious matters, notably the ironic *Argument Against Abolishing Christianity* (written 1708, published 1711), show him a staunch Anglican intolerant of Dissent. He abandoned his Whig associates and bent towards the Tories. In 1708 he invented the character of Isaac Bickerstaff for

Predictions for the Ensuing Year, a spoof at the expense of the astrologer John Partridge, and in 1709 he published two of his more famous short poems in *The Tatler.*

In 1710 he was with the Tory ministry of Robert Harley and he became the editor of *The Examiner.* Later he concentrated on *The Conduct of The Allies.* He was now very close to Harley and enjoyed an increasingly bright reputation in London, where he befriended Pope, Arbuthnot and Gay. Their association was formalized in The *Scriblerus Club.* The intimate, playful letters Swift addressed to Stella in Dublin, posthumously published as the *Journal to Stella* (selection, 1766; edition, 1768), tell us much about his movements during these years. He also came in contact with a young London lady Esther Vanhomrigh (whom he nicknamed Vanessa). His poem, *Cadenus And Vanessa* (written 1713, published 1726), represents the equivocal nature of the affair. Indeed, his exact relationship with Stella has also been the cause of much speculation, one theory holding that they were secretly married in 1716, another that they were already related illegitimately by blood. The extent of his involvement with any of the women in his life remains unclear, but his reputation as a misogynist is patently unfounded.

Swift's official appointments reached a peak when he became Dean of St Patrick's, Dublin, in 1713, though his literary reputation in London continued to grow until the collapse of the Tory ministry with which he was socially and intellectually identified. He defended the cause of the Irish economy, in particular, with his *Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufacture* (1720) and the *Drapier's Letters* (1724), which effectively prevented the exploitation of Ireland through the issuing of debased coinage. Ironically, Swift succeeded in establishing himself as one of the leading Irish patriot of his country.

Despite his many protests to the contrary, Swift seemed reasonably content in Dublin. He wrote a good deal of satirical verse and began his best-known book, *Gulliver's Travels,* published in 1726 to great acclaim and the only piece of writing for which he was ever paid. Stella's death in 1728 committed him to an intermittently lonely existence, though there is certainly no evidence that his mental powers were fading until much later in life. He founded a short-lived weekly paper, *The Intelligencer,* in 1728, he produced a diverse and talented body of work, including his notoriously powerful *A Modest Proposal* (1729), poems such as "The Grand Question Debated" (1729), 'On Poetry: A Rhapsody'(1733) and *Verses on the Death of Dr Swift* (1739), and the delightful dialogues of his *Polite and Ingenious Conversation* (1738)

15.2.2 SWIFT AND THE GOLDEN AGE OF SATIRE

The general atmosphere of the age was rational, intellectual and sceptical. It was charged with political rivalry and bitter partisanship in which writers were pressed into service to fight under the banner of the Whigs and the Tories. Moreover, the aim of literature was social and there

was naturally a keen desire to preserve the social stability against all those forces which were threatening to upset or disturb it. This is the atmosphere which is conducive to the growth of Satire, which is the product of a civilized community, quite alive to the social values and the dangers likely to undermine it.

The satire of this age pervades all the kinds and forms of literature, both prose and poetry and, has a remarkably wide range. The writers were conscious of the great achievements of the Roman masters, Horace and Juvenal, and tried to recapture the past glory. The great writers were Pope and Johnson. Much of the social satire appeared in the periodicals. Meanwhile political corruption was presented under the government of Walpole. Swift is the greatest figure in this field who satirized the political malpractices of the day in the first two books of his *Gulliver's Travels* and presented the most trenchant and powerful satire of the day in his famous *Drappier's Letters.* How deadly a weapon can irony become in the hand of a great genius is illustrated by his devastating essay, *Modest Proposals.* Suffice is to say that much of the prose of the day was classical, marked by simple elegance, conciseness and lucidity, lit up by irony, humour and satire, but rarely rising to imaginative height or dipping into the depth of passion.

15.2.3 SWIFT'S PLACE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

Swift has been much misrepresented and often misunderstood. But because of the efforts of twentieth century critics he emerged from the cloud that had obscured his fame for such a long time since his death in 1745. He is recognized as a writer of powerful satires, which embittered his own contemporaries and so unbalanced the later critics, Thackeray and Scott, as to upset their judgement of the nature and quality of his writings. Tragic, as it was, the reaction against Swift was in effect an acknowledgement of the power of his satires to vex the world. Though he has written poems too, his greatness and his place in the history of literature will depend finally on the value of his satire. He is read, and will be read because of his satires. During his literary career, spanning a period of about 30 years, he gave to the world some of the finest satires. And his vision was not limited to only one aspects of life. It was comprehensive in range, covering as it did all aspects of life and human activity- religion, social institutions, politics, philosophy and literature; it was deep in that it penetrated far beneath the outward show of things, exposing to critical gaze the corruption and evils that lay at the bottom. His satire is universal in that it touches human nature itself and shows us its many perversions. Though his satire is bitter and sharp, he wrote not out of spite, nor to obtain relief from the pressure of his allegedly neurotic nature. He wrote because the world he lived in was riddled with evils and corruptions and absurdities, and he wanted to laugh men out of them. He was a reformist, but instead of the pulpit he chose the pen to express his sense of the deviation of mankind in general from ideal standards and also his perception of the comic in the pretensions, vanities and follies of man.

Swift does not belong to the line of those writers who create new worlds of poetic vision, as do Shakespeare and Keats and Lawrence. That was not his field. He derives his strength from his power to destroy a world of pretensions and unreason. He does not create; he only clears the ground for others to build a new edifice. The proper place of Swift is, therefore, among those writers who through their satirical writings force a perception of the depraved, the corrupt and the absurd, in order to laugh us away from. He has satirized and laughed at the ways of mankind, to improve them.

15.2.4 SWIFT'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

The charge of absolute misanthropy is disproved by numerous facts of his life. He worked with great dedication for the welfare of his parishioners. For four years he was touched by the sufferings of the Irish people and he fought for their political and economic emancipation. He admired men and women who were sincere, honest, truthful and humble. But he found that the bulk of the people were moved by evil passions and were irrational in thought and conduct. He hated these evils.

He was an absolute pessimist. There were many factors which shaped his philosophy of life. He was a posthumous child and his mother was too poor to support him. He was neglected and humiliated by the people in the society due to his poor economic situation. This made him very bitter. A person's health is very important in shaping his philosophy of life. He was very unlucky in this respect. All his life he suffered from poor eyesight, deafness, giddiness and most of the time he was in great pain. It is natural for such a man to look at the darker side of things. The miserable plight of the poor people of Ireland also made him very sad. Ireland was treated as a colony by the English and was thoroughly exploited by them. The most important influence on Swift's mind was the attitude of the Christian preachers towards human nature. They regarded man as a sinner by nature. But there is one difference between Swift's attitude and that of the Christian divines. They held out the hope that in spite of his sins man would ultimately attain the kingdom of Heaven through the intervention of Jesus Christ. Swift held out no such hope.

Swift had a high notion of what man could have achieved with his gift of reason, and he was very sad that man had become the slave of passion. His pessimism made his contemporaries think about him as a gloomy writer. He once said, "Life is a tragedy, wherein we sit as spectators awhile and then act our own part in it."

15.2.5 SWIFT'S PROSE STYLE

With simplicity and barrenness of expression goes the clarity of his language. It will be difficult to name another writer in English language who is as lucid and clear as Swift. He is never obscure or incomprehensible, never ambiguous or vague. He always aims at precision of expression and this clarity of language reveals the clarity of thinking.

He emphasizes the need to be clear in thought to achieve lucidity in expression. His conciseness, is a quality which has been universally admired. His training as a political journalist had taught him to be rigorously functional and to gain the maximum effect by expressing himself precisely and concisely. At times he does give the impression of leaving out something unsaid but this he does intentionally to heighten the irony of his writing. He is well known for his impartial tone of writing. He is seldom passionate or declamatory. He always appears to be giving an objective account. In fact this calmly objective tone suits his satiric purpose admirably. By appearing to be merely describing, what he sees, Swift magnifies the horror of the evil which is his satiric target.

15.3 SUMMING UP

Swift was both a prolific and a versatile writer, the originality of his imagination never in doubt despite all the many fluctuations in his reputation. The close and constant proximity of his complex personality and his writings has often caused Swift to be severely misrepresented. The myth that he went mad from misanthropy persists, though in fact the senility of his last years was largely the result of physical causes such as Meniere's syndrome. His fierce dislike of injustice and his intolerance of folly combine to make the satirist's fierce indignation. He had charitable concern for the ordinary people of Ireland. We also notice his love of pranks and spoofs and his devotion to common sense. He is one of the most significant writers in English. The simplicity, directness and lucidity of his style will be the envy of all those who aspire to be among the front ranks of prose writers.

15.4 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Question-1 Discuss about the Neo-classical Age.

Answer- See Section 15.0, 15.1

Question-2 Discuss Swift as a satirist.

Answer- See Section 8.1, 8.2, 8.3.1, 8.3.2.

Question-3 Write a note on Swift's life .

Answer- See Section 15.2

Question-4 Illustrate about the prose style of Swift.

Answer- See Section 15.2.5

Question-5 What were the political conditions of the age of Swift?

Answer- See Section 15.2.2

Question-6 Write a note on the main political parties of the eighteenth century England.

Answer- See Section 15.2, 15.2.1, 15.2.2

Question-7 Describe about the contribution of Swift to English Literature.

Answer- See Section 15.2.3

Question-8 Throw light on the Important works of Swift.

Answer- See Section 15.2.1, 15.2.2

Question-9 Write a note on Swift's Place in literature.

Answer- See Section 15.2.3

Question-10 Describe about the philosophy of Swift.

Answer- See Section 15.2.4

15.5 FURTHER READING

- Gosse,Edmund- *Eighteenth Century English Literature.*
- Hudson, W. H.- *An Outline History of English Literature.*
- Legouis and Cazamian- *History of English Literature.*
- Leslie Stephen: *Swift* (E.M.L. Series)
- Moody and Lovett- *A History of English Literature.*
- Read, Herbert- *Collected Essays in Literary Criticism.*
- Rickett , A.C.- *A History of English Literature.*
- Willey, Basil- *The Eighteenth Century Background.*

UNIT-16 THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS : TITLE, THEMES

Structure

16.0 INTRODUCTION

In this Unit you will study about the significance of the title *The Battle of the Books.* You will also go through the different themes adopted by the writer in this prose work. This book can better be understood in the context of that particular time and atmosphere. Any work of literature represents the age in which it has been written. It is suggested that the

students should go through the economic, political and social conditions of that time to understand any piece of work.

After reading this Unit try to answer the questions based on it. The questions have been given at the end of this Unit. Your answers can be checked with the hints given by us.

16.1 OBJECTIVES

The Battle of the Books is a prose satire written in 1697. It is a short satire written by Jonathan Swift and published as part of the prolegomena to his *A Tale of a Tub* in 1704.It is a burlesque of the famous controversy on the relative merit of the ancients and moderns, represented by the Bee and the Spider respectively. The ancients, under the patronage of Pilas, are led by Homer. Pindar, Euclid, Aristotle, and Plato, with Sir W. Temple commanding the allies; the moderns by Milton, Dryden, Descartes, Hobbes, Scotus, and others, with the support of Momus, and the malignant deity, Criticism, The ancients have the advantage in the fight, but a parley ensues and the tale leaves the issue undecided. The treatment of the book is satirical. At the end of your study of this unit you will be able to:

- know about the title of the work.
- understand about the theme of the work.
- be familiar with the publication and composition of the work.

16.2 TITLE

The Battle as per its title is "a full and true account of the battle fought last Friday between the Ancient and Modern in St. James's Library." Swift himself claims: "I, being possessed of all qualifications requisite in an historian, and retained by neither party, have resolved to comply with the urgent importunity of friends, by writing down a full impartial account thereof" (that is , of the battle). So the obvious purpose of *The Battle* was to give an account of the ancient-modern controversy in an impartial manner.

The Battle of the Books remains the classic, humorous treatment of the debate between Ancients and Moderns. In his *Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning* (1690) Sir William Temple, Swift's patron, had opposed the New Learning and unfavourably compared contemporary writers and philosophers with their classical counterparts. Temple exposed himself to attack, from Richard Bentley and William Wotton, by singling out the spurious epistles of Phalaris for special praise.

Swift's reply on his patron's behalf takes the form of a Mock-Heroic drama in the Royal Library, where books championing the ancient and modern causes prepare to fight over the right to occupy the higher

peak of Parnassus. A dispute meanwhile arises between a spider and a bee; Aesop's intervention identifies the spider with the Moderns, who spin out empty pedantry, while the bee, like the Ancients, goes directly to Nature and produces honey and wax, 'sweetness and light'. The verdict goads the Moderns into attack, and battle starts. Under the protection of Pallas, Homer leads the Ancients against the Moderns under Milton's leadership. Individual duels are nicely matched, as when Virgil takes on his translator Dryden and Aristotle shoots Descartes while aiming at Francis Bacon. The book ends in mid-battle, supposedly because of a defective manuscript.

16.3 PERSONS AND PLACES IN THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

Before going through the theme of the work, it is must to know about the characters. There is a long list of characters in *The Battle of The Books.* The theme of this work takes place in different settings.

16.3.1 PERSONS

1. Sir William Temple: (1628-99), Swift's patron, a renowned scholar and statesman.
2. William Wotton: (1666-1726), A classical scholar whose criticism of Temple incurred the wrath of Swift.
3. Charles Boyle: (1676-1703), Aristocrat and a wit.
4. Scotus: Johannes Duns Scotus (1265-1308), a theologian and philosopher of the medieval ages.
5. Aristotle: (384-322 B.C.), Greek philosopher, leader of the medieval scholars.
6. Plato: (427-348 B.C.), Greek philosopher, teacher of Aristotle and student of Socrates who wrote *Dialogues.*
7. Descartes: (1596-1650), A French scientist and philosopher.
8. Hobbes: Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), famous political scientist who wrote *The Leviathan.*
9. Dryden: John Dryden (1631-1704), a well-known English poet who annoyed Swift.
10. Withers: George Withers (1588-1667), a minor English author.
11. Bentley: Dr. Richard Bentley (1662- 1742), Classical scholar, keeper of St. James Library.
12. Cowley: (1618-1667), Famous poet of the seventeenth century.
13. Tasso: (1544-95), well-known Italian poet.
14. Despreaux: Generally known as Boileau (1636-1711), great French poet and critic.

15. Gassendi: (1592-1655), French philosopher and theologian.
16. Paracelsus: (1493-1541), Swiss scientist.
17. Harvey: (1578-1657), medical scientist who discovered the circulation of blood.
18. Guicciardin: (1482-1540), A Florentine historian.
19. Davila: (1576-1631), An Italian historian.
20. Polydore Virgil: (1470-1555), An English historian of Italian origin (not to be confused with the great epic poet).
21. Buchanan: George Buchanan (1505-82), wrote history of Scotland in Latin.
22. Mariana: Juan de Mariana (1537-1624), A famous Spanish historian.
23. Cambden: William Cambden (1551-1623), English historian and antiquary.
24. Regiomontanus: Johan Muller (1436-76), astronomer and mathematician, the Latin term refers to his birth place.
25. Wilkins: John Wilkins (1614-77), one of the founders of the Royal Society.
26. Aquinas: (1225-74), Philosopher and theologian of the medieval ages.
27. Bellarmine: Roberto Bellarmine (1542-1621), supporter of Roman Catholicism.
28. L'Estrange: Or Lestrange (1616-1704), a journalist and political pamphleteer.
29. Homer: Greatest Greek epic poet, who wrote *Odyssey* and *Illiad.*
30. Pindar: Great Greek lyric poet.
31. Euclid: Famous Greek mathematician.
32. Herodotus: Well-known Greek historian.
33. Livy: A Roman historian.
34. Hippocrates: Renowned Greek physician, known as the father Medicine.
35. Vossius: Classical scholar of the seventeenth century.
36. Galen: (130-200), famous ancient medical writer.
37. Denham: Sir John Denham (1615-68), a minor poet.
38. Wesley: Samuel Wesley (1662-1735), an unknown minor poet.
39. Perrault and Fontennelle: French writers who supported the moderns.
40. Lucan: A Roman poet of the first century A.D.

41. Blackmore: Sir Richard Blackmore (1650-1729), poet and physician.
42. Creech: Thomas Creech (1659-1700), translator of classical works.
43. Horace: Well-known Roman poet.
44. Ogleby: John Ogleby (1600-76), translator of Homer and Virgil.
45. Oldham: John Oldham (1653-83), an English poet.
46. Afra: Mrs. Aphra Behn (1640-1689), playwright and novelist.
47. Scaliger: Joseph Justus Scaliger (1540-1609), a minor writer of the sixteenth century.
48. Aldrovandus: Ulisse Aldrovandus (1522-95), a tedious writer of natural history.
49. Virgil: (70-10 B.C.), well-known Roman epic poet.
50. Phalaris: Tyrannical ruler of Sicily, who lived in the 6th century B.C.
51. Aesop: A semi-legendary writer of stories of animals, believed to have lived in the 6th century A.D.

16.3.2 PLACES

1. St. James's Library: The Royal Library at St. James Palace where the 'battle' is believed to have taken place.
2. King's Library: The same as St. James Library.
3. Rhaetia- A place in the Alps, now a part of Austria.
4. Gresham- Gresham College was the headquarters of the Royal Society, at the time of 'battle'.
5. Nova Zembla: An island in the Arctic Region.
6. Covent Garden: Place in London, famous for its coffee-houses
7. Libyan: Pertaining to Libya in Africa.

16.4 CLASSICAL AND LITERARY ALLUSIONS

There is a long list of characters and places used by Swift in this book. They all belong to different ages and countries. It becomes necessary for the readers to know about classical and literary allusions used in this book.

16.4.1 CLASSICAL ALLUSIONS

1. The hill Parnassus: A mountain in Greece, sacred to Apollo and the Muses.
2. Beelzebub: Patron-God of flies

3. Evander: A character in Virgil's *Aeneid.* But Swift has mistakenly used this name. Actually it was Acestes who shot an arrow which flew into the clouds, caught fire and then vanished.
4. Jupiter: Chief of the Roman Gods, also known as Jove.
5. Momus: Greek God of fault-finding.
6. Pallas: Greek Goddess of wisdom.
7. Mercury: A Roman God who acts as the messenger of the Gods.
8. Apollo: God of poetry and music.
9. Esculapius: Patron-God of physicians.
10. Ambrosia: A drink of the Gods.
11. Helicon: Originally a mountain sacred to the Muses, later it came to be referred to as a fountain of poetic inspiration.
12. Echo: A nymph or Goddess according to Greek mythology.
13. Philomela: The nightingale. A princess but according to Greek mythology she was transformed into a nightingale.
14. Charon: A ferryman conveying the souls of the dead across the river in the lower world, according to Greek mythology.
15. Styx: According to Greek mythology, the river of darkness in the lower world or Hades.

16.4.2 LITERARY ALLUSIONS

1. On Ancient and Modern Learning: An essay written by Sir William Temple in 1690. It formed the origin of the controversy about ancient and modern literature.
2. Reflections Upon Ancient and Modern learning: Written by William Wotton in 1694; a criticism of the views of Temple.
3. Dissertations upon the Epistles of Phalaris and the Fables of *Aesop:* An appendix written by Bentley. This is attached to the second edition of Wotton's book mentioned above, in which he refutes the views of Temple.
4. Epistles of Phalaris: Edited by Charles Boyle in 1695
5. *Aesop's Fables:* A collection of animal stories; though written by different unknown people but credited to Aesop.
6. *The Seven Wise Masters*: A text-book, an anthology of moral instruction derived from the ancient world.
7. Vortex: An allusion to Descartes' philosophy of Vortices.
8. Gondibert: A heroic poem by Sir William Davenant.

9. Shield- A reference to Cowley's love poems entitled *The Mistress.* Being love poems they are connected with Venus and stood as a shield given by her.

10. The Weapon: The reference is to the *Examination* by Charles Boyle in which he defended Temple against the charges of Bentley.

16.5 THEME

The Battle of the Book is comprised of five clearly distinguishable incidents. The battle is fought between the ancients and the moderns in the regal library, as a result of the mismanagement of the librarian, Bentley, who shows undue favour to the moderns and purposely hems in ancient books by their counterparts. The author makes a mock pretence to impartiality and is ready to write down a full impartial account of the battle.

16.5.1 FIRST INCIDENT

The first of the five incidents, that form the main body of the satire, concerns the dispute between the ancients and the moderns for the right to live on the highest peak of Parnassus. Before touching the actual dispute, the author refers to the internecine warfare that goes on among the dogs of the streets. After having thus established want and lust as the main causes of quarrels, the satirist turns to the disputes between the inhabitants of Parnassus. The moderns live on a lower peak. They cannot rise high through their own efforts and cannot see the ancients enjoying a superior position. Jealousy lies at the bottom of their hostile attitudes towards the superior beings. An emissary is sent up to the ancients to ask them to remove themselves to a lower position and surrender the top peak to the moderns, else the latter will "come with shovels and mattocks, and level the said hill as low as they shall think it convenient." The impertinence of the moderns amuses the ancients. The ancients could not expect such a message from a colony they had permitted to settle down as their neighbours; they had also not expected such foolishness as to think of cutting down the hill which was an entire rock. Their advice therefore is that the moderns should rather try to raise their own side of the hill, to which they "would not only give licence but also largely contribute". Many "arguments, rejoinders, brief considerations, answers, replies, remarks, reflections, objections, confutations" are issued by either party to substantiate its claim of victory.

Soon the controversy takes a serious turn when the animated books of St. James's library take up the argument. They soon organize themselves into two mutually hostile camps. On one side are Plato, Homer and other ancients, while on the other are a host of writers; prominent among whom are Descartes, Scotus, Dryden, Withers and Hobbes. The news that the moderns are planning to open a hostile front against the ancients leaks out and the ancient decide to protect themselves with their

better organization and superior armour. The first incident ends with Temple, the patron of Swift and a staunch champion of the ancients, playing a leading part in organizing the defence of his party against the vile ambitions of the modern.

16.5.2 SECOND INCIDENT

The second incident concerns the episode of the spider and the bee which is remarkable for its artistic economy and satiric efficacy. When the controversy is going on in the library of St. James, a material incident falls out. There is a spider, swollen up by the destruction of infinite numbers of flies, "whose spoils lay scattered before the Gates of his Palace, like human Bones before the Caves of some Giant." A bee unknowingly blunders into the spider's web, which, in mock-epic phraseology, is described as a 'mansion', a palace, a citadel, and a fortress. Though the bee escapes but the web is broken. At first the spider is terrified to imagine some approaching calamity but later he saw the culprit. The infuriated spider calls him names and levels many accusations against him, the chief being that while the spider spins his web out of himself, the bee depends upon flowers and nature to provide himself with food. The bee, therefore, is a universal plunderer without house and possession but a pair of wings and a drone pipe. The bee makes a fitting reply that when he visits flowers he enriches himself without the least injury to their beauty, smell, or their taste. But the spider's web is no more than a 'store of dirt' enriched by 'sweepings exhaled from below'. In short, the question is, who is better? The spider who is feeling proud of feeding and engendering on itself, producing nothing at all, but flybane and a cobweb or the bee, 'by an universal range, with a long search, must study, true judgement, and distinction of things brings home honey and wax? The allegorical significance of the episode is made explicit through Aesop. The bee stands for the ancients, while the spider is the representative of the moderns.

16.5.3 THIRD INCIDENT

The third incident takes us to the battlefield. The two parties decide to make a trial of strength. On the side of the ancients are such luminaries as Homer, Pindar, Virgil, Herodotus, Lucan, Euclid, Plato, Aristotle and Temple. Though the number of the ancients was less, but their discipline, and superior skill was better. The moderns are supported by Tasso, Dryden, Withers, Cowley, Descartes, Harvey, Denham, Gondibert and a host of others. Homer appears on a furious horse, which symbolizes his power as an epic poet, and he slays five moderns, one after another. Pindar kills many opponents including Oldham, Afra Behn and Cowley. The most interesting encounter takes place between Virgil and Dryden. Here Swift is at his liveliest and his language carries too many punches for poor Dryden. Just when the two warriors are about to clash, the modern desires a parley and on lifting up his helmet he is recognized as Dryden. The helmet was nine times too large for the head. The satiric implication is that

though he tried his hand at heroic verse but his capacity was not equal to the task. Dryden is not willing to fight and humbly proposes an exchange of armour. Virgil accepts to exchange his golden armour with the rusty one of Dryden.

16.5.4 FOURTH INCIDENT

The fourth incident falls in the middle of the third, just after the marshalling of the rival forces and before the commencement of the actual battle. The scene is shifted from the battlefield to the Milky Way, where the Gods have assembled to hear from Jupiter the account of the controversy going on down below in the library. Momus, the patron of the moderns, makes an excellent speech to support the cause of his devotees. The ancients are well served by Pailas. The assembly being so violently divided in its opinion, Jupiter commands Mercury to bring him the book of fate to know beforehand the outcome of the battle. He reads it silently. This worries Momus, who is apprehensive of the fate of his devotees. He meets Criticism and appeals to interfere in the war in favour of the moderns. Her soliloquy presents the pedantry and shallow critical acumen of the moderns. The attempt of the moderns to criticize the ancients and claim superiority over them appears almost frivolous.

16.5.5 FIFTH INCIDENT

The fifth incident is an allegorical version of the supposed victory of Charles Boyle, who wrote in defence of Temple's praise of the ancients, over Wotton and Bentley. Enraged at Wotton's profane attack on Temple, Apollo approaches young Boyle and entrusts to him the task of taking immediate revenge. Wotton runs away out of fear, but Boyle pursues him like a daring lion. In the meanwhile, Bentley happens to pass by the same way, his hands carrying the spoils of Aesop and Phalaris, both of whom are so dear to Boyle. The young warrior engaged Bentley in a deadly combat. With a single lance, Boyle fixes both Wotton and Bentley together: "so was this pair of friends transfixed, till down they fell, joined in their lives, joined in their deaths."

Thus ends the account of the battle of the books. The victory belongs to the ancients, even though the author does not state it directly.

16.6 SUMMING UP

In this unit we have discussed about the significance of the title of this book. The main body of the satire is however preceded by the bookseller's notice to the reader and a very brief Preface. The bookseller's notice is regarding the authorship of the satire and the circumstances leading to its composition. It is short and direct and contrasts happily with the bewildering variety of prefaces, notices, dedications etc. The author declares his satirical intention of bringing under his lash those who are light of brain and do not know how to manage their stock with husbandry.

16.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Question-1 Comment about the title of *The Battle of The Books.*

Answer- See Section- 16.2.

Question-2 Write a note on the main characters of *The Battle of The Books.*

Answer- See Section-16.3.1.

Question-3 Write about the main places of *The Battle of The Books.*

Answer- See Section- 16.3.2.

Question-4 Describe about the Classical allusions used in *The Battle of The Books.*

Answer- See Section-16.4.1.

Question-5 Describe about the Literary allusions used in *The Battle of The Books.*

Answer- See Section-16.4.2.

Question-6 Examine and comment on the theme.

Answer- See Section-16.5.

Question-7 Write a note on the first incident.

Answer- See Section-16.5.1 .

Question-8 Write a note on the Spider and Bee as an episode.

Answer- See Section-16.5.2.

Question-9 Describe about the third incident.

Answer- See Section-16.5.3.

Question-10 Give a description about the fourth incident.

Answer- See Section-16.5.4.

Question-11 Give an account of the last incident.

Answer- See Section-16.5.5.

16.8 FURTHER READING

- Gosse,Edmund- *Eighteenth Century English Literature.*
- Hudson, W. H.- *An Outline History of English Literature.*
- Legouis and Cazamian- *History of English Literature.*
- Leslie Stephen: *Swift* (E.M.L. Series)
- Moody and Lovett- *A History of English Literature.*
- Read, Herbert- *Collected Essays in Literary Criticism.*
- Rickett , A.C.- *A History of English Literature.*
- Willey, Basil- *The Eighteenth Century Background.*

UNIT-17 STRUCTURE AND TECHNIQUE

Structure

17.0 INTRODUCTION

In this Unit we shall discuss about the structure and technique being used by Swift in *The Battle of The Books.* The book has been written in a well-planned structure. It has been divided in different incidents with a preface that gives a complete shape to this book. Swift has used various techniques to make this book interesting. His style is extremely unadorned. Directness, vigour, simplicity and ironical flashes mark every page of this book. His style is vigorous and forceful. His charm chiefly lies in the absolute ease with which he could create by words the very mood- humorous or grave, gay or cynical, profoundly misanthropic or playful or tender, in which he desired to place his readers. Whether he is shallow or not is a different story, but it would be difficult to find out a better example of forceful narrative prose.

First read the Unit and then answer the questions that follow. Your answers then should be checked with hints given.

17.1 OBJECTIVES

That Swift is a genius, there is no doubt about it. He is a great satirist, a great humorist and an ironist. There was no one to excel him in his age, but he was unscrupulous in his political writings and lacked love for humanity. Though he was needlessly coarse and sentimental, his works

exhibit a vigour; a high spirit, and a range of invention. At the end of your study of this unit you will be able to:

- know about the structure of the work.
- understand about the technique of the work.
- be familiar with the artistic devices of the work.

17.2 ARTISTIC DEVICES

In Unit 16 we have discussed about the theme of *The Battle of the Books* being divided in five incidents. The main body of the satire is, however, preceded by the Bookseller's notice to the reader and a very brief Preface. The Bookseller's notice is regarding the authorship of the satire and the circumstances leading to its composition. It is short and direct and contrasts happily with the bewildering variety of prefaces, notices, dedications etc. In the Preface, the author declares his satirical intention of bringing under his lash those who are light of brain and do not know how to manage their stock with husbandry. The text has been divided in paragraphs. The title given to the main text, *A Full and True Account of the Battle Fought Last Friday, Etc.* is very interesting and arouse the curiosity the readers. The structure being followed by the author suits his purpose behind writing this Book. The theme moves in a well planned way carrying a large number of characters.

The writer has used various techniques to express his thoughts. He has used so many devices to bring out the Antithesis between the Ancients and Moderns.

17.2.1 MASK

In Chapter V, Swift uses the device of a dramatic mask or mouthpiece to gain the effect of impersonality and to weave rich patterns of irony in his satire. That is, he speaks through a fictitious character who acts as a mouthpiece. In *The Battle of the Books* this fictitious character is the Historian who professes to give an objective and impartial account of the battle between the ancients and the moderns. However, we are not to take him seriously. His account is neither full nor impartial. It is a highly coloured and partisan version of the fight, clearly favouring the Ancients. It is the historian who tells in the first episode that the ancients are granted the right to the highest peak, and the efforts of the moderns to dislodge them are made to appear absurd considering that the hill on which the former lived was an entire rock, which would break their (moderns') tools and hearts without any damage to itself. Again the bee and the spider is a convenient excuse to malign the moderns by identifying them with the poisonous spider. The comments of Aesop are the views of Swift himself. The use of the mask or mouthpiece also serves to provide a unity to the work as all the episodes narrated in it are seen through him. Swift uses a

simple mouthpiece, simple in the sense that his observation does not have the richness of irony and the complexity of meaning.

Through the use of the mouthpiece, Swift does make an attempt to appear impartial and objective. However, the historian never solidifies into a tangible character to carry much conviction with the readers. No serious effort has been made to develop him into an independent character. No personal details regarding the Historian are furnished, except that he is not retained by any side. All the same, the use of the mouthpiece is interesting as Swift is here employing a device which he will later develop into a very powerful satiric tool.

17.2.2 THE ALLEGORY

The whole of *The Battle of the Books* is in the form of an allegory. The unmindful attack on the ancient writers is symbolized in the threat issued by the Moderns to their counterparts, either to vacate the higher summit, or "give leave to the moderns to come with shovels and mattocks, and level the said hill as low as they shall think it convenient." The parallel events that give rise to this unpleasant controversy in France are quite recognizable. The animated books of St. James's Library allegorise the controversy which arose in England after certain attempts by the Royal Society to compare the achievements of the ancients and the moderns in the field of natural philosophy and Dryden's cautious assessment in the field of literature.

The allegory of the spider and the bee is most pertinent. The ancients are like the bee who gives honey and sweetness. The moderns are symbolized by the spider which stands for dirt, poison and squalor. The spider tries to build his foul castle against the laws of nature, and thus is typical of the moderns who indulge in vain boast and produce undisciplined writings with no reference to outside standards. On the other hand, the bee, who has to exercise judgment in choosing the flower, used his art in extracting honey and labours hard to separate the wax, thus giving sweetness and light to the world.

The clash between the two armies is also represented allegorically. The armour of each warrior suggests the nature of his literary production. The Epic writers lead the Ancients and ride on horses. The philosophical nature of Plato's and Aristotle's writings is suggested by making them bowmen who shoot their arrows in the air. The inconsequential nature of the army of the moderns is suggested by describing most of their troops as "mercenaries". Here is his amusing description of the moderns. The rest of the army was confused and led by Scotus, Aquinas, and Bellarmine without either arms, courage, or discipline. The last phrase "all without coats to cover them" is an allegorical way of referring to cheap pamphlets which had no hard covers on them.

The combat between the leaders of the two sides too has an allegorical significance. The superiority of the ancients over the moderns is suggested by giving them the palm of victory in each one of the

combats. Homer gets the better of Gondibert, and kills both Perrault and Fontenelle, the two staunch defendants of the moderns, by hurling one at another, with the same blow dashing out their brains. The most interesting combat is the one that takes place between Virgil and Dryden. The latter, it may be noted, had made attempts to ape the manners of Virgil. Therefore, while Virgil's armour shines and fits him lawfully well, Dryden's is ill-fitting and clearly not his own but a borrowed one.

The narrative dealing with Wotton and Bentley is allegorical in nature. The real events comprising their attack on Temple, and Charles Boyle's answer to them, can be seen behind the narrative. The death of Wotton and Boyle signifies vindication of the stand taken by Temple in his essays.

17.2.3 THE MOCK-HEROIC TECHNIQUE

The mock-epic was the fashion of the seventeenth century in the field of literature. Swift too stuck to the fashion in giving a mock-heroic touch to his *Battle*. In the mock-heroic the conventions of the epic are employed to describe a comparatively trivial theme. Following the conventions of the epic Swift uses the supernatural and describes the battle between the ancients and moderns in a heroic manner. He employs similes, metaphors which have an epic glamour. He creates two armies of animated books to fight out the issue. The description of the individual warrior and army formations, of actual combats and arms, is couched in epic phraseology and makes for mirth. Then again the combats between individual warriors are in epic tradition, but without the grandeur and awe of the combats between Achilles and Hector or between Aeneas and Turnus. The description of the horse, of the javelin of Pindar, etc. are in epic phraseology. The fight of Boyle with Wotton and Bentley is also in the nature of an epic climax; like a lion, Boyle sweeps down upon the two offenders and transfixes them with a lance of wondrous length and sharpness.

The best example of the mock-heroic can be seen in the description of the spider's web and his quarrel with the bee. The web is described as if it were an important, strong fortress of a powerful figure, though in reality it is a flimsy, airy thing. The spoils of the flies at the gates of his palace are like human bones before the cave of some giant. Every trick of the language is employed to give an inflated account of the cobweb. It is spoken of as a palace, a mansion, a fortress, a castle, a citadel, guarded with turnpikes and palisades.

17.2.4 THE USE OF THE SUPERNATURAL MACHINERY

One of the elements borrowed by Swift from the epic proper is his use of the supernatural. He uses the supernatural in response to the needs of the narrative. It helps him to provide a supernatural setting, disparaging

to the moderns by showing their allegiance to malicious and spiteful deities and to explain away the outcome of many single combats which in others might have proved embarrassing. The Gods and Goddesses of ancient epic poets are shown as having the power to assume any shape or form. Denham is converted into a star by Apollo and a half of Cowley into a dove by Venus. When Goddess Criticism comes down on the earth to help the moderns in their fight against the ancients, she assumes the shape of a book to enter the library. She is described as she gathered up her person into an "octavo compass".

The supernatural is introduced at the very outset of the narrative. The setting is not the familiar landscape of the earth but Mount Olympus, which was supposed to be sacred to Apollo and the Muses. Once the supernatural tone is established it is easy to transfer the scene to Heaven where Jupiter is holding a council in the Milky Way to discuss the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns. He declares his deep interest in what is going on down below in the regal library and thus prepares us for divine intervention in the actual battle.

The supernatural is treated realistically and Swift has tried to give it a natural semblance. The supernatural characters who appear before us in the heavenly council and later on in the battlefield are as puritan and passionate as those whom they support or oppose. Momus, the patron of the moderns, is a hideous deity and his concern for the moderns is loaded with ironical implications. Swift has made very effective use of the supernatural. The supernatural is made subservient to his satiric purpose, namely to disparage the moderns and to establish the superiority of the ancients.

17.2.5 THE FABLE

Another device is that of the fable. It is a short and special type of allegory that exemplifies a moral thesis or a principle of human behaviour. The bee and the spider episode is a fable in which animals are employed as a means of a moral. It is one of the most interesting and brilliant incidents of *The Battle of the Books.* Technically, it is an episode because it is introduced as an interlude at a time when the ancients and moderns are hurling hot words at each other and preparing to launch an offensive.

The episode is introduced as a 'material accident' which sparks off the battle. In a corner of the library there lived a spider. Into his web a bee happened to enter by mistake. There is a serious damage in the web. The spider blames the bee by calling her names. He calls her a vagabond, without house, a plunderer who robs nature and flowers. The bee in his reply calls the spider's web airy and having no substance. The spider with his love of dirt and self-sufficiency is a perfect modern. Then the spider is proud of his great skill in architecture. Modern literature is made of materials as flimsy as cobweb, it lacks durability. The moderns may be proud of their pedantry, false erudition, wrangling and satire, but these characteristics of the moderns are equivalent to the spider's poison. The

case of the ancients is put forward symbolically by the bee. Like the ancients, the bee goes to all corners of nature and with discrimination selects the most suitable material which he converts into something good and useful for mankind.

The spider- bee episode has been widely admired for its brilliant effect and artistic economy. It teaches us that the progress can be made through the bee's way and not through the spider's example. The moderns live on controversies and personal animosities whereas the ancients are far away from that. The ancient writers like Homer and Virgil brought out sweetness and light, collecting the two after ranging widely over the realms of matter and mind.

17.3 SUMMING UP

The Battle of the Books is a remarkable blend of wit, humour, burlesque and satiric ingenuity. It is episodic with 'allegories, parody, mock-heroic, everything neat in itself but all loosely strung together. Swift's satire is usually simple and direct. The unflagging spirit of the writing, the fertility and ingenuity of the illustrations, brilliant canter of Swift's comic Pegasus, sparkles, extended allegory in the form of an epic fragment, the narration of episodes, its language and imagery, etc. make *The Battle of the Books* a unique book.

17.4 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Question-1 Describe the Structure of the book.

Answer- See Section 17.2.

Question-2 Write a note on the use of Mask in *The Battle of the Books*.

Answer- See Section 17.2.1.

Question-3 Write a note on the use of allegory in *The Battle of the Books.*

Answer- See Section 17.2.2.

Question-4 Throw light on the use of The Mock-heroic Technique in *The Battle of the Books*

Answer- See Section 17.2.3.

Question-5 Describe briefly The Use of the Supernatural Machinery in *The Battle of the Books*

Answer- See Section 17.2.4-

Question-6 Describe the technique of the Fable in *The Battle of the Books.*

Answer- See Section 17.2.5.

Question-7 The spider and the bee episode serves as an allegory, discuss.

Answer- See Section 17.2.5.

Question-8 Discuss the spider and bee in *The Battle of the Books* as a fable.

Answer- See Section 17.2.5.

Question-9 Summarise the techniques of *The Battle of the Books* .

Answer- See Sections 17.2.1, 17.2.2, 17.2.3, 17.2.4, and 17.2.5.

17.5 FURTHER READING

- Bonamy Dobree: *English Literature in the Early Eighteenth Century.*
- David Daiches: *A Critical History of English Literature,* Vol.II.
- Herbert Read: English Prose Style.
- Herbert Davis: *The Satires of Swift and Other Studies.*
- John Murray: *Swift.*
- Kathleen William: *Swift and the Age of Compromise.*
- Leslie Stephen: Swift (E.M.L. Series).
- Mark Spilka, (Edited by): Swift (20th Century Views Series)

UNIT-18 CHARACTERS

Structure

18.0 INTRODUCTION

In this Unit you will study about the characters being presented by Jonathan Swift in his *The Battle of the Books.* In the sphere of characterisation he made distinct contribution. No doubt Swift had excelled in characterisation and was one of the greatest masters in this field. In this present work we come across a host of characters belonging to all ages of literature beginning from Ancient age to Modern age. His range of characterisation is both wide and varied. As we read this work we pass through a thickly crowded world which almost appears like a variety show.

Read this Unit and answer the questions given at the last of the Unit. Your answers may be checked with the help of the clues given.

18.1 OBJECTIVES

The characters of Swift give the vivid and graphic picture of all ages in *The Battle of the Books.* The work is a merciless dissection of human nature in general and of intellectual pride and hypocrisy in particular. It shows the brilliance of Swift's wit and the sharpness of his imaginative power. He writes about quarrels bred by beggary and want, pride and petty jealousy, and which quarrels are to be seen among men and dogs alike. By thus equating dogs and warring moderns, Swift deals a crushing blow to the latter, though seemingly elaborating the nature of his theme.

At the end of your study of this unit you will be able to:

- know about the types of characters.
- understand about the writers of different ages.
- be familiar with the supernatural characters of the work.

18.2 CHARACTERISATION

There is a long list of characters in *The Battle of the Books.* The writer presents the conflict between the Ancients and the Moderns for their supremacy. The conflict begins with the books in the library. The writer presents these characters with all their strength and weaknesses. He has coloured them with different shades. The characters belong to different ages. The Ancients, though few, had celebrated names to fight on their side. Not only this but also he has presented supernatural characters who don't belong to this earth. In one of the five incidents of the plot he has presented a fable with animals as its characters like a spider and a bee. Swift's characters are the mixture of his fancy and imagination.

18.2.1 ANCIENTS

Aesop- Aesop is known for his fables, which are read throughout the world by people of all ages. They have been the delight of generation after generation, in all climes and countries . Among his more popular stories are those relating to the fox and the sour grapes , the foolish crow cheated by the fox, the man and his donkey.

Aesop is believed to have lived in the sixth century A.D. Many legends are associated with him. One legend has it that he was a slave of Iadmon, a Thracian. Later on he got his freedom and turned his attention to writing Fables. Perhaps it would be more true to say that Aesop compiled the Fables written by diverse hands and which were current in his time. His Fables are allegorical in character and seek to convey morals. Aesop is, therefore, the right person who can offer an allegorical explanation of the dialogue just exchanged between the spider and the bee.

Aesop, who had been listening to the arguments exchanged between the bee and the spider, came forward and interpreted the controversy in this way; the spider was a Modern in his egoistical nature and love of filth, whereas the bee, with his search of beauty, labour, and sense of discrimination, symbolized the Ancients.

Aquinas- (1225-1274) He was an Italian scholastic philosopher known as the Angelic Doctor and Prince of Scholastics. He entered the Dominican Order and studied under Albert Magnus at Cologne where he also began his career as a teacher. His main contribution to the history of human thoughts is *Summa Theologiae,* which is a systematic survey of Catholic theology and assigns to him "a rank of honour on a par with Aristotle and Augustine." His philosophy, currently called Thomism, is based on the axiom that knowledge springs from the wells of reason and revelation.

Aristotle- (384-322 B.C.)-He was a Greek philosopher and thinker, who contributed to various disciplines and branches of knowledge. He was a disciple of Plato, but at many places he disagreed with his master, a fact to which Swift refers in his allusion to the ousting of Plato by Aristotle and Scotus.

Aristotle thought and wrote almost on all the subjects known to his age. Some four hundred works were attributed to him.

Lucan- Marcus Annaeus Lucanus flourished in 1st century A.D. This Roman epic poet at first won the favour of Emperor Nero, who later on grew jealous of his immense popularity as a poet. Consequently, he forbade him to give public recitals. Lucan resented this and joined in a conspirancy against Nero. When discovered, he was condemned to death by suicide. His most important work is *Pharsalia* in which he deals with the struggle between Caesar and Pompey.

Euclid- (c. 300 B.C.) He was the Greek mathematician who founded a school at Alexandria, Egypt. He gave a new direction to geometry and his propositions still form a part of geometry text-books. His most significant work was *The Elements* in which he dealt with Plane and Solid Geometry and Properties of Numbers.

Herodotus-(484-432 B.C.) He was a famous Greek historian. His great work, *A History of the Greco-Persian Wars,* brought him the title of the "Father of History". It consists of nine books, named after the nine Muses.

Hippocrates- (460-337 B.C.) He is also known as the "Father of Medicine", Hippocrates, a Greek Physician, was a pioneer in his field. He attained fame by writing profusely on the art of healing. The Hippocratic Oath, still taken by physicians of several countries, laid down a code of ethics.

Homer- He is the semi-legendary author of the Greek epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey.* He is the earliest epic poet that we know of.

Livy- (59B.C.-17A.D.) He was a towering figure of the Augustan period in Roman history. A great prose writer, yet his fame rests chiefly on his writings concerning the history of Rome. He wrote the *Annals of the Roman People* which ran into 142 volumes of which only about one- third are still extant.

Phalaris- Phalaris, who probably lived in the 6th century B.C. , is known to history as a tyrannical ruler. Of the many legends associated with him, the one says that he used to roast the criminals alive in a brazen bull, made specially for the purpose. His *Epistles* have been read by scholars with considerable curiosity and interest.

Immediately after Temple had praised the literary merit of Aesop's Fables and Phalaris's *Epistles* , Charles Boyle, a wit of Christ Church College, Oxford, took upon himself the task of popularizing the *Epistles* by bringing out a new edition of Phalaris. For the purpose he had to consult the manuscript-text, kept in St. James's Library and it is said that Bentley

showed him discourtesy while he was thus engaged in his editorial work. The new edition was out in 1695.

Pindar- (518-438 B.C.) He is the celebrated Greek lyric poet. His highly elaborate and regularly patterned odes- known as the Pindaric Odes- have won immortality for him. His power lies not in his ideas, but rather in an amazing splendour of language, rhythm and imagery, which has made his poetry impossible to translate and difficult to imitate. Some English poets did try to write odes on the Pindaric pattern.

Sir William Temple's character and merits- Temple was generally regarded as a man of liberal views and scholarship. There is no doubt that in his own circle he was much respected. The challenge to his eradicate learning from Wotton and Bentley must have come as a rude shock to his admirers.

Virgil-(70-19 B.C.) He was the Roman poet of the first century B.C. His famous epic, the *Aeneid* recounts the heroic exploits of Aeneas , the leader of Trojan band. Standing as he did between the pagon and the Christian era, Virgils contribution to the epic was significant. He helped keep alive the tradition of the epic, though in many ways differed from Homar. His other important works were *Eclogues* and the *Georgics*.

18.2.2 MODERNS

Aphra Behn – (1640-89) She was an English novelist, dramatist and poet. She was the first British professional woman writer. For a few years, she worked as a spy in Antwerp. Her best known novel, *Oronooko,* draws on her childhood experiences. She also composed some Pindaric poems and for this reason she is here cited as one of the Moderns pitched against Pindar.

Bacon-(1561-1616). Sir Francis Bacon was one of the leading lights of the Elizabethan England. He made significant contribution in the field of literature and philosophy. After spending some years in political activities, Bacon devoted the rest of his life to natural philosophy and literature. He introduced a new trend in philosophy by advocating inductive method. His unique approach influenced his own contemporaries and subsequent generations greatly. In the world of letters he will be remembered for his Essays which are remarkable for their wordly wisdom and practical advice and terseness of expression.

Ballarimine- (1542-1621) He was the famous staunch supporter of Roman Catholicism. He, along with Aquinas, defended Roman Catholicism against the sweeping influence of Protestantism.

Bentley – Richard Bentley (1662-1742) was the greatest philologist and Greek scholar of his age. Though he is given a very rough treatment in The Battle, but time has since redeemed his reputation and proved him right in the stand taken by him in questioning the genuineness of Aesop's Fables and the Epistles of Phalaris.

Born in Yorkshire an educatedat St. John's College, Cambridge, Richard Bentley made name for himself as a scholar by issuing a critical note on the Greek dramatists. His reputation increased steadily and in 1694, he was appointed the Keeper of St. James's Library. When William Temple put out his *Essay*, he , with his immense philological knowledge and scholarship, soon discovered that the *Epistles* referred to in Temple's *Essay*, were suspicious. He became an object of Swift's wrath when he appended his *Dissertation* to Wotton's second edition of the *Reflections.*

Blackmore – (1650-1729) He was an English physician and poet. He served as physician to Queen Anne. During his leisure hours, he composed poems of different quality. One of his poems, Creations received warm applause from Dr. Johnson. In his other words too, Swift laughs at this pretentious poet whom he considers as a fit successor to Flecknoe.

Buchanan- (1506-1582) He was a Scottish writer. Though his major work is in the field of drama and verse, he is mentioned here as a historian's account of Scotland, published in 1582.

Camden- (1551-1623) He was an English historian. His well-known work is *Britannica,* which, after the literary fashion of the times, is written in Latin.

Charles Boyle- Charles Boyle (1676-1731) was a scholar of the Christ Church College, Oxford and sided with Temple in the controversy over the respective merits of the Ancients and the Morderns. He brought out a new edition of Phalaris in 1695 as Temple had praised the work in his *Essay.* He was made the Earl of Orrey in 1703.

Cowley- (1618-1667) He was an English poet and essayist. He was quite popular in his old time, but later fell into disrepute. His work is characterized by fantastic conceits, a quality to which Swift always reacted violently. He produced a number of irregular odes based on the Pindaric pattern. His important works are *Davideis, Mistress Puems* and *Poetical Blossoms.*

Creech – (1659-1700). A noted translator who made available in English the works of a number of ancient writers, including the verses of Lucretius, the odes, satires, and Epistles of Horace, parts of Lutarch, 13th satire of Juvenal, and minor Latin and Greek works. He committed suicide in 1700, from disappointed love and pecuniary difficulties.

Davila- (1576-1623) He was an Italian historian who is known by his account of the struggles in France in the second half of the 16th century.

Denham- John Denhem (1615-1688). He gave to the 17th century poems of unequal quality, some good, some bad. One of his poems, *Cooper's Hill,* was much admired by his contemporaries, but later scholars did not share the same view. Writing about this poem, Henry Craik says, "it has no real epic character; and although it contains an occasional foretaste of the vigour of expression which Dryden was to bring to perfection, it has scarcely any other quality which would recommend it to the taste of our

own day ..... Compared with *Gondibert,* his work justified the half-divine descent with which Swift credits him."

Despreaux- (Nicolas Boileau). Boileau's name has now become a byword for French neoclassical criticism. Born in 1636 and died in 1711, Boileau was for decades the centre of French literary activity and criticism. As a neoclassicist, he urged always prudence, moderation, commonsense and obedience to authority in the writing of literature. His own satires were inspired by Horace and Juvenal and in them he castigated the foibles and follies of the contemporary social and literary scene. He also wrote a mock-epic, *Le Lutrin.* His most important critical work was *Art Poetique* (1674), in verse the literary principles of neoclassical school of literature. So dominant was his influence in literary circles that Boileau was often referred to as the *legislator de Parnasse* (legislator of Parnassus). He influenced the 18th Century English writers also.

Dryden- Born in 1631 and died in 1700. Dryden dominated the post-Restoration literary scene in England. Though he will be remembered primarily for his verse satires, yet his contribution in other fields-dramas, prose and criticism- was by no means insignificant. He was Swift's uncle, through a long line of relationships. Legend has it that when Swift sent him his first attempts in composing verses, Dryden sent back a curt reply, saying, "Cousin Swift , you will never be a poet." Later in the book, when describing the encounter between Dryden, as representative of the Mordern', and Virgil, Swift has his sweet revenge by portraying his uncle as an imposterand a coward. In *A Tale of A Tub* too Swift makes fun of the literary devices used by Dryden to gain cheap popularity.

Fontenelle - (1657-1757). Bernard de Bovier de was a miscellaneous French writer who, along with Perrault, took a leading part in the celebrated controversy. He, too, wrote on the side of the Moderns and was opposed to servile obedience to authority. A man of wide learning and curiosity, he championed the cause of freedom in thought and, so, sided with the Moderns. He was a member of the Royal Society of England. In his attack on ancient learning, he was anticipating the attack which before long science was to make on religion.

Gassendi- (1592-1655) Pierre Gassendi was a noted French philosopher and scientist of the 17th century. He took holy orders in 1617 and was appointed the professor of philosophy at Aix the same year. He attacked the Aristotelian system of philosophy and the Cabalists. His views differed sharply from those of Descartes. He favoured the philosophy of Epicurus, in opposition to the philosophy of Descartes, a leading light of the times.

Gondibert- Gondibert is the hero of an epic poem written by William Davenant, a 17th century poet. To us the poem appears an unrelieved exercise in dull narrative, yet it won unstinted praise from contemporary critics and poets. Walter, Cowley and Hobbes vied with one another in eulogizing it. One fails to see any substance in Hobbe's words that he had never seen a poem "that had so much shape of art, health of morality, and

vigour and beauty of expression" as Gondibert. Swift here falls foul of the poem and gets its hero slayed by the brave Homer.

Guicciardini- (1483-1540) He was an Italian historian of the 16th century whose work, *Historia d' Italia,* was made available in English translation in 1579. His writings are characterized by a gruelling tediousness, which makes their reading a sort of punishment. Swift refers to this historian and lists him on the side of the Moderns with obvious satiric intention.

Harvey- (1578-1657). William Harvey was an English physician, physiologist and anatomist. His most significant discovery was the circulation of the blood which he expounded in 1628 in his essay, *The Motion of the Heart and the Blood.* The announcement of his discovery resulted in a furore and it was disparaged by Temple also. He wrote, "There is nothing new in Astronomy to vie with the Ancients, unless it be the Copernican system; nor is physic, unless Harvey's circulation of blood. But whether either of these modern discoveries, or derived from old fountains is disputed… if they are true, yet these two great discoveries have made no change in the conclusions of Astronomy, not in the practice of Physics and so have been of little use to the world, though, of much honour to the authors."

Hobbes- (1588-1679) He is an English thinker of the post- Restoration period. His political theories were a subject of protracted discussion. His most significant work was *Leviathan.*

Mariana- (1537-1624) He was a Spanish Jesuit, often regarded as one of the greatest historians of Spain. Fame came to him on the publication of the "History of Spain", written in Latin. His attempt to defend tyranny under certain circumstances earned him the hostility of many, among whom one may easily name Swift. His work was translated into English.

Milton-(1608-1674) He is a famous English poet who lived in a turbulent period in the political history of England. His classicism was enriched with an astonishingly vast reading in the classics. During the Civil War, he sided with the Independents and wrote a number of tracts in their defence. He went blind in 1652, and afterwards, in the intense seclusion of an isolated life, produced that rare gem of poetic beauty and melody, *Paradise Lost.* The great epic was started in 1658 and finished in 1665. Though Milton did not receive much recognition as a poetic genius in his life-time, yet afterwards he wrote the surging wave of critical acclaim and was generally regarded as the most sublime poet in English language.

Ogleby – He was a 17th century English printer and translator. He produced copious translations of Homer, Virgil and Horance which brought him short-lived reputation. His translations were distinguished not by literary excellence but rather by their excellent get-up and production.

Oldham- (1653-1683) John Oldham was a satirist who also wrote some Pindaric odes and that's why he is mentioned in connection with Pindar. He was paid a warm tribute by Dryden in a poem written on his death.

"Farewell! to little and to lately known,

Whom I began to think and call my own."

Paracelsus- (1493-1541) He was a famous Swiss historical figure. He was a physician who burned to discover the secrets of the world. His involvement in his work was so complete and total that legends soon grew up around him. He is said to have "delved deeply into alchemy and to have kept a small devil prisoner in the pommel of his sword." He also worked as a professor of medicine at Basle.

Perrault- (1628-1703) Charles Perrault was a french poet and critic. A member of the *Acadami francaise,* he was employed by Colbert as an adviser in matters of art and letters. He is remembered for his part in the "*querelle des anciens st des mordernes"* (the quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns). He was a staunch supporter of the Moderns. In this famous poem, *Siecle de Louise le Grand (1687*), he set the Moderns – Reginer, Malherbe Moliere and others above the poets, of Greece and Rome. That he was by temperament opposed to authority, was again borne out in yet another significant work of his, *Parallele des ancient et des moderns,* which appeared from 1688 to 1697. In this, he made fun of the pedants and the authority.

Polydore Virgil- (1470-1555) He is not to be confused with Virgil, the epic poet. He was an Italian who settled down in England and wrote a book called, *Historia Anglica* (History of England).

Rene Descartes- (1596-1650) He was a French mathematician and philosopher, marked a turning point in the realm of thought. His powerful influence was felt not only by philosophers but by men of letters also. The word 'Cartesian' is often used to refer to his philosophical tenets. There is little doubt that his mechanical interpretation of the universe and emphasis on reason helped the evolution of new trend in philosophy.

Scaliger – the reference seems to be to Joseph Justus Scaliger (1540-1609) whose methods in controversy were condemned by Boyle in Examination. Bentley, however, defended Scaliger in the *Preface to the Dissertations.* The scolding handed out to Bentley by Scaliger looks all the more effective for this reason.

Scotus- An English philosopher, who lived and wrote in the 14th century and was a dominating influence in the world of the thought until the 16th century when his cramping and abstruse philosophical system was challenged and shaken off under the impetus of the Mordern thought. Legend has it that for some time he worked as Professor of Divinity at Oxford. His most significant work was *De Modis Significandi Sive Grammatica Speculatix.*

Tasso-(1544-1595) An Italian poet and author of the well known epic *Jerusalem Delivered.* Among his other noteworthy works are *Renaldo, Aminta* and *Torrismondo*.

Vossius- (1618-1689) Issac Vossius was a classical scholar. He had an eventful life; visited Italy, edited seven epistles of St. Ignatius, was a royal librarian at Stockholm from 1649-52) He supported the Septuagint against Cartesianism. He also edited Pliny's *Natural History* (1669). Along with Temple, Swift holds him up as a model of classical scholarship.

Wilkins-(1614-1672) He was an English mathematician who took an active part in the affairs and transactions of the Royal Society, which so frequently came under attack from Swift. He has been treated as a typical representative of the Royal Society. His quaint and what then appeared to be fantastic writings must have prompted Swift to give him this dubious honour. Among his better known writings are: *The Discovery of a World in the Moons, Discourse Concerning the possibility of a Passage to the Moon* and *Philosophical Language.*

William Wotton- William Wotton (1660-1726) was an extensively read scholar of his day. He took his B.A. from St. Catherine's College, Cambridge at the very young age of 13. His prodigious learning was the envy of many a noted scholar of the time. He viewed modern learning with much sympathy and, when Temple came out with his *Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning,* in which he sided with the ancients, he was compelled to rebut his argument by asserting the supremacy of the modern learning. This he did in *Reflections upon Ancient and Mordern Learning*, published in 1694. Though Wotton was careful to make distinction between learning and literature, and in the latter case conceded the supremacy of the ancients, yet his stand appeared to be inimical to the position adopted by the Temple and hence the savage treatment accorded him by Swift.

When the second edition of the *Reflections* was issued in 1697, it carried Bentley'sDissertation in the form of an appendix. It was *Dissertation* which openly challenged the judgement and scholarship of Temple. But Swift, in The Battle, treats both Wotton and Bentley with equal contempt.

Withers- (1588-1667) A lyric poet, who composed lyrics ranging from refreshingly beautiful to awefully trite. In the days of Swift he was looked upon as a dull poet and Swift's placing him alongside of Dryden is not without satiric undertones.

18.2.3 SUPERNATURAL CHARACTERS

Jupiter- He is the ruler of Gods in Roman mythology. He occupies the same position which Zeus does in the Greek mythology and Indra in Hindu mythology. Jupiter calls minor gods who act as his servants, gives them certain message and them to attend the disputants in regal library. To realise his mock-epic satire, Swift creates his own supernatural machinery. A large number of lesser gods are depicted as servants of Jupiter; they carry out the orders of the master. Though they never go near Jupiter, they communicate with him through a long hollow trunk. Among the human being, they are known as accidents or events.

Criticism – Like Fame, Criticism is a deity, created by Swift himself. She symbolizes the rancour and jealousy which Swift thought characterized the writings of the Moderns. The target of Swift's satire is that carping criticism which seeks not to understand but to half-understand to destroy. Since such quack critics make many volumes victims of their uninformed intelligence, Criticism is shown here sitting amidst a heap of mutilated books.

All the vices and inflated attitudes that accompany destructive criticism are personified here as blood relations of Criticism. The goddess herself had claws like a cat. A cat has sharp claws to tear his victim. The claws have been given a symbolical value here and the fact that Criticism too possesses them, shows her destructive nature. So far as intelligence was concerned, Criticism was as foolish and unthinking as an ass. Swift paints this ugly picture of Criticism in lurid colours. It should be noted that Swift himself is a master of destructive satire and specializes in the use of imagery of ugliness filth. His picture of Criticism is built up with a profusion of images that cause repulsive feeling.

Criticism falls into a reverie, eulogises herself for giving wisdom to infants; making school-boys critics, beaux, politicians, coffee-house wits, correctors of style. She makes up her mind to speed immediately to the help of Moderns. Criticism's soliloquy is a masterpiece of ironical writing. Lost in her own thoughts, the goddess recounts her exploits and the favours she distributes among her devotees; but what she considers as reflecting her glory and power is in fact a testimony to her abiding stupidity and bad temper.

Momus-According to Hestod, he is the God of primeval Night; in Greek mythology, the personification of criticism and fault-finding.

Pallas- Pallas Athene, is the Goddess of wisdom. It is significant that the Moderns have Momus, the God of Criticism, as their patron and the Ancients, the Goddess of wisdom. This betrays the sympathies of the author and explodes his claim to impartiality and truthfulness.

18.2.4 CHARACTERS OF THE FABLE

The Bee- The case of the Ancients is put forward symbolically by the bee. Like the Ancients the bee goes to all corners of nature, selects the best material and changes into something useful for the whole mankind. The author seems to favour the bee. The bee ridicules the spider for his vaunted skill in Mathematics and ignorance of music. The arrogant spider is on the verge of bursting with rage and pride, but she flies away to a bed of fllowers.

The Spider- The spider with his love of dirt and self-sufficiency is a perfect modern. He is modern "in his air, his turns, and his paradoxes. Then the spider is proud of his great skill in architecture, and improvements in Mathematics. It is because the modern literature is made

of materials as flimsy as cobweb, it lacks durability. The spider begins to establish his claim to superiority. The bee, he claims, is only homeless vagabond, while he maintains that he himself is a domestic animal living in a castle which he has himself built.

18.3 SUMMING UP

According to the theme of this work, Swift has to present so many characters of so many types. As the plot has been divided in five incidents, these varieties of characters are must for the development of the story. The writer has borrowed these characters from different ages and different countries and has given them satiric vein. Some are supernatural characters also. In one of the incidents he presents a fable. The fable consists of animal characters.

18.4 SELF-ASSEMENT QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Question-1 Write a note on the art of characterization in *The Battle of The Books.*

Answer- See the Section 18.0, 18.1.

Question-2 What are the main categories of the characters in *The Battle of The Books?*

Answer- See the Section 18.2.

Question-3 What do you mean by the Ancients?

Answer- See the Section 18.2.1.

Question-4 What do you know about the Moderns?

Answer- See the Section 18.2.2.

Question-5 Describe about the supernatural characters in *The Battle of The Books.*

Answer- See the Section 18.2.3.

Question-6 Write a note about the characters of the fable in *The Battle of The Books.*

Answer- See the Section 18.2.4.

Question-7 Who are the writers belonging to the ancient period?

Answer- See the Section 18.2.1.

Question-8 Who are the main writers of modern age?

Answer- See the Section 18.2.2

Question-9 Describe about the supernatural characters in *The Battle of The Books.*

Answer- See the Section 18.2.3.

Question-10 What are the main characters of the fable described in *The Battle of The Books?*

Answer- See the Section 18.2.4.

Question-11 Whom does the writer seem to favour, the Ancients or the Moderns?

Answer- See the Section 18.2.1, 18.2.2.

18.5 FURTHER READING

- Bonamy Dobree: *English Literature in the Early Eighteenth Century.*
- David Daiches: *A Critical History of English Literature,* Vol.II.
- Herbert Read: English Prose Style.
- Herbert Davis: *The Satires of Swift and Other Studies.*
- John Murray: *Swift.*
- Kathleen William: *Swift and the Age of Compromise.*
- Leslie Stephen: Swift (E.M.L. Series).
- Mark Spilka, (Edited by): Swift (20th Century Views Series)

UNIT-19 SATIRIC ELEMENT IN THE WORK

Structure

19.0 INTRODUCTION

Swift is the greatest satirist of the eighteenth century. No other major English writer is so charged with the spirit of satire as Swift. His entire work is satirical in tone and lashing in essence. His satire is savage and bitter, glowing with a consuming intensity of feeling. The truth is that Swift was nothing if not a satirist. Satire was his deity whom he placed on a high pedestal and worshipped her with utmost adoration and devotion. Satire was the mission of his life, the breath of his nostrils, the plasma of his blood, and the marrow of his bones.

Read this Unit carefully and answer the questions that follow. Your answers should then be checked with the hints given.

19.1 OBJECTIVES

Satire in the writing of Swift was both personal and general but most of Swift's satirical prose writings are general in intention; in his verse Swift frequently satirises the individual.

Swift allows us for a few moments to remain in doubt about his real meaning, or even to misunderstand it, so that the next moment he can crash it home with direct and quite unambiguous denunciation.

At the end of your study of this unit you will be able to:

- know about the satire of Swift.
- understand about the satirical elements in the work.
- be familiar with the satirical techniques.

19.2 NATURE OF SATIRE

Satire is not a distinct literary genre- it is rather an attitude towards a subject, an attitude of indigestion of human follies and incongruities. The aim of the satirist is "to mend the world as far as they are able". A dissatisfaction with the existing conditions and a painful realization that man is not what he can be and ought to have been is behind satire in all Ages. A satirist is then a person who reveals the incompatibility between the ideal and the actual. Swift's satires are calculated to "vex the world" and make it aware of higher standards of morality. All through his satire one may discern an insistence on reason as the best guide in life. This reason is more than mere commonsense; it is a manifestation of the divine spark in man.

In the Preface, Swift defined satire as "a sort of glass, wherein Beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own; which is the chief reason for that kind of reception, it meets in the world, and ,that ,so very few are offended with it." But this being modest, for Swift's satire has teeth to bite deep into human pretensions and follies, and to make its bite felt.

In *The Battle of the Books* the satire is both general and personal. This is a highly successful exercise in belittlement, at once gratifying the visual imagination and effectively ridiculing a literacy controversy. Swift's aim here is almost purely destructive; his intention is much more to haul Bentley and Wotton than to take sides with the Ancients against the Moderns. He does, it is true, pronounce upon the issue in the whole controversy appear trivial, a mere battle of books. Sir William Temple had been made to look foolish, and Swift decided that if he was to be defended the best form of defence here was to attack, and he attacked Bentley and Wotton, are slain by one lance.

James Sutherland says, "In the prose satire of the eighteenth century, Swift has no equal," but the same critic also discovers two short-comings in the satires of Swift. He says, "In general, Swift's satirical intentions are not in doubt, except on two important accounts. The first is that irony always baffles the dull and the stupid; and the second is that in most of his satires the writer or speaker is not Swift himself, but some

persona that he has assumed for the occasion. If we do not realise who the persona is and what he represents, we shall misunderstand the irony, and so inevitable, misinterpret Swift's satirical intention."

Jonathan Swift worked for William Temple during the time of the controversy, and Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* takes part in the debate. From its first publication, Swift added a short satire entitled "The Battle of the Books" to the *Tale of a Tub.* In this piece, there is an epic battle fought in a library when various books come alive and attempt to settle the arguments between Moderns and Ancients. In Swift's satire, he skillfully manages to avoid saying which way victory fell. He portrays the manuscript as having been damaged in places, thus leaving the end of the battle up to the reader.

The battle is told with great detail to particular authors jousting with their replacements and critics. The battle is not just between Classical authors and Modern authors, but also between authors and critics. The prose is a parody of heroic poetry along the lines of Samuel Butler's parody of battle in *Hudibras.*

19.3 USE OF ALLEGORY

To suit the purpose of his satire, Swift used allegory, sometimes intermittently as in *The Battle of the Books,* sometimes consistently in *A Tale of a Tub,* and sometimes with not so well- defined aims in *Gulliver's Travels.* It must be remembered that he never wrote allegory for the sake of allegory, but primarily to make his satire universal and more effective.

The combat in the "Battle" is interrupted by the interpolated allegory of the spider and the bee. A spider, "swollen up to the first Magnitude, by the Destruction of infinite Numbers of Flies" resides like a castle holder above a top shelf, and a bee, flying from the natural world and drawn by curiosity, wrecks the spider's web. The spider curses the bee for clumsiness and for wrecking the work of one who is his better. The spider says that his web is his home, a stately manor, while the bee is a vagrant who goes anywhere in nature without any concern for reputation. The bee answers that he is doing the bidding of nature, aiding in the fields, while the spider's castle is merely what was drawn from its own body, which has "a good plentiful Store of Dirt and Poison." This allegory was already somewhat old before Swift employed it, and it is a digression within the *Battle* proper. However, it also illustrates the theme of the whole work. The bee is like the ancients and like authors: it gathers its materials from nature and sings its drone song in the fields. The spider is like the moderns and like critics: it kills the weak and then spins its web (books of criticism) from the taint of its own body digesting the viscera.

In one sense, *The Battle of the Books* illustrates one of the great themes that Swift would explore in *A Tale of a Tub*: the madness of pride involved in believing one's own age to be supreme and the inferiority of derivative works. One of the attacks in the *Tale* was on those who believe

that being *readers* of works makes them the equals of the *creators* of works. The other satire Swift affixed to the *Tale*, "The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit," illustrates the other theme: an inversion of the figurative and literal as a part of madness.

19.4 USE OF SYMBOLS

Swift made effective and adequate use of the art of symbols in conveying his satiric vision of a world pretending to be rational and sane but really hollow and irrational.

Besides using extended allegory, Swift has also used symbols in his satire to realise his satiric aim. The images of excretion (in Spider and Bee episode) are used to suggest moral corruption. When Swift speaks of the filth and ugliness, he is symbolically exposing the moral depravity and meanness. Swift was also at pains to attack all forms of unreason, since he stood for a life governed for divine reason. Therefore, in his satire images of disorder or prevented order symbolize unreason.

19.5 SATIRICAL DEVICES

Swift uses many techniques to suggest the moral decline of man. Much has been said by critics about his excremental imagery and his hard hitting style. Swift's satire is dramatic, that is to say, Swift himself rarely appears in person in his satiric writings. And wisely so, by keeping himself in background he gives himself two advantages: (1) he safeguards himself against possible counterattacks and at the same time such a method gives him freedom to voice his opinions freely; (2) the dramatic situation gives the satiric piece a completeness, and so the opinion expressed, the criticisms made, appear more plausible than would otherwise be. To secure this dramatic effect, Swift employs almost all known classical devices. "He makes use of the mask, of allegory, of parody, of irony, of discoveries, projects and machines." (We have discussed these devices in detail in Unit 17.

19.6 SWIFT AS THE GREAT SATIRIST

A satirist is a sort of preacher who aims at exposing wickedness and vice, not by delivering sermons, but by raising a satiric laughter. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines satire "as the expression in adequate terms of the sense of amusement or disgust excited by the ridiculous or unseemly, provided that humour is a distinctly recognizable element, and that the utterance is invested with literary form. Without humour, satire is invective; without literary form, it is mere clownish jeering."

"Satire is a sort of glass," says Swift, "*wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own, which is the chief reason for that kind of reception it meets in the world, and that so very few*

are offended with it." Swift, indeed, is the greatest satirist of the Age of Queen Anne. There is no other English writer in whom the satiric element is so predominant as it is in Swift. His three principal works-*A Tale of a Tub, The Battle of the Books,* and *Gulliver's Travels*- are all satires; his verse is prevailingly satirical, and the best of his miscellaneous writings are also satirical. He owed his commanding position as the most powerful and subtlest satirist not only to personal qualities such as passion, humour, honesty courage, intelligence, moral conviction- but to qualities which are most obviously literary, such as imagination, inventiveness, stylistic and rhetorical skill.

Causes which made Swift a Satirist

Swift turned to satire for both subjective and objective reasons. Swift was disgusted with the prevailing conditions of his life and his desire to improve the socio-political conditions led him to choose this weapon of satire. Disgusted with the hollow pretensions, deceit and pride of men crawling on the face of the earth, finding life an unhappy affair, having a powerful intellect and being morose, he found satire his natural medium of expression. His frail constitution, his final insanity, and disappointment in ambition made him a sadder a bitter critic.

Personal Satire

In his satirical writings Swift rarely exposes the individual: only in two of his works- *Short Character of His Excellency, Thomas Earl of Wharton* and *Issac Bickerstaff's Predictions for the Year 1708*- he satirized individuals. The condemnation of Wharton's character is achieved in part to the assumed carelessness with which it is delivered and by his pose of impartiality. In the second personal satire Swift's aim was to expose Partridge, the astrologer. The joke about the death of Partridge was kept up for several months and he succeeded in putting him out of business.

General Satire

Swift's satire is more often general than personal. In the opinion of Hugh Walker, "*Primarily and essentially Swift's satire is aimed at human nature. It is not satire of a party, or of a creed, or of a person, or of an age; though satire of all these is to be found in his writings. It is satire of the very nature of man."* There is not much personality in his satire. He exposed the fool and lashed the knave" not as individuals but as types. His aim is not personal malice but prompting men of genius and virtue to mend the world as far as they are able.

Intellectual Satire

According to Hugh Walker, "*Swift's satire is intellectual."* We get glimpses of this type of satire. Swift has the incisive power of logic. His satire is not emotional as seen in Dryden, Pope, Burns and Byron.

Literary Satire

Swift satirized literature and litterateurs in many a work. *A Tale of a Tub, The Battle of the Books, On Poetry* and *Dedications for Making a Birthday Song while* contain pungent literary satire. An example of intellectual and literary satire is cited below:

"The most accomplished way of using books at present is twofold; either, first, to serve them as some men do lords, learn their titles exactly, and then brag of their acquaintance. Or secondly, which is indeed the choicer, the profounder, and politer method, to get a thorough insight into the index by which the whole book is governed and turned, like fishes by the tail. For to enter the palace of learning at the great gate requires an expense of time and forms; therefore men of much haste and little ceremony are content to get in by the back door."

In *The Battle of the Books* the satire is mainly literary. It is fluent, witty and diverting, sometimes stinging, but rarely bitter. The satire brought forward through the spider-bee episode is one of the glories of English literature.

Miscellaneous Satire

Swift's best satire is found in *Gulliver's Travels.* It is a satire at humanity. *The Travels* is a parody of both travels and science literature. It is also a satire on the four aspects of man: the physical, the political, the intellectual, and the moral. The book is often called morbid and utterly pessimistic. Critics have imagined as if it was written by a mad man in anger and contempt. Yet it is a great comic masterpiece. Thackeray finds that when Swift wrote the *Travels* he was a savage, mad, embittered misanthrope.

Swift's Satiric Technique

Satire is very natural to Swift. He uses it very effectively without much efforts. He uses intricacy, insinuation (that is, implying a fact without stating it in so many words), persuasiveness, irony, gradualism (step by step attention to detail and measurements, *e.g.,* in the fourth voyage of Gulliver) and situational satire. As mentioned by Ricardo Qaintana, "A satire of Swift is….. an exhibited situation or series of such situations… It is to be observed that the satirist himself is not involved. He is as much an observer, as much outside all the fuss and nonsense as we are….."

Irony is Swift's chief weapon. In the words of Charles Whibley, *" Swift is the greatest master of irony that has ever been born in the British isles great enough to teach a lesson to Voltaire himself, and to inspire the author of Jonathan Wild."* The irony may be understood as the language with an opposite or at least different tendency. In *The Battle* Swift does not tell us that Richard Bentley, the great philologist, was very rude and uncourteous to Boyle. On the other hand, Swift praises him and says, "The guardian of the regal library, a person of great valour, but chiefly renowned for his humility, had been a fierce champion of the moderns." In *A Modest Proposal* to *Irish Parents* Swift has gained the desired effect

through broad and sustained irony. The ironic solution for Ireland's economic difficulties is the selling off of human bodies, as slaves in one case and as food in the other. The shock technique of irony has been used in *Gulliver's Travels.*

In the hands of Swift satire becomes a versatile instrument, capable of affording a variety of harmonies. From the delightful fun of *Meditations Upon a Broomstick* and the hoisting of the astrologer Partridge with his own petard, to the savage irony of *A Modest Proposal* there is no note that Swift has not sounded on it. Swift has now come into his own and a number of penetrating studies of his satiric technique have been written. Perhaps we can pay him no greater compliment than saying that he has given to the despised centre of satire a place on Parnassus: "The texture of satire at its keenest is truly organic; its parts inter-relate; sometimes it approaches the richness and integration of a poem."

19.7 SUMMING UP

Swift was the greatest prose satirist of the Age of Queen Anne whereas. The whole Addison's satiric at world is in prose, and Pope's satirical work is in verse but swift used both verse and prose as the medium of his satire, though his verse satire is qualitatively inferior to his prose satire which has earned him the renown of being the most sustained and vitriolic writer of satire . Swift is head and shoulders above other prose satirists in English literature and it will not be too much to say that the world has not produced the like or equal of him as yet.

19.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

Question-1 Comment on Swift as the satirist.

Answer- See the Section 19.0, 19.1.

Question-2 What are the different types of satire?

Answer- See the Section 19.6.

Question-3 Write a note on the irony of Swift.

Answer- See the Section 19.6.

Question-4 What do you know about satire?

Answer- See the Section 19.6.

Question-5 Describe about the nature of satire in *The Battle of The Books.*

Answer- See the Section 19.2.

Question-6 Write a note on the use of symbolism in *The Battle of The Books.*

Answer- See the Section 19.4.

Question-7 Write a note on *The Battle of The Books* as the allegory?

Answer- See the Section 19.3.

Question-8 Discuss the causes which made Swift a satirist?

Answer- See the Section 19.6.

Question-9 Describe about the satirical devices of Swift.

Answer- See the Section 19.5.

Question-10 'Swift was a great satirist'. Discuss.

Answer- See the Section 19.6.

Question-11 Write a note on 'Swift in relation to other writers of his age'.

Answer- See the Section 19.2.

19.9 FURTHER READING

- Bonamy Dobree: *English Literature in the Early Eighteenth Century.*
- Charles Whibley- Jonathan Swift (1917).
- David Daiches: *A Critical History of English Literature,* Vol.II.
- Herbert Read: English Prose Style.
- Herbert Davis: *The Satires of Swift and Other Studies.*
- Hugh Walker: *English Satire and Satirists.*
- John Murray: *Swift.*
- Kathleen William: *Swift and the Age of Compromise.*
- Leslie Stephen: Swift (E.M.L. Series).
- Mark Spilka, (Edited by): Swift (20th Century Views Series)
- Ricardo Quintana: *Swift.*
- Ricardo Quintana: *The Mind and Art of Swift.*